

Lyle Lovett, John Hiatt on tour

What to know if you go

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Lyle Lovett performs during a relief concert in College Station, Texas, on Oct. 21. All five living former U.S. presidents joined to support a Texas concert raising money for Harvey, Irma and Maria's devastation in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Associated Press

On John Hiatt's latest tour, one fan has followed him to every show.

He always procures one of the best seats, he claps and smiles at the right times, and when the spirit moves him, sometimes he sings along.

He doesn't check his phone, talk during songs or even try and take a selfie, but boy can he ask some nosy questions.

His name is Lyle Lovett. Like a road-show of an intimate night at Nashville's famed songwriter-haven, The Bluebird Cafe, the two legendary singer/songwriters are out on an intimate, acoustic tour bringing the living room back to the music swapping songs and yarns from their storied careers.

The critically acclaimed cross-country theater tour rolls into the historic Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center in downtown Huntington at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6 as part of the Marshall Artists Series 2017-18 season.

Some tickets remain at \$65, \$76 and \$97. Contact the Artists Series Box Office at 304-696-6656 or order tickets online at Ticketmaster.com, or visit the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse box office noon to 5 p.m. Monday.

Speaking by phone from his latest tour stop, Lovett, a four-time Grammy winner, said it truly has been amazing to be "in the audience" during this unique tour that has Hiatt, who is now 63, and Lovett, who is 57, serving up a dozen or so songs each, and sometimes joining in on each other's songs.

"It is really fun and it's a chance to get to spend time with one of the finest artists that you would ever get to see. What I enjoy most about it is I am the audience for half the show and as an audience member I get to actually ask the questions that go through your mind when you are watching a show," Lovett said with a chuckle.

"I get to interrupt John Hiatt and be like, 'Hey, what were you thinking when you wrote this song?' And that is great fun."

Lovett, the proud Texas native who has always infused his music with Texas, swing, country, jazz, folk, gospel and blues, said he actually did a short but similar tour with Hiatt back in 1989 for the Country Music Foundation that featured him and Hiatt, Joe Ely, and the late, great fellow Texas songwriter Guy Clark.

"The idea comes from those Nashville songwriter guitar pulls," Lovett said of this tour that's been rolling off and on since fall 2015.

"There were so many songwriters who historically would just get together for fun and sit around and play their songs and each other's songs but so many of them didn't play out so they would all get together and do it."



Lovett said it is quite fascinating as a songwriter to listen on a deeper level to Hiatt, who has added such timeless songs as "Have A Little Faith In Me," "Thing Called Love," "Feels Like Rain" and "Cry Love" to the rock canon.

"His point of view is so consistent and that is what I enjoy getting to see, really getting to know him over the past year," Lovett said. "His songs are really different expressions of the puzzle of his life. It is nice to see how he talks about his life and his songs. Whether he is telling a story in a literal manner or alluding to it with these images that he comes up with he is doing so from his personal point of view and every one consists of a piece of the puzzle."

In addition to being able to dust off his Texas A&M journalism degree to wryly grill Hiatt, Lovett, the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Famer who has written an astonishing 600 songs, said the cozy set-up allows him to distill his songs down to how they first came to be.

Lovett, who has chalked up 14 albums, including his famous 1989 Grammy Award-winning album "Lyle Lovett and His Large Band" (that featured a band of nearly 20 members), said there is something beautiful about the simplicity of acoustically performing songs he arranged for his big band like "What Do You Do/The Glory of Love," "She Makes Me Feel Good" (written for his famed ex, Julia Roberts), and "She's No Lady," to his poetic solo songs like "If I Had A Boat," "Nobody Knows Me," and his famous 1991 slow-boiling cover of The Grateful Dead's, "Friend of the Devil."

"When I am out with the band I am trying to think of material to highlight the band," Lovett said.

"In this I'm able to play some quieter songs the ones that I might only normally play with one or two other members of the band, but if you're out with the band you don't want to under-utilize them, so this is a good time to play some of my quieter songs and even some songs that are arranged for the band. I can play them without the band and change to this format and to the way I wrote them. That is fun for me. I don't know how much the audience hears that, but if people are familiar with my recordings I would like to think if they hear a song I play on just my guitar they can hear where the arrangement ideas came from and where the song came from."

Lovett, who was awarded the Americana Music Association's inaugural Trailblazer Award, said he and Hiatt, who won that association's Lifetime Achievement Award, tour together often but have not written together, although both are currently writing and working on new solo projects.

"We haven't and we're not currently writing together but we talk about it on stage like, 'yeah, I should record one of your songs,' but so far it is just talk, but ... there is value in talking about doing something," Lovett said. "I know, and not to speak for John, but he has talked about it on stage, that he just finished a new album that he said will come out next spring, and I have been writing songs and getting ready to come into the studio too, early next year."

Lovett said one great thing that has come out of touring for the past few years in this format is that he will be reuniting in a similar tour with his college buddy and fellow songsmith Robert Earl Keen.

The two, who've written such great songs as "This Old Porch," will team up for a similar acoustic tour in late January. Lovett's tour with Hiatt runs through Nov. 18; after that, Lovett has a handful of solo dates.

"As I started with these shows and had so much fun I thought, well, I wonder what Robert, that old scamp, is doing?" Lovett said of his college buddy. "We had been going in different directions, so I said what about doing some shows together?"

Lovett said those friendships mean more with each passing day.

Lovett said losing some of America's great songwriters in the past few years, including one of his mentors, Guy Clark, makes him appreciate being able to share his songs with people and to appreciate the beautiful songs created by other song crafters he admires.

"You feel blessed every time you can be on stage," Lovett said. "It does put it in perspective as you get older yourself. I think about the last time I was able to work with Guy Clark, because of his health, it was 2008, and then we lost him last year. It makes you think, because when you are in the middle of touring and doing shows and working it seems like it will last forever, but it doesn't."

WHAT TO KNOW IF YOU GO

WHAT: The Marshall Artists Series presents an acoustic evening with Grammy Award winning songwriters, Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt

WHERE: The historic Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, 925 Fourth Ave., Huntington

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6

GET TICKETS: Tickets for An Acoustic Evening with Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt are \$97.87, \$76.04/65.13. Contact the Marshall Artists Series Box Office at 304-696-6656 or order tickets online at Ticketmaster.com. You may also visit our box office located in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse on the Marshall University campus. Box office hours are noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SPONSORS: City National Bank, Radiology Inc, ZMM Architects, Ransbottom Law Office, Hilliard Lyons, WTCR, B97, WSAZ, the Herald-Dispatch, Marshall University, and the Marshall Artists Series.

ON DECK AT THE ARTISTS SERIES: Here's a look at the remainder of the 2017 portion of the season for the Marshall Artists Series 2017-2018.

The Broadway musical "A Night With Janis Joplin" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14: "A Night with Janis Joplin" is a musical journey celebrating Joplin and her biggest musical influences - icons like Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Odetta, Nina Simone and Bessie Smith, who inspired one of rock 'n' roll's greatest legends. Fueled by such songs as "Me and Bobby McGee," "Piece of My Heart," "Mercedes Benz," "Cry Baby" and "Summertime," it's a great way to celebrate the half-century of "The Summer of Love."



This performance is sponsored by North Star Anesthesia and Dr. and Mrs. Brian Ferguson. Ticket prices are \$97.87, \$81.50, \$70.58 and \$64.04.

"A Charlie Brown Christmas:" Reynolds and Associates, American Babbitt Bearing, Prichard Electric, Chapman Printing and Hoops Family Children's Hospital present "A Charlie Brown Christmas" as the cherished animated TV special comes to life onstage at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5. The faithful stage adaptation features favorite characters including Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the entire Peanuts gang. The Emmy and Peabody award-winning story by Charles M. Schultz has warmed the hearts of millions since it first aired on television more than 50 years ago. This performance is also sponsored by Northwestern Mutual, Huntington Federal and Marshall Orthopedics. Tickets are \$68.40, \$54.21 and \$43.30.

Welcome to the discussion.

Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CAPS LOCK.

Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

Share with Us. We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.

