



## 'Ranky Tanky' to open Black Box Concert Series in Athens Aug. 25

### Special to the Banner

Athens Area Council for the Arts introduces a diverse lineup of performers offering something for everyone in its 38th performance season.

AACA is bringing all performances home to the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater presenting five concerts by professional touring artists in its Black Box Concert Series. The Black Box Concert Series is sponsored by the Tennessee Arts Commission.

• Gullah group, Ranky Tanky, opens the concert series on Aug. 25. "Gullah" is a West African word meaning "a people blessed by God." "Ranky Tanky" translates loosely as "Work It" or "Get Funky!"

In this spirit, the Charleston, S.C., based quintet revives a "heartland of American music" born in their own backyards. From playful game songs to ecstatic shouts, from heartbreaking spirituals to delicate lullabies, the musical roots of Charleston are "rank" and fertile ground from which these contemporary artists are grateful to have grown.

• Brother Duo The Cactus Blossoms are known for bringing timeless sound to the modern era and on Sept. 15, will bring it to the Black Box. By infusing

elements of early rock-'n'-roll and classic country, The Cactus Blossoms have created a sound that is both timeless and contemporary, accompanied by thoughtful lyrics and soaring harmonies.

The duo shines a spotlight on the time-honored tradition of blood harmony, best illustrated by artists such as The Everly Brothers or The Carpenters.

• Folk's rising star Joan Shelley takes the stage Nov. 10. Backed beautifully by guitarist, Nathan Salsburg, Shelley's music mixes the sound and feel of down-to-earth Appalachian folk music, airier U.K. folksingers, and soothing conversations with an understanding friend. She has recently been on the cover of magazines such as Acoustic Guitar and Rolling Stone.

• Jan. 26, 2018, brings David Gerald Blues Band back by popular demand. Gerald grew up to the sounds of the blues and R&B music in his hometown, Detroit, where his dad moved the family to pursue the American Dream.

Gerald started playing guitar at the age of 15, influenced by Prince and 80's rock guitarists. He rediscovered the blues and listened to the music of Albert King, ZZ Hill, BB King, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, to name

just a few. Year round, the band performs at clubs and festivals across the United States and his most recent album topped numerous blues and roots charts.

• Dead Horses, "Wisconsin Band to Watch in 2017," closes the series on April 26, 2018. Dead Horses have cultivated a soulful roots sensibility beyond their years due to the award-winning vocalist that is front-woman and songwriter, Sarah Vos.

Raised on Bible hymns by her preacher father, her back story sounds more like that of an old bluesman from the Mississippi Delta than a young folk singer from Wisconsin. Despite their youth, Vos and collaborative artist and bassist Daniel Wolff have crafted a timeless sound that has won them 2016 Americana/Bluegrass "Best Artist" and "Album of the Year" awards and landed them on curated "must listen" lists.

Tickets are on sale now for all events in the Black Box Concert Series.

All Black Box Concert Series shows are in the Sue E. Trotter Theater at The Arts Center in Downtown Athens. Tickets and more information about this and other programs of Athens Area Council for the Arts are available





online at athen-  
sartscouncil.org, by  
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