SAN LUIS OBISPO, -- Considered “a songwriter’s songwriter” throughout the music industry, Grammy-winner John Prine brings his craggy voice, biting guitar and deadpan humor to the Christopher Cohan Center at 8 p.m. on Saturday, September 25, 2004.

Opening for John Prine is popular alt country singer/songwriter Mary Gauthier.

Cal Poly Arts presents Prine -- whose genius lies in his lyrics and the stories he tells -- as part of the new 2004/2005 season.

“My brother Dave taught me a chord...and from there, it was me sitting there alone in a room singing to a wall,” Prine remembers. He then adds with his characteristic style of understatement, “The wall seemed to like it.”

Loyal audiences and music critics around the country have been “liking” his style for decades.

With the encouragement of fellow musician Kris Kristofferson, Prine penned his 1971 self-titled debut album for a national label. The release was praised by critics around the country.

Throughout eight albums and two record companies, Prine continued refining his voice and attracting fans who closely identified with his emotional sharp shooting.

Says Prine: “It’s a great feeling when you put something in a song and other people say that’s exactly how they feel. That’s the most gratifying thing about songwriting for me.”
Among the songs that Prine wrote are such classics as “Please Don’t Bury Me,” “Fish and Whistle,” “Paradise,” “Sam Stone,” and “Souvenirs.” There were also more humorous, often ironic offerings such as “Dear Abby,” “Sabu Visits The Twin Cities”, “Illegal Smile”, and even “Christmas In Prison.”

The artist’s special musical visions and personal integrity attracted Bette Midler to cover Prine’s “Hello In There,” Bonnie Raitt to adopt “Angel From Montgomery” as her own, and the numerous country artists such as Tammy Wynette and Johnny Cash to release their own versions of “Unwed Fathers.”

After moving to Nashville in the early 1980’s, Prine formed Oh Boy records and became a record company executive.


Prine won a Grammy for 1991’s “The Missing Years,” which featured appearances by Bruce Springsteen and Tom Petty and became one of his best selling albums to date.


1999 saw the release of the Grammy-nominated “In Spite Of Ourselves,” an album comprised of classic country “lovin’, leavin’, and cheatin’” songs, featuring duets with Lucinda Williams, Trisha Yearwood, Melba Montgomery, Emmylou Harris, Dolores Keane, Patty Loveless, Connie Smith, and Fiona Prine.

“Souvenirs,” released in 2000, is a group of re-recordings of many of Prine’s classic tunes.

Oh Boy Records has recently released its first DVD Video project, “John Prine Live from Sessions at West 54th,” which includes his entire PBS hour-long special, as well as outtakes and an extensive interview.

Opening for the Cal Poly Arts concert is special musical guest Mary Gauthier, known for introducing audiences to characters whose moral qualities are tied to spiritual struggles with cords that are thin, frayed, and well-worn.

Dubbed the “People's Heart of Alternative Country” by Ireland’s media after a recent European tour, that sentiment is shared by audiences everywhere Gauthier tours -- in the U.S., Europe, and most recently, on festival stages throughout Canada.

Gauthier's third CD, “Filth & Fire,” appeared on many of 2002’s "Top CD's of the Year” lists across the country. Jon Pareles of the New York Times ranked the album as his No. 1 Independent Album of the Year.
"Unflinching honesty makes ‘Filth & Fire’ a triumph, the best singer-songwriter album of the year," reported No Depression after the album's release.

Wrote the Washington Post: "’Filth & Fire’ should establish her as one of the finest artists in the whole alt country field."

Tickets for the performance range from $36 - $48, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order on-line at www.pacslo.org.

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For audio and video samples of Cal Poly Arts events, visit www.calpolyarts.org.

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