

Lincoln Center's

January 22–February 29, 2020

# American Songbook

*Lead Support provided by Holland America Line*

The Program

**Friday, January 31, 2020 at 8:30 pm**

## Cowboy Junkies

Margo Timmins, *Vocals*  
Michael Timmins, *Guitar*  
Peter Timmins, *Drums*  
Alan Anton, *Bass*

With Jeff Bird, *Harmonica and Mandolin*

*This evening's program is approximately 90 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.*

*This performance is being livestreamed; cameras will be present.*

*Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.*

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Endowment support provided by Bank of America

Corporate support provided by Morgan Stanley

**This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.**

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The Appel Room

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall

## American Songbook

Additional support for Lincoln Center's American Songbook is provided by Christina and Robert Baker, EY, Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Family Foundation, The DuBose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund, The Shubert Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Lincoln Center Patrons and Lincoln Center Members

Public support is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature

NewYork-Presbyterian is the Official Hospital of Lincoln Center

Artist catering provided by Zabar's and Zabars.com

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### UPCOMING AMERICAN SONGBOOK EVENTS IN THE APPEL ROOM:

*Saturday, February 1 at 8:30 pm*

**Joe Iconis**

*Wednesday, February 12 at 8:30 pm*

**iLe**

*Thursday, February 13 at 8:30 pm*

**Roomful of Teeth**

*Friday, February 14 at 8:30 pm*

**Brandon Victor Dixon**

*Saturday, February 15 at 8:30 pm*

**Our Lady J**

*Wednesday, February 26 at 8:30 pm*

**An Evening with Natalie Merchant**

*Thursday, February 27 at 8:30 pm*

**Kalani Pe'a**

*Friday, February 28 at 8:30 pm*

**Ali Stroker**

*Saturday, February 29 at 8:30 pm*

**Martin Sexton**

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [AmericanSongbook.org](http://AmericanSongbook.org). Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 or visit [AmericanSongbook.org](http://AmericanSongbook.org) for complete program information.

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*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

*In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.*

# Songwriting in the Age of Reckonings

By Jim Farber

Thirty years ago, the Cowboy Junkies created a sound that drew heavily from the past. Their surprise hit album, *The Trinity Session*, connected with listeners by countering the slick and synthetic hits of the '80s with entirely live music that ambled through the root sounds of country, folk, and blues.

Now, three decades later, they've released an album that couldn't be more in step with the present. Titled *All That Reckoning*, the set reflects a time when reckonings have come to dominate the public conversation, whether they regard sexual harassment, racial bias, environmental threat, or the evolving definitions of gender. "All that was definitely on my mind as I was writing," says the band's chief songsmith and guitarist, Michael Timmins. "I knew this record would speak to this time."

Even so, the songs had a personal origin. "I'm at an age when people have to go through certain reckonings, whether that be in your relationship, with your kids, or with getting old," says Timmins, who turned 60 this year. "But, as I began writing about all that, political reckonings were beginning to creep in. The micro became macro."

The melding of those two not only formed the basis of the album, it informs the show the Cowboy Junkies perform this evening at American Songbook. A key song from the set, "When We Arrive," expresses generational anxiety over the wide divide between boomer-age views of the world and the fresh perspectives of millennials and post-millennials. "New ideas taking root/Everything unsure," goes a refrain from the song. "What if they cast us seaward/to find new land/What if we lose each other?/Will we be holding hands/when we arrive?"

Lately, Timmins has dealt with this anxiety on two fronts: regarding his kids, who range from 17 to 22 years old, and his dad, who's 93. "It's looking up, and looking down, and trying to figure out how the generations relate," he says. "Will we still be talking to each other when we get to wherever the hell we're going?"

A parallel anxiety, concerning contemporary politics, arises in "The Things We Do to Each Other." It deals with the manipulations many world leaders use to stoke power. "Fear is not so far from hate/So, if you get folks to fear/it only takes one small twist/To kick up a gear," reads a crucial quatrain.

The album's title track turns those reckonings inward, chronicling a romantic relationship as it falters. The song appears twice on the album, first as a brooding ballad, then as a psychedelic outburst. "We thought it was good to bookend the album that way," Timmins says. "We wanted to make sure people understood that there's a thematic concept to the record."

As timely as the theme may be, the music on the album isn't fundamentally different from the sort the Junkies started out with. They began back in 1985, in Toronto, with three siblings—Michael, his sister Margo on vocals, and their drummer brother

Peter—as well as bassist Alan Anton. They haven't had a single personnel change since. The band's self-distributed debut in 1986, *Whites Off Earth Now!!*, consisted almost entirely of covers, mostly written by blues mainstays like Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and Robert Johnson. "To us, blues is the core," Timmins says. "It's what underlies all good, modern western music."

Still, the way the band plays blues, and how they mix it with country, folk, and proto-grunge, has its own style. Throughout their career, the Junkies have always favored low volumes and a slow pace. "When the four of us get together, that's just how we play," Timmins says. "It's natural." The result has caused some griping. "When we started out, people would talk about edge and how we didn't have any," he says, with a laugh. "But if our music is quiet, it's also extremely intense."

Clearly the millions who bought *The Trinity Session* album agree. To Timmins, their breakthrough collection connected with so many listeners because "a lot of really impersonal recordings were being made at the time. A lot of the human characteristics of music were being left behind. With our record, you hear a bunch of musicians communicating—guitars talking to bass, talking to pedal steels."

Retaining that approach kept the band on both the Canadian and the American charts for 20 years. They experienced an especially productive surge between 2010 and 2012, when they released no fewer than four albums, all corralled under the tag "The Nomad Series." To Timmins, these sets "reflect the four sides of our personality. The first was very experimental. The second expressed our love for [songwriter] Vic Chesnutt. The third was our more psychedelic side. And the fourth was the singer-songwriter, folk side."

Creating four works in two years exhausted Timmins as a writer, which helps explain the six-year gap that preceded *All That Reckoning*, the longest fallow period in the band's career. When Timmins finally began to write again, a new generation of social and political ideas helped give him inspiration.

"I'm amazed what kids talk about today," he says. "They're things we could never consider, let alone talk about. Huge cultural, societal, and climate issues are on their minds all the time. The conversation is often 'we're fucked.' But there seems to be a little bit of movement towards 'we're going to make it better.' People are beginning to see that they can make a difference. That's where I feel hope."

*Jim Farber, the former chief music critic of the New York Daily News, currently contributes to the New York Times, Guardian, Entertainment Weekly, and many other outlets. He is a three-time winner of the ASCAP-Deems Taylor/Virgil Thompson Award for music writing.*

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# Meet the Artists



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## **Cowboy Junkies**

With ten critically acclaimed releases and more than four million records sold, the Cowboy Junkies have continued to create a distinctive sound, consistently making music on their own terms. The band started out in 1985 and released its debut, *Whites Off Earth Now!!* in 1986 on its own Latent Recordings label. Its second album, *The Trinity Session* (1988), was recorded with a single microphone in Toronto's Church of the Holy Trinity in one 14-hour session. It featured spare, lilting originals alongside Jennings, Williams, and Patsy Cline covers, as well as a haunting version of the Velvet Underground classic "Sweet Jane." Before long, the Junkies had signed to RCA Records, which re-released *The Trinity Session* to a wider audience and platinum sales. Their subsequent albums—*The Caution Horses* (1990), *Black Eyed Man* (1992), *Pale Sun*, *Crescent Moon* (1993), *Lay It Down* (1996, featuring the Top 20 Modern Rock hit "A Common Disaster" and earning Cowboy Junkies a gold record), *Miles From Our Home* (1998), *Open* (2001), and *One Soul Now* (2004)—chronicle the band's evolution, a process that guitarist Michael Timmins sees as gradual and organic.

In 1999 Cowboy Junkies restarted Latent Recordings and released *Rarities*, *B Sides and Slow*, *Sad Waltzes*, a collection of unreleased songs from their vaults. Since 1999, they have recorded the live album *Waltz Across America* (2000), which chronicles their tour through North America in support of the *Rarities* CD; *The Radio One Sessions* (2002) and *In the Time Before Llamas* (2003) from the vaults of the BBC and in conjunction with Strange Fruit records out of the U.K.; *Open Road* (2002), a double

disc set that included a DVD chronicling the band's world tour in support of *Open*, as well as a live CD of that tour, *Anatomy of an Album* (2004).

Cowboy Junkies have played in some of the most prestigious music venues in the world, including Royal Albert Hall, the Musikhalle in Hamburg, and Wolftrap in Washington, D.C., as well as legendary rock clubs CBGB and the Fillmore in San Francisco. Their music can also be heard in dozens of feature films (including *Natural Born Killers*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Silver City*, *The Good Girl*, *Play It to the Bone*) and television shows (*ER*, *Law & Order*, *Homicide*, *Six Feet Under*, *Dawson's Creek*, *Miami Vice*, *Jordan's Crossing*). They have also been asked to participate and have contributed recordings to numerous tribute albums honoring such luminaries as Townes Van Zandt, Neil Young, The Grateful Dead, The Beatles, Gordon Lightfoot, and Gram Parsons, among others.

## American Songbook

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In 1998, Lincoln Center launched American Songbook, dedicated to the celebration of popular American song. Designed to highlight and affirm the creative mastery of America's songwriters from their emergence at the turn of the 19th century up through the present, American Songbook spans all styles and genres, from the form's early roots in Tin Pan Alley and Broadway to the eclecticism of today's singer-songwriters. American Songbook also showcases the outstanding interpreters of popular song, including established and emerging concert, cabaret, theater, and songwriter performers.

## Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

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Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community engagement, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of thousands of free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers a variety of festivals and programs, including American Songbook, Avery Fisher Career Grants and Artist program, David Rubenstein Atrium programming, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Awards, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Lincoln Center Vera List Art Project, LC Kids, Midsummer Night Swing, Mostly Mozart Festival, White Light Festival, the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS, and Lincoln Center Education, which is celebrating more than four decades enriching the lives of students, educators, and lifelong learners. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Film at Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Lincoln Center Theater, The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, New York Philharmonic, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, School of American Ballet, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

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**For American Songbook**

Matt Berman, *Lighting Design*

Scott Stauffer, *Sound Design*

Paloma Estevez, *Company Manager, Contemporary Programming*

Roshni Lavelle, *House Seat Coordinator*



## Matt Berman

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Matt Berman is the resident lighting designer for Lincoln Center's American Songbook. He most recently designed the lighting for Kristin Chenoweth's *For the Girls* at the Nederlander Theatre. In the summer he designs in Provincetown for producer Mark Cortale's concerts and shows at the both the Art House and Town Hall. This past spring, Mr. Berman had the honor of designing the lighting and sound for South Florida Symphony Orchestra's remarkable production of *Porgy & Bess*, directed by Richard Jay-Alexander. This past summer he designed a small promotional tour of the U.S. with Meow Meow and Thomas Lauderdale of Pink Martini for their collaboration album, *Hotel L'Amour*. Additionally he has designed shows with Meow Meow for the London Philharmonic Orchestra and many other concert appearances.

Mr. Berman's international touring with stars such as Liza Minnelli, Kristin Chenoweth, Alan Cumming, Meow Meow, and Elaine Paige has allowed him to design for such iconic venues as Royal Albert Hall, the Paris Opera, Olympia Theater in Paris, Royal Theatre Carré in Amsterdam, the Sporting Club in Monte Carlo, The Acropolis, the famed amphitheater in Taormina, Sicily, Luna Park in Buenos Aires, the Sydney Opera House and, closer to home, the Hollywood Bowl, Alice Tully Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Other Broadway credits include Kristin Chenoweth's *My Love Letter to Broadway* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, the Tony Award-winning *Liza's at the Palace*, *Bea Arthur on Broadway* at the Booth Theatre, Nancy LaMott's *Just in Time for Christmas*, and *Kathy Griffin Wants a Tony* at the Belasco Theater.

## Scott Stauffer

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Scott Stauffer has been the sound designer for Lincoln Center's American Songbook since 1999. His Broadway design credits include *A Free Man of Color*, *The Rivals*, *Contact* (also in London and Tokyo), *Marie Christine*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Jekyll & Hyde*. Off-Broadway Mr. Stauffer has worked on *Mother Freaking Hood*, *Subverted*, *Promises, Hereafter*, *A Minister's Wife*, *Bernarda Alba*, *Third*, *Belle Epoque*, *Big Bill*, *Elegies*, *Hello Again*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *Pageant*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. His regional credits include productions at the Denizen Theater, Manhattan School of Music, Capitol Repertory Theatre, University of Michigan, Hanger Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Alley Theatre. His concert credits include many Lincoln Center galas, as well as the Actors Fund concerts of *Frank Loesser*, *Broadway 101*, *Hair*, and *On the Twentieth Century*. At Carnegie Hall he has worked with Chita Rivera and Brian Stokes Mitchell. As a sound engineer, Mr. Stauffer has worked on *The Lion King*, *Juan Darién*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *Carousel*, *Once on This Island*, and the original *Little Shop of Horrors*.