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Grammy Winner Emmylou Harris Plays the PAC Sept. 28

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – Billboard magazine has called 11-time Grammy-winner Emmylou Harris “a truly venturesome, genre-transcending pathfinder.”

On Wednesday, September 28 at 8 p.m. in the Christopher Cohan Center, Cal Poly Arts presents Emmylou Harris with special guest Buddy Miller in a concert featuring a mix of Harris' classic hits and original music.

During her 33-year career, Emmylou Harris has been hailed as a major figure in several of America’s most important musical movements. A steadfast supporter of roots music and a skilled interpreter of compelling songs, Harris also has been associated with a diverse array of admiring collaborators.

With a myriad of Gold and Platinum albums and a sound uniquely her own, Harris’ contributions to country-rock, the bluegrass revival, folk music, and the Americana movement are widely lauded.

Her 1995 Grammy-winning “Wrecking Ball” was a watershed album for her, combining several world-music elements with acoustic instruments, driving percussion, and a folk/roots flavor.

The new style would evolve on a number of Harris' subsequent releases, including 1998’s “Spyboy,” 1999’s “Western Wall” (a collaboration with Linda Ronstadt), 2000’s “Red Dirt Girl” and 2003’s “Stumble Into Grace.”

Harris took up guitar as a teenager inspired by the folk music of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, and Judy Collins. “Starving-artist stints” in Greenwich Village and Nashville led to regular club work in Washington D.C., where country-rock visionary Gram Parsons discovered her and brought her to Los Angeles to become his duet partner in 1972.

Harris emerged as a solo star with "Pieces of the Sky" in 1975. The album electrified the country-music world, becoming the first of her eight consecutive Gold or Platinum records. Her next three releases made her an unquestioned country-rock leader; she made country music “hip” and brought it to a vast youth market for the first time.

She then led the way back to neo-traditionalist sounds with 1979's "Blue Kentucky Girl." The following year’s “Roses In the Snow” paved the road toward the bluegrass revival.

By the 1990s, Harris took a leading role in yet another musical revolution—the Americana movement that gave country music its “alternative” wing. She reinvented her sound with the acoustic band The Nash Ramblers and honored one of country music’s most legendary concert halls with the Grammy-winning “Live at the Ryman” CD of 1991.

She has recorded with diverse artists such as The Band, Johnny Cash, Elvis Costello, Bright Eyes, Bob Dylan, Little Feat, Tammy Wynette, Neil Young, Bill Monroe, Lyle Lovett, Roy Orbison, Bonnie Raitt, Garth Brooks, Lucinda Williams, and George Jones.

Stars such as Ricky Skaggs, Vince Gill, Rodney Crowell, Jon Randall, and The Whites have emerged from the ranks of her bands.

Billboard magazine honored Emmylou Harris with its prestigious Century Award in 1999, “…to acknowledge the uncommon excellence of (her) still-unfolding body of work.”

In July, 2005, Harris’ first single-CD career retrospective was released by Rhino Records. “Heartaches and Highways: The Very Best of Emmylou Harris” reflects on the more than 30 years she has been performing, beginning with her duet with Gram Parsons that brought her to the forefront as singer -- “Love Hurts” -- and ending with a new recording, “The Connection.”
The Cohan Center performance also features longtime bandmate Buddy Miller, who is a skilled producer and emotive songwriter, widely recognized as one of the best guitar players in Nashville.

Miller has done session work on albums by Jim Lauderdale, Victoria Williams, and Trisha Yearwood and has earned praise from fellow greats like Steve Earle, who has called Miller “the best country singer working today.”

In Nashville, Miller’s songwriting also garnered major attention, with artists like the Dixie Chicks, Lee Ann Womack, and Brooks and Dunn cutting Miller-penned songs.

With a career spanning six albums -- including the Grammy-nominated “Buddy and Julie Miller” -- Miller’s most recent release, “Universal United House of Prayers,” has its soul firmly planted in the traditions of gospel and also in the roots-country music for which Miller is known.

Tickets for the performance range from $52 - $64, 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.

Sponsored by Daniel and Kathryn Rider, KCBX 90.1 FM, and the Foundation for the Performing Arts Center.

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