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Legendary Joe Cocker To Play Cohan Center Aug. 26

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- With four decades' worth of music and a career still going strong, legendary pop-rocker Joe Cocker will bring his greatest hits grand tour to the Christopher Cohan Center at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, August 26, 2003.

Cal Poly Arts presents Joe Cocker and his stage band as part of the Cal Poly Arts 2003 Center Stage Summer celebrity series. Some of the hits audiences may look forward to include "I'll Cry Instead," "Up Where We Belong," "You Are So Beautiful," and "When the Night Comes."

Joe Cocker is considered to be one of the truly great rock voices of all time. In 1964, the British-born Cocker released his first single -- a cover of The Beatles' "I'll Cry Instead" -- and built up a large following in England.

He ventured to France for a two month stint playing on American airbases and the French dubbed him "Le Petit Ray Charles."

Cocker's first television appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show" in 1969 garnered him legions of American fans. Life Magazine called him "the voice of all those blind criers and crazy beggars and married men who summon up a strength we'll never know to bawl out their souls in the streets."

Soon Cocker was singing at all the major rock festivals of that summer, culminating in the filmed triumph of Woodstock before half a million people.

Of his ensuing hit album, "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," Cocker has said: "My thoughts were off to Venus, heading for outer space." Along with Leon Russell, Cocker toured forty-eight cities in fifty-six days. After the exhausting tour, Cocker ended up, in his own words, "in a heap in Los Angeles, very disillusioned with the rock business."

In 1970, Cocker had sold $3 million worth of records in America alone. His first three albums went Platinum and Playboy Magazine voted him "Number One Vocalist" in their annual jazz and rock poll.

Throughout the next decade, Cocker continued making albums and delivering hit singles like "Guilty," "The Moon's A Harsh Mistress," and "You Are So Beautiful."

In the early 1980's, inspired by Cocker, the Crusaders wrote and performed "I'm So Glad I'm Standing Here
Today" which Cocker sat in on. Cocker received a standing ovation when he sang the song at the 1992 Grammy Awards.

His duet with Jennifer Warnes on "Up Where We Belong" -- the theme from the movie "An Officer and a Gentleman" -- brought an appearance at the 1993 Oscar Awards ceremony and produced a hit worldwide, garnering Cocker his first "Number One" song in America.

Cocker has also sung theme songs for the films "9 1/2 Weeks," "Harry and The Hendersons," "Bull Durham," and "An Innocent Man."

His albums have been very successful: "Cocker," "Unchain My Heart" and "One Night Of Sin" all turned Platinum. His 1991 album. "Night Calls," with the title single penned by Jeff Lynne, turned Gold across Europe within weeks of its release.

Cocker has performed at many prestigious international shows, including playing for British royalty at the "Prince's Trust Gala," "Nelson Mandela's Birthday Concert," and "Konzert for Berlin" that celebrated the breaching of the Berlin Wall. He also played the inauguration ceremony for President George Bush.

Joe Cocker has been called a survivor, a star and a rock legend. After more than twenty-five years on the road, he has no plans of retiring.

"As long as being on stage is fun," says Cocker, "as long as I enjoy that part and still get a buzz out of performing, I'll keep going out there."

Tickets for the Center Stage performance are $48 & $54 and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Center Ticket Office from 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.

Program Partner: The Beach 95.3 FM

Tickets are also on sale for the remaining Cal Poly Arts Center Stage Summer events performing at the Christopher Cohan Center, which include An Evening With Dave Brubeck, featuring his renowned Dave Brubeck Quartet, on Friday, August 29, and premier Broadway vocalist Audra McDonald on Friday, September 12.

For audio and video samples of all Cal Poly Arts events, including the new Cal Poly Arts 2003/04 performing arts series, please visit www.calpolyarts.org.

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