

**For immediate use: Tuesday, June 23, 2009**

**Photos: To download photos, see end of story.**

### **Authors Smith, McCorkle to join musicians at festival**

CHAPEL HILL - Authors Lee Smith and Jill McCorkle, with Nashville musicians Matraca Berg and Marshall Chapman, will perform works that inspired the musical "Good Ol' Girls" at the North Carolina Literary Festival Sept. 10-13.

The performance will be at 8 p.m. Sept. 12 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the site of the festival. Venue and ticket information will be announced in August with the festival schedule.

"Readings and discussions by McCorkle and Smith, describing some of their best-known scenes and characters, will alternate with selections rendered vocally and on guitar by Berg and Chapman," said festival director Amy Baldwin. "The performance will be quite different from the musical, and those who attend will be in for a new treat. Each artist is amazing in her own right, and we are delighted and honored with their participation."

UNC communication studies professor Paul Ferguson, Ph.D., who adapted the writers' work for the stage, will introduce the Sept. 12 performance. Metro Magazine of Raleigh will sponsor the show.

"Good Ol' Girls" debuted as a work in progress at the first N.C. Literary Festival, in 1998. The New York Times called it "a feminist literary country music review." Positive reviews accompanied a 1999 production of the finished play in spring 1999 at UNC. Subsequent versions followed, one of which aired on UNC-TV, the statewide public television network.

Berg (whose first name is pronounced "muh-TRACE-ah") had the idea for the musical after reading novels by Smith. Berg approached her friend Chapman, who approached her friend Smith, who approached Ferguson and McCorkle, and a show was born.

The 2009 literary festival, on the Carolina campus, will include readings and discussions by more than 100 authors representing all genres of books, exhibits, children's activities and book signings and sales. The festival is an educational outreach project designed to promote reading and writing, spotlighting the literature of the American South.

The libraries of UNC and N.C. State and Duke universities, with additional support from N.C. Central University, organize and sponsor the festival, whose location rotates biennially among Carolina, N.C.

State and Duke. Since the festival began, it has been held in 1998 and 2002 at Carolina, 2004 at N.C. State and 2006 at Duke.

Smith, of Hillsborough, is retired from teaching creative writing at N.C. State University. She has written 11 novels, including "Oral History," "Fair and Tender Ladies," "Family Linen" and her most recent, "On Agate Hill" (Algonquin Books, 2006). Her novel "The Last Girls" (Ballantine Books, 2003) was a New York Times bestseller and won the Southern Book Critics Circle Award. She won an Academy Award in Literature in 1999.

Other honors include a Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Award for 1995-1997, the Robert Penn Warren Prize for Fiction in 1991, the North Carolina Award for Fiction in 1984, O. Henry Awards in 1979 and 1981 and two Sir Walter Raleigh Awards, for "Oral History" in 1983 and "Fair and Tender Ladies" in 1989.

Carolina alumnus and North Carolina native McCorkle, a former student of Smith's, teaches creative writing at N.C. State. She has written five novels - including "July 7," "Ferris Beach" and "Carolina Moon" - and three short story collections including "Crash Diet," with a fourth due in September, "Going Away Shoes."

Her work has appeared in The Atlantic, Ploughshares, Best American Short Stories, New Stories from the South and other publications. A recipient of the New England Book Award, the John Dos Passos Prize and the North Carolina Award for Literature, she has taught creative writing at UNC, Bennington College and Tufts, Harvard and Brandeis universities.

Besides Deana Carter's No. 1 hit "Strawberry Wine" in 1996, Berg wrote hits including "The Last One to Know," recorded in 1987 by Reba McEntire; "XXX's and OOO's, 1994, Trisha Yearwood; "Wild Angels," 1996, Martina McBride; and "If I Fall You're Going Down With Me," 2001, the Dixie Chicks. Others who have recorded Berg compositions include Clint Black, Faith Hill, Randy Travis and Keith Urban.

Berg also records and tours. Her first solo album, "Sunday Morning to Saturday Night" (Rising Tide) debuted in 1997 and was followed by "Lying to the Moon and Other Stories" (RCA, 1999). Her first studio album in 10 years will be released this summer.

Songwriter, author and performer Chapman has made 10 albums and had her compositions recorded by artists including Jimmy Buffett, Joe Cocker, Emmylou Harris, John Hiatt and The Uppity Blues Women. Her "Betty's Bein'Bad" was a No. 1 hit for country band Sawyer Brown in 1985.

Chapman's "Goodbye, Little Rock and Roller" (St. Martin's Press, 2004) was a finalist for the Southern Book Critics Circle Award and the 2004 book award from the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance. Her second book, "They Came to Nashville," is due next year and will feature stories about and interviews with artists including Harris, Bobby Bare, Rodney Crowell, Kris Kristofferson, Miranda Lambert and Willie Nelson.

**N.C. Literary Festival Web site:** <http://www.ncliteraryfestival.org/>

**Photo URLs: Smith:**

<http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/lee%20smith%20photo.jpg>

**McCorkle:**

[http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/authorportrait\\_2.jpg](http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/authorportrait_2.jpg)

**Berg:**

<http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/matraca%20berg%20photo.jpg>

**Chapman:**

[http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/marshallglasses%20300\\$20dpi.jpg](http://uncnews.unc.edu/images/stories/news/arts/2009/marshallglasses%20300$20dpi.jpg)

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