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August 1, 2023



**Contact Information:**

Montana Performing Arts Consortium

Emily Wolfram

406-284-5524, [info@mtperformingarts.org](mailto:info@mtperformingarts.org)

**Announcing: Artist Lineup for Showcase Performances at the  
Mansfield Theater in Great Falls, Montana**

**17 artists will perform at the Annual Showcase & Conference hosted by the Montana Performing Arts Consortium**

GREAT FALLS, Mont. — The Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC) announces the artist showcase lineup for its annual conference. Seventeen different artists from throughout North America will each perform at the Mansfield Center for Performing Arts on Saturday, October 14, 2023. Showcases are free and open to the public and start at 9:00AM, 12:30PM, and 3:30PM. Featured performers include the Jazz Legacy Project (Georgia), Mari Black Trio (Massachusetts), Pollo Loco (Montana), Tomas Kubinek (Massachusetts), Ollee Owens (Alberta), Sarah Hagen (Prince Edward Island), Steve Leslie (Tennessee), Leeroy Stagger (British Columbia), Duende Libre (Washington), Mud Bay Jugglers (Washington), Megan Karls (Montana), Ian Sherwood (Nova Scotia), The Wardens (Alberta), Sundae + Mr. Goessl (Wisconsin), Acoustic Eidolon (Colorado), Phyllis Sinclair (Alberta), and Sam Platts and the Plainsmen (Montana).

MPAC's artist showcases make up the main event of its Annual Showcase & Conference, a business event that connects Montana venues and presenting organizations with performing artists from around the world. It is a unique opportunity for concert planners to see live performances and talk to artists and agents in preparation for planning and booking the next season's performances. Communities ranging from Sidney, to Gardiner, to Eureka rely on this event to bring high caliber performing arts experiences to their stages and schools.

**Showcase I – 9:00AM, Saturday, October 14, 2023**

**The Jazz Legacy Project (Georgia):** Created in 2015 after an epiphany Justin Varnes had while teaching Jazz History at Georgia State University, the JLP has an ongoing residency at the Velvet Note jazz club in Atlanta, where they have been selling out their performances for 6 years and counting.

**Mari Black Trio (Massachusetts):** Multi-style violinist and champion fiddler Mari Black has earned recognition as Scotland's Glenfiddich Fiddle Champion, 2-time U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, and 2-time Canadian Maritime Fiddle Champion. Currently touring nationally with her trio, Mari sweeps audiences away with dance music from around the globe.

**Pollo Loco (Montana):** Montana's own Pollo Loco formed in February of 1990 when 3 old friends gathered to share the warmth of a common love: Western Music. Pollo Loco (Poy-o-Looco) (Spanish: Chicken Crazy) has received acclaim for their pure harmonies, warm western sound and "off the cuff" humor that endears them to audiences wherever they perform.

**Tomas Kubinek (Massachusetts):** Described as a "Physical Poet and Verbal Acrobat," Tomáš Kubínek has appeared in over 30 countries as a featured solo artist at theaters, opera houses, and international festivals.

Mr. Kubínek is the recipient of numerous international awards including The Moers Comedy Prize from The International Comedy Arts Festival in Germany, The Schneestern Award from the International Festival of Humor in Arosa, Switzerland, and The Samuel Beckett Theatre Award from The Dublin Theater Festival in Ireland.

Ollee Owens (Alberta): With a lyrical mastery that speaks on all of life's moments paired with a dynamic voice that reveals a well-travelled soul and the burning embers of passion within, Calgary-based artist, Ollee Owens is a musical force of nature. Ollee has played stages across Alberta from the Badlands Amphitheatre's Roots Blues and BBQ Fest and the Stettler Summer concert series, to Downtown Calgary's Stephen Avenue live, the King Eddy, Festival Hall, Ironwood, and the Blues Can.

Sarah Hagen (Prince Edward Island): Awarded as Artist of the Year by Ontario Contact and the BC Touring Council, Sarah Hagen brings to the stage her unique combination of piano and humor. Playing "with great sensitivity and heart" [Vernon Morning Star], critics rave: "Her comic timing is as solid as her musical meter." [Edmonton Journal]

### **Showcase II – 12:30PM, Saturday, October 14, 2023**

Steve Leslie (Tennessee): Steve Leslie has had a professional songwriting career for more than twenty-five years with songs recorded by Kenny Rogers, Mark Chesnutt, George Strait, Darryl Worley, Rhonda Vincent, Neal McCoy, Ricky Skaggs, Darius Rucker, and more. Steve currently tours with some of the best players in Nashville, presenting his own original songs in addition to well-known favorites in his show, "How Sweet It Is! Steve Leslie Sings James Taylor."

Leeroy Stagger (British Columbia): Since first making his mark on the Canadian independent music scene at the turn of the century, Leeroy Stagger has toured the world, both on his own and with the likes of Steve Earle, The Pixies, Modest Mouse, Evan Dando, Jason Isbell, Drive By Truckers, Josh Ritter, and Buffy Sainte-Marie. Leeroy Stagger is a winner of a Canadian Folk Music Award, a Western Canadian Music Award and the winner of the 105.3 The Peak's highly competitive Peak Performance Project in 2015.

Duende Libre (Washington): Duende Libre is an award-winning jazz trio whose original music combines jazz virtuosity with roots rhythms from Cuba, Brazil, and the Mediterranean into a "strikingly authentic blend". Each member has apprenticed with direct descendants and master musicians of these traditions and consider themselves disciples of their teachers.

Mud Bay Jugglers (Washington): The Mud Bay Jugglers formed 43 years ago and has since traveled the continent, performing thousands of shows at festivals, colleges, and theaters. They have developed a unique performance style that combines impossible looking juggling with precise choreography, physical comedy, and theatrical flourishes. Like fine wine (and facial hair) their show has grown richer and fuller over the years.

Megan Karls (Montana): Violinist Megan Karls lives in Montana, where she performs as Co-Concertmaster of the Great Falls Symphony and with their resident ensemble, the Cascade String Quartet. In her October showcase, Megan shares new classical music written for her by Montana composers. Demystifying the notion that classical music was all composed hundreds of years ago in faraway lands, her program will warm the hearts of audiences young and old, while showcasing sounds inspired by the vast beauty of Montana.

Ian Sherwood (Nova Scotia): Armed with a saxophone, guitar, looping pedal, and a voice that won him a Canadian Folk Music Award for contemporary singer of the year, Ian Sherwood has charmed his way across

Canada, the US, Australia, and the UK with his unique brand of genre-shifting music and stage show. A natural storyteller with a timeless sound, his influences are some of the best folk/pop/country singer-songwriters: from Springsteen to Tom Petty to Blue Rodeo.

### **Showcase III – 3:30PM, Saturday, October 14, 2023**

**The Wardens (Alberta):** The Wardens' beloved multi-sensory performance—blending stories, songs and images—rises from the land they protect as national park rangers. In their second decade of performance, the Canadian Rockies trio have added western Canada's finest fiddler (Sott Duncan) to the group. With haunting three-part harmonies and chilling tales, fiddle further deepens their rich mountain canvas. The band has performed widely across western Canada and in the US from Alaska to California.

**Sundae + Mr. Goessl (Wisconsin):** Sundae + Mr. Goessl have been wooing audiences since 2014 with their “Fun & Fancy” music/G-rated comedy act featuring velvet vocals, swingin’ guitar, and everyone’s favorite: the melodica. With 1500+ shows under their belt, this fantastic act has earned a fair share of well-deserved attention, acquiring awards that some artists have taken decades to earn, including Best Duo Act from Seattle Weekly, Vocalist Of The Year from Earshot Magazine, Acoustic Ensemble of the Year in 2021.

**Acoustic Eidolon (Colorado):** Acoustic Eidolon (pronounced “idle on”) features Hannah Alkire on cello and Joe Scott on double-neck guitjo, an instrument of his own design praised by USA Today as a “beautiful harp-like sounding instrument ... like nothing we’ve ever heard before.” These masterful artists captivate audiences throughout the world with their signature “new acoustic” blend of Celtic, Americana, World & Flamenco musical influences. The duo has performed in Montana many times and graced stages worldwide with their soul-stirring and genre-bending blend of music.

**Phyllis Sinclair (Alberta):** Distinguished by Maverick Magazine as a "A Lady of Conviction" Canadian singer-songwriter Phyllis Sinclair taps on the conscience of the established ethos to flag distinctions and inequities under a brilliant banner of song. She has earned praise and honors from the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, Musicians with a Cause, Radio Canada International, and the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards.

**Sam Platts and the Plainsmen (Montana):** Sam Platts and the Plainsmen is an energetic Americana band from southwest Montana, focused on bringing traditional country and western swing to modern audiences. Sam’s songwriting is in the vein of country and western swing, and much of his inspiration comes from rural life, his family history in the West, and traditional country music. The group keeps a busy schedule and has had the honor of opening for acts like Asleep At The Wheel, Wayne Hancock, Dale Watson, and Corb Lund.

Visit [www.mtperformingarts.org](http://www.mtperformingarts.org) for more information.

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#### Montana Performing Arts Consortium

The Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC) is a non-profit coalition of Montana-based performing arts presenting organizations, artists, and artist agencies from throughout the U.S.A. and beyond. Founded in 1981, MPAC's mission is to promote and encourage the touring of the performing arts throughout Montana in a professional and cost-effective manner, provide support and technical assistance to performing arts presenters, and foster a favorable climate for both artists and presenters in Montana.