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Folk Reunion Featuring Tom Paxton and The Highwaymen and The Limeliters

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Tom Paxton has become a voice of his generation, addressing issues of injustice and inhumanity, laying bare the absurdities of modern culture and celebrating the tenderest bonds of family, friends, and community. He has been an integral part of the songwriting and folk music community since the early 60's Greenwich Village scene, and continues to be a primary influence on today's "New Folk" performers. Paxton's songbooks, critically acclaimed children's books (available from HarperCollins), award-winning children's recordings, and a catalog of hundreds of songs (recorded by artists running the gamut from Willie Nelson to Placido Domingo), all serve to document his 40-year career. Paxton's place in folk music is secured not just by hit records and awards, but by the admiration of three generations of fellow musicians. An internationally recognized and loved cultural figure, he has always chosen goodwill over commercial success. His generosity has taken the shape of a benefit concert performance for a little girl fighting leukemia, or a personal note of encouragement to an up-and-coming songwriter. This is the man who wrote and lives the words, "Peace will come, and let it begin with me." He is one of the great songwriters of the last century and will be reckoned as one of the greats in this new century as well.

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Sunday, April 1, 2007

2006/2007 Season sponsored in part by a generous grant from The Illinois Arts Council
The "Hungry-I" in San Francisco was packed that night in 1959 to hear the sensational new folk trio whose reputation had preceded them from a small club in Aspen called "The Limeliters. Today, The Limeliters are still thrilling audiences with their surging vocals and ironic wit. With different configurations over the years, the group has preserved their signature vocal sound and continues to earn their name as "The Fabulous Limeliters." For three years, The Limeliters were the musical representatives for Coca-Cola. Their rendition of the jingle, "Things Go Better with Coke" became a national hit. *Time* magazine summed up their appeal with the memorable quote: "If the button-down, scrubbed-looking Kingston Trio are the undergraduates of big-time U.S. folk-singing, The Limeliters are the faculty." And now, after 45 years, the Limeliters are still alive and well. As they sail through the new millennium, their unique blend of thrilling harmony, whacked-out humor and contemporary satire consistently draws standing ovations from audiences that, today, span three generations. With their energy and enthusiasm undiminished, The Limeliters remain the most exciting folk act that the genre has ever produced. Although original Limeliter Alex Hassiley has recently retired, the superbly talented members of the current group - Mack Bailey, Andy Corwin, and Gaylon Taylor - carry on in the spirited tradition of "The Fabulous Limeliters" to the delighted applause of audiences everywhere.

The Highwaymen's origins go back to the late 1950s, when, for a time, it seemed as though every college was spawning a folk group or two or three. California's Menlo College led the way as the birthplace of the Kingston Trio, and a year later Connecticut's Wesleyan University was where the Highwaymen were born. In the fall of 1958, Dave Fisher, Steve Butts, Bob Burnett, and Chan Daniels met through a performance at a college fraternity show, and guitarist Steve Trott came aboard during their rehearsals. Originally named The Clansmen, for their heavily Scottish and Irish repertory, they were popular enough at concerts around Wesleyan that they decided to try and turn professional, and to get a recording contract. The group cut a demo tape of their entire repertory and, as an afterthought, included a song that they'd lately added to their shows, called "Michael, Row The Boat Ashore." They signed with United Artists and "Michael, Row The Boat Ashore" slowly became popular across the northeast and broke out nationally in 1961, rising to the No. 1 spot that summer. The Highwaymen suddenly found themselves major recording stars as their senior year commenced. United Artists was eager to get them back into the studio. A new album, entitled *Standing Room Only*, followed, along with appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show and a full schedule of weekend concerts. The group's singles 'The Gypsy Rover' and "Cottonfields" became immediate successes. After graduation, the Highwaymen became much closer to the core of the urban folk music revival. If they weren't topping the charts, their records still sold respectively, including a live album, *Hootenanny With The Highwaymen* in 1963, and *One More Time* in 1964. Indeed, the Highwaymen, with all of their other "firsts" in terms of cutting certain songs, may be the only folk group in the history of the United States to boast a sitting Federal Appeals Court judge, in the person of Steve Trott, in their line up.
Tom Paxton has become a voice of his generation, addressing issues of injustice and inhumanity, laying bare the absurdities of modern culture and celebrating the tenderest bonds of family, friends, and community. He has been an integral part of the songwriting and folk music community since the early 60's Greenwich Village scene, and continues to be a primary influence on today's "New Folk" performers. Paxton's songbooks, critically acclaimed children's books (available from HarperCollins), award-winning children's recordings, and a catalog of hundreds of songs (recorded by artists running the gamut from Willie Nelson to Placido Domingo), all serve to document his 40-year career. Paxton's place in folk music is secured not just by hit records and awards, but by the admiration of three generations of fellow musicians. An internationally recognized and loved cultural figure, he has always chosen goodwill over commercial success. His generosity has taken the shape of a benefit concert performance for a little girl fighting leukemia, or a personal note of encouragement to an up-and-coming songwriter. This is the man who wrote and lives the words, "Peace will come, and let it begin with me." He is one of the great songwriters of the last century and will be reckoned as one of the greats in this new century as well.

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Governors State University

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