

Merle Haggard to Perform at MerleFest

Written by Merlefest Media

Monday, 10 February 2014 16:11

Legendary country music artist Merle Haggard will perform for the first time at MerleFest as he closes **MerleFest** 2014 in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, on Sunday, April 27. The festival also welcomes back MerleFest favorite Ricky Skaggs,

whose Saturday, April 26, evening performance will mark the 12th time that the famed bluegrass musician has appeared in the lineup.

MerleFest, presented by Lowe's and slated for April 24-27, 2014, is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans that takes place on the campus of Wilkes Community College.

As a performer and a songwriter, [Merle Haggard](#) was one of the most important country artists to emerge in the 1960s, and he became a leading figure in the Bakersfield country scene in the '60s. While his music remained hardcore country, he pushed the boundaries of that music, drawing from all forms of traditional American music – country, jazz, blues and folk – and in the process, developed a distinctive style of his own. As a result, Haggard found his songs at the top of the charts on a regular basis. In addition to his 40 No. 1 country hits, Haggard charted scores of Top Ten songs. He has won just about every music award imaginable, both as a performer and as a songwriter, and in 1994 was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. His body of work easily places him beside Hank Williams as one of the most influential artists in country music.

Ricky Skaggs struck his first chords on a mandolin over 50 years ago, and by age 21 was already considered a master of one of America's most demanding art forms. Today, this 14-time

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Grammy Award winner continues to do his part to lead the recent roots revival in music and remains one of the most respected and beloved bluegrass performers in the genre. With 12 consecutive Grammy-nominated classics behind him, all from his own Skaggs Family Records label, the gifted Skaggs creates diverse and masterful tones that come from a life dedicated to playing music that is both fed by the soul and felt by the heart. The all-star lineup of Skaggs' Kentucky Thunder includes Andy Leftwich (fiddle), Cody Kilby (lead guitar), Paul Brewster (tenor vocals, rhythm guitar), Eddie Farris (baritone vocals, guitar) and Scott Mulvahill (bass, bass vocals). Skaggs' last appearance at MerleFest was in 2008.

The full MerleFest 2014 lineup is viewable at www.MerleFest.org/lineup ; the daily stage schedules for the festival will be posted at the site on Wednesday, Feb. 19.

Ticket purchases for MerleFest 2014 can be made on the web at www.MerleFest.org or by calling

[800-343-7857](tel:800-343-7857)

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. With more than 130 acts performing on 13 stages during the course of the event, MerleFest is an excellent entertainment value. An early bird ticket discount is available through March 10, 2014.

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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, North Carolina. 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.