

Friday, April 23, 2010, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Arlo Guthrie



Guthrie Family Rides Again

with

Arlo Guthrie *guitar, vocals*
 Abe Guthrie *keyboards, vocals*
 Cathy Guthrie *guitar, vocals*
 Annie Guthrie *guitar, vocals*
 Sarah Lee Guthrie *guitar, vocals*
 Johnny Irion *guitar, vocals*
 ...and the kids

Presented in association with the Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse.

Cal Performances' 2009–2010 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

FOLK MUSIC ICON ARLO GUTHRIE is a legendary artist who shares timeless stories and unforgettable classic songs as he carries on the Guthrie Family legacy. With his singular voice as both a singer-songwriter and social commentator, he has maintained a dedicated fan base that spans the globe. A celebrated figure in American music, Arlo connects with communities far and wide leaving a lasting impression of hope and inspiration. His artistic ventures help bridge an often divided world through his powerful spirit of song, and his inimitable musical ingenuity forges to new creative heights as he perseveres through the times.

Arlo Guthrie left the major record label system in 1983 to fully embrace life as an independent artist, bringing his thriving career into the hands of a family-run business with the launch of his own label, Rising Son Records. Currently operated by his two daughters, Annie and Cathy Guthrie, Rising Son debuted with the release of Arlo's *Someday* (1986). Since its inception, Rising Son has served as a family label housing Arlo's complete catalogue as well as albums by Pete Seeger & Arlo Guthrie, Sarah Lee Guthrie & Johnny Irion, Abe Guthrie and his band Xavier, Folk Uke (Cathy Guthrie and Amy Nelson, daughter of Willie Nelson), plus the soundtrack to *Woody Guthrie Hard Travelin'* and a tribute CD to the influential banjo player, Derroll Adams.

In Times Like These (2007), one of Rising Son's most recent releases, features Arlo alongside the University of Kentucky Symphony Orchestra. The album marks the culmination of his work with 27 different symphony orchestras and more than 40 live concerts. His show at Boston Symphony Hall, conducted by Keith Lockhart, was recorded and aired on PBS's *Evening at Pops*. In 2001, the Fourth of July celebration with the Boston Pops was broadcast live by A&E. A compelling collection of original songs and select American classics performed by Arlo and a full orchestra, *In Times Like These* was released on vinyl in fall 2009.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of Woodstock, Rising Son released *Arlo Guthrie: Tales of '69*. Recorded just prior to Woodstock, the recently discovered lost tape highlights Arlo live in concert in Long Island, New York, and

features nine tracks, including an epic 28-minute talking blues tale as well as three previously unrecorded songs.

When not at home in Washington, Massachusetts, hanging out with family and friends, Arlo tours the world. "Guthrie Family Rides Again" marks the second North American tour featuring Arlo on stage with his children and grandkids; in 2006, they traveled together in the "Guthrie Family Legacy Tour." Arlo comments, "It's really fun and an adventure to hit the road as a family. We get to travel together to all these wonderful cities. My parents always had a dream of doing this, but they never had the chance to pursue it. We've always been family oriented, and it's a great excuse to get everybody out of the house."

In 2005, as part of a Guthrie Foundation sponsored tour, the family rode the Amtrak City of New Orleans train from Chicago to New Orleans, stopping along the way to perform benefit concerts. Arlo Guthrie & Friends' "Ridin' on the City of New Orleans" has raised more than \$140,000 in cash and garnered hundreds of replacement instruments for musicians suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Arlo's ambitions have always included various community projects in addition to his artistic pursuits. In 1991, he purchased the old Trinity Church near Stockbridge, Massachusetts, which is now home to The Guthrie Center, named for his parents, and The Guthrie Foundation. The Guthrie Center is a not-for-profit interfaith church foundation dedicated to providing a wide range of local and international services. The Guthrie Foundation is a separate not-for-profit educational organization that addresses issues such as the environment, health care, cultural preservation and educational exchange.

"Guthrie Family Rides Again" features three generations of Guthries, including Arlo's son Abe, who has contributed keyboards and backing vocals to his father's live shows since the 1980s. His daughters, Cathy, Annie and Sarah Lee Guthrie, all of whom have their own bustling music careers, will sing and accompany on acoustic guitars. Sarah Lee's musical partner and husband, Johnny Irion, leads songs and lends his stalwart guitar playing.

The youngest generation of Guthrie kids join the fun on select songs.

Along with Arlo's standards, these concerts spotlight a selection of unpublished Woody Guthrie lyrics recently put to music by such distinguished artists as Billy Bragg, Wilco, Eliza Gilkyson, Janis Ian, Wenzel, The Klezmatics and others.

To commemorate Arlo and his family's imprint on American culture and ongoing social and musical influence, the Guthrie Family was featured in the November 2007 issue of *Vanity Fair* as part of the "Music Portfolio Series on Folk Legends," a series featuring leaders in different musical genres.

If you have attended an Arlo Guthrie concert in the past 20 years, it is likely you have seen **Abe Guthrie** (*keyboard, vocals*)'s great smile, and heard his adept and tasteful keyboard accompaniment along with his powerful supporting vocals. In a recent interview Arlo said of his son, "Abe is a great musician and covers the bass for me, and whatever else I need." It is rare to see an Arlo show without Abe by his side. A natural musical talent, Abe at age three traded another neighborhood boy his Big Wheel for a keyboard. At age 11, he was kicked out of a piano lesson for playing rock music. Abe's first paying job at 15 was as David Bromberg's guitar tech.

Abe started performing professionally with his father in the early 1980s, playing transformative keyboard solos during his father's concerts with Shenandoah. Displaying his sense of humor, Abe would occasionally show up on stage wearing spikes and chains. In the 1980s, he founded Xavier with fellow bandmates Randy Cormier and Timothy Sears. Over the years, various forms of Xavier have backed up Arlo on the road. Their first full-length CD, *Full Circle*, was released on Rising Son Records in 2000, and Xavier is currently at work on a follow-up album.

A multifaceted artist, Abe Guthrie has demonstrated his versatility by having a hand in many music projects worldwide. His varied roles have ranged from performance and studio musician, engineer, producer, graphic artist and of course, Arlo's right-hand man onstage and off. Abe has recently worked with such artists as David Bromberg, Rory

Block, Bobby Sweet, Folk Uke (Cathy Guthrie and Amy Nelson's band), Johnny Irion, Sarah Lee Guthrie, David Grover and many others. Against his will and better judgment, Abe has also found himself performing with his sisters, Cathy, Annie and Sarah Lee, as the G Babes. This unique family ensemble can be heard each year at the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival in Okemah, Oklahoma.

Annie Guthrie (*guitar, vocals*) runs the family record label Rising Son Records and is Arlo's personal manager. Behind the scenes, she has been honing her own songwriting skills. As a single mother of two, she has been able to draw from real life experiences. As Woody says, "you can only write what you see," and she has taken that to heart writing songs that tell it like it is. Another facet of the Guthrie Family keeping tradition alive and well in the vein of Johnny Cash and the Carter Family, Annie has her hands full but has still found the time to write a sackful of inspiring songs.

Cathy Guthrie (*guitar, vocals*) always knew she would be in the music business but never thought she would be a musician. In some ways, she could be considered the Guthrie radical. Right after high school, she moved to San Diego, California, to attend college, then spent several years pretending to be normal working at various normal jobs, although she just didn't feel normal. In June 1996, her dad called her and asked her to come home and help run the family business, and she accepted. Cathy came home and dove head first into the shallow end of the folk music business, learning as much as any Guthrie could in six months—maybe a little bit more. She then moved to Los Angeles, where she set up a satellite office while her sister Annie anchored the main office in Massachusetts. Together, they run Rising Son Records as well as the affiliated companies that sustain the "family business."

In 2000, Cathy paired up with Amy Nelson (daughter of Willie) to form Folk Uke. With Amy on guitar and Cathy on ukulele, they began writing songs and playing for friends. In no time, they were getting offers for shows and they couldn't believe it. They weren't very good, but they were funny and quite charming. In 2005, they released their

self-titled debut CD, which has earned them a cult following. Their vocal harmonies and melodies are sweet and contagious, and their lyrics are explicit.

Sarah Lee Guthrie (*guitar, vocals*) was two years old when she made her singing debut as part of a children's chorus on Arlo's 1981 album, *Power of Love*. Although she grew up within a celebrated music family, it wasn't until after graduating high school that Sarah Lee discovered her love for making music. After tour managing for her father while he emceed the Further Festival in 1997, and subsequently moving to Los Angeles and meeting her songwriter-guitarist husband, **Johnny Irion** (*guitar, vocals*), Sarah Lee's path would forever change.

Sarah Lee and Johnny Irion have worked together as musical partners for more than a decade. In 2005, the duo released an essential collection of unadorned American roots songs on their critically acclaimed debut release, *Exploration*. A follow-up to their simultaneously released 2001 solo records, *Sarah Lee Guthrie* and Johnny's *Unity Lodge*, *Exploration* has received top accolades from both U.S. and international publications. Johnny also recently put out a second solo recording, *Ex Tempore*.

Last year, Sarah Lee and Johnny released two new projects, including Sarah Lee Guthrie & Family's *Go Waggalo* (Smithsonian Folkways) and *Folksong*, a live HD DVD capturing their unforgettable Valentine's Day 2008 show at Tales from the Tavern at The Maverick Saloon in Santa Ynez, California.

Sarah Lee and Johnny's music reflects the enduring tradition of age-old American folk music while embracing a fresh, poignant and up-to-date outlook on our often-turbulent times. At once timely and timeless, their energetic country rock and down-home, back-porch ballads touch upon contemporary social issues, and offer insights on an unsettled world amidst the sanctuary of a lasting, loving relationship. It is music portraying a coming of age of two vital and distinctive artists, each naturally bringing out the best artistry in the other.