

KATHY MATTEA

“Songs and the Season”

Drawing from her Grammy-winning collection “Good News”, and the critically acclaimed follow up, “Joy for Christmas Day”, Kathy Mattea has crafted a wide-ranging yet cohesive Christmas presentation that highlights the joyous message of the holiday with a thoughtful blend of new songs and old favorites, stretching stylistic boundaries to engage with a variety of her favorite musical influences.

From the organic reinvention of traditional carols like “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and “I Saw Three Ships”, to the Celtic harmonies of “Christ Child’s Lullaby,” to the dramatic “Mary Did You Know?”, Mattea’s “Songs and the Season” program displays her natural flexibility and hard-won artistic integrity. Whether she’s adapting the classic “Do You Hear What I Hear?” or arranging “There’s Still My Joy,” a new contribution from award-winning writers Melissa Manchester and Beth Nielsen-Chapman, Kathy brings a fresh ear and a natural, unforced eclecticism to this holiday musical experience. Her Christmas concerts are, she says, “more about the spiritual side of Christmas, and not so much about the holiday” – and the result is a performance that brings both joy and reverence to the Christmas celebration.

Twice named Female Vocalist of the Year by the Country Music Association, Kathy Mattea carved out a role for herself in the late 1980s and 1990s as an artist at ease both with country tradition and free-ranging innovation. In 1990, the West Virginia native won the first of her two Grammy Awards, earning the Best Female Country Vocal Performance award for her moving “Where’ve You Been,” co-written by husband Jon Vezner. With close to thirty Top 40 country hits, including 15 Top 10s and 4 Number One entries, 5 gold albums and a platinum-selling greatest hits compilation, she is among the most successful women in the genre’s history, yet her creative spirit has led her to explore musical territory extending well beyond its confines. Her recent recordings have intertwined Celtic, gospel, and bluegrass influences with the folk and acoustic music that have always served as her artistic anchor.

An early spokesperson and advocate for AIDS awareness and research, Kathy’s long history of activism has led her to bring public attention to several current environmental issues, including climate change and some mining practices in her native Appalachia.

The work and the music joined together to produce 2008’s Grammy-nominated CD, “COAL”, featuring songs from the coal country and culture of “her place and her people”. Her latest release, “Calling Me Home” on Sugar Hill Records, is a deeper and more personal exploration of the music of Appalachia.

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