

Old Crow Medicine Show to Play Merlefest

Written by Amber Herman

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MerleFest, presented by Lowe's and slated for April 24-27, 2014, has announced the addition of Old Crow Medicine Show to the festival's Friday evening lineup. The four-day event, an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans, will once again take place on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, NC.

As previously announced via social media to the festival's fan base, singer-songwriter Holly Williams will also perform at MerleFest 2014.

MerleFest is known for its unique mix of traditional, roots-oriented music from the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, Americana, blues, country, Celtic, Cajun, cowboy, zydeco, rock and many other styles that Doc Watson, who helped found the festival, referred to as "traditional plus."

Old Crow Medicine Show got its start busking on street corners in New York state and up through Canada, winning audiences along the way with its boundless energy and spirit. They eventually found themselves in Boone, North Carolina, where they caught the attention of folk icon Doc Watson while playing in front of a pharmacy. He immediately invited the band to play at MerleFest, helping to launch their career. Shortly thereafter the band relocated to Nashville for a residency at the Grand Ole Opry, where they entertained the crowd between shows.

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It's been nearly 15 years since these humble beginnings, and the band has gone on to tour the world, sell over 800,000 albums, become frequent guests on "A Prairie Home Companion," and play major music festivals throughout the country.

On Sept. 17, 2013, Old Crow Medicine Show received the great honor of being inducted as the newest members of the historic Grand Ole Opry. Other highlights from the year included winning the Grammy Award for Best Long Form Music Video for the film "Big Easy Express" having their classic single, "Wagon Wheel," receive the RIAA's Platinum certification for selling over 1,000,000 copies.

Old Crow Medicine Show now has four studio albums to its name, three of which were released by Nettwerk Records – "O.C.M.S." and "Big Iron World," produced by David Rawlings, and "Tennessee Pusher," produced by Don Was. On its newest album, "Carry Me Back," Old Crow continues to craft classic American roots music while pushing itself in new directions. "Carry Me Back," released by ATO Records and produced by Ted Hutt, represents a new stretch of road in the timeless journey of a rambling string band.

Holly Williams will make her first MerleFest appearance on Thursday night of the festival. Part of the key to Holly Williams' success as a singer-songwriter is that it has never been her mission to try and live up to the legacy cast by her famous and prolific father and grandfather – Hank Jr. and Sr., respectively – nor has she spent a lot of time trying to live it down. The respect that Holly has garnered as an artist over the course of many years spent building an international fan base, and the release of two acclaimed albums, 2004's "The Ones We Never Knew" and 2009's "Here With Me," has come on her own terms, based on her own sound. Her most recent album, "The Highway," finds the artist putting a distinctly personal spin on universal themes like love, loss, conflict, family and desire.

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Additional performers for MerleFest 2014 will be announced in the coming weeks. The lineup is viewable at www.merlefest.org/lineup .

Ticket purchases for MerleFest 2014 can be made on the web at www.merlefest.org or by calling 1-800-343-7857. An early bird ticket discount is available through March 10, 2014.

MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans held on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, NC. MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of the late American music legend Doc Watson. MerleFest is a celebration of "traditional plus" music, a unique mix of music based on the traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles. The festival hosts over 130 artists, performing on 13 stages during the course of the four-day event. The annual event has become the primary fundraiser for the WCC Endowment Corporation, funding scholarships, capital projects and other educational needs.