



**DON'T FENCE ME IN
MUSIC AND POETRY OF
THE AMERICAN WEST**
TOURING FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012

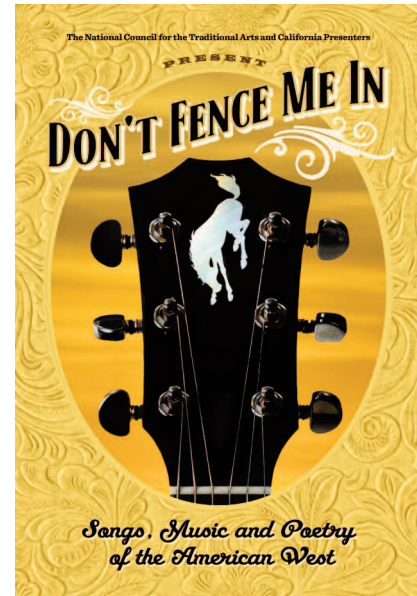
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P A G E

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Few places in the world capture the imagination like the American West. From the range, ranch, reservation and roadhouse, from the valley of the Rio Grande to the Bitterroot Mountains, *Don't Fence Me In: Songs, Music and Poetry of the American West* explores the region's celebrated musical and oral culture. Cowboy songs and poetry, high plains yodeling, western swing fiddle and vocal harmonies, lively Tex-Mex polkas and *rancheras*, and Northern Plains pow-wow drum and song are performed by an assemblage of exceptional artists – all working cowboys and other authentic representatives of today's western culture. Appearing several times throughout the performance in different musical roles and configurations that will surprise and delight audiences, these artists express the vitality, power and ever-evolving nature of tradition. This exciting new tour is produced by the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) and presented in partnership with California Presenters, Inc.

**TOUR ARTISTS: WYLIE & THE WILD WEST | NORTH BEAR
LOS TEXMANIACS | THE QUEBE SISTERS BAND | PAUL ZARZYSKI**



TOUR ARTISTS

Wylie & The Wild West

Cowboy songs and high plains yodeling



Photo: Michael Stewart

Five-thirty in the morning is not an hour generally claimed by musicians. Despite his successful career as one of America's most popular western entertainers, world-class western yodeler and singer **Wylie Gustafson** still gets up everyday to tend the livestock. It is what grounds him and is the backbone of his art. For Wylie, the ranch and the recording studio are inseparable. "The connection between ranching and my music is extremely close," he says. "Most of my songs are born out of the environment where I live and punch cattle. When I write an upbeat song, I make sure it's a song that a cowboy can dance to. When I write a more lyrical song, I make sure that a real cowboy will be able to relate to it somehow." Born and raised in Conrad, Montana where his dad was a rural veterinarian and rancher, Wylie now owns a ranch just down the road from where he grew up. That shiny belt buckle he wears wasn't won on EBay. Wylie is an accomplished cutting horse enthusiast who was the 2005 NCHA Western National Finals Champion. Wylie & The Wild West have traveled the world over, and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry over 50

times, performed at venues from Lincoln Center to the Houston Rodeo & Livestock Show, from the Kennedy Center to the Calgary Stampede. Wylie's was the original "Ya-hoo-ooo!" yodel of the Yahoo! advertising campaign, and he has a new instructional book and CD entitled *How to Yodel: Lessons to Tickle Your Tonsils*.

The Quebe Sisters Band

Western swing and Texas fiddling

Three lovely and very talented fiddling sisters from Fort Worth, Texas are creating quite a stir. Playing western swing, country and western, and traditional Texas fiddle tunes, **Hulda, Sophia** and **Grace Quebe** (pronounced KWAY-bee), ages 19, 22 and 24 respectively, bring a fresh, youthful energy to the rich musical traditions of the Lone Star State. They not only fiddle, but also sing, in three-part harmony, with an amazing vocal blend that it seems only siblings can achieve. (Imagine the Andrews Sisters joining up with Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys.)



Before any of them reached their teens, the Quebe sisters went to a fiddle contest near their hometown and fell in love with the sound of Texas fiddling. All three of them have been Texas State Champion fiddlers, and won titles at the National Old-Time

Fiddlers Contest in Weiser, Idaho. The Quebe Sisters are joined by their accomplished fiddle teacher and vocal arranger Joey McKenzie, who provides masterful rhythm guitar accompaniment, and by bassist Drew Phelps. The Quebe Sisters have performed with Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss, have appeared numerous times on the Marty Stuart Show, at the Grand Ole Opry, at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada and at the 2010 Berkshire-Hathaway Annual Shareholders Meeting, where even the "Oracle of Omaha" and ukulele player Warren Buffet couldn't resist joining the girls on "Red River Valley."

Los Texmaniacs
Tex-Mex conjunto

Emerging from San Antonio's vibrant Tejano music scene, Los Texmaniacs is one of the most exciting exponents of *conjunto tejano*. Melding the classic conjunto sounds – *rancheras*, polkas, waltzes, *cumbias*, *huapangos* and schottishes – with Texas rock, blues and R&B, this talented quartet is putting its own stamp on musical traditions that run deep in their own families and in south Texas communities. Born in the valley of the Rio Grande along the Texas-Mexican border, conjunto ("group" in Spanish) is a lively dance music that has its beginnings in the late 19th century when German, Czech, and Polish immigrants introduced the button accordion into Mexican working class communities



in southern Texas. By the early 1930s, the modern conjunto sound emerged as a boisterous and distinctive Tex-Mex fusion that revolved around the sounds of the accordion and the *bajo sexto*, a 12-stringed guitar-like instrument that

provided a bass line and rhythm. Founder **Max Baca** is one of the most dynamic bajo sexto players in the world. He started playing music at age five, and was performing in his father's band at nine. The bajo sexto typically provides rhythm, but in Baca's hands, it becomes a powerful lead instrument as well, capable of jaw-dropping lead runs as well the signature rock-steady, rhythmic "bajo" punch. **David Farias** began playing accordion in his brother's band at age eight. At 13, he was fronting his own band. Farias and Baca joined forces in 1997, and while grounded in the tradition, began to incorporate rock elements into their music. Rounding out Los Texmaniacs are **Lorenzo Martinez** on drums and **Oscar Garcia** on bass guitar and harmony vocals. Los Texmaniacs took home the 2010 Grammy for "Best Tejano Album."

North Bear
Northern Plains pow-wow drum and song

In pow-wows around the country, the intense, repetitive heart-beat of the drum and soaring falsetto accompany agile dancers in competition and in ceremony. One of the newest and most powerful of the Northern Plains drum and song is North Bear. Founded in 2003 by brothers Jermaine and Luke Bell of the Northern Arapaho tribe, North Bear's members represent tribes from across the Great Plains including the Oglala Lakota, Cheyenne and Paiute. The group has gained recognition as a foremost exponent of the Northern Plains "straight" or "traditional" singing. This powerful style employs falsetto and non-word musical syllables called "vocables" that increase in volume and tempo as the song progresses. While firmly rooted in Plains tradition, North Bear's music also represents innovation within American Indian tradition. The group is at the center of a resurgence of interest in the hand drum within the American Indian community.



Photo: Ship Howard

Hand drum competitions, in which the drums accompany love songs or topical songs, often humorous, with improvised lyrics, akin to rap, are an increasingly popular, new feature of Plains pow-wows. North Bear composes and performs hand drums songs with a youthful energy and style influenced by modern R & B and hip-hop that makes for exciting live performances. The group has traveled throughout the U.S., performing and competing in national pow-wows from Oklahoma to the Pacific Northwest, taking numerous prizes.

Paul Zarzyski
Rodeo Poet

Recipient of the 2005 Governor's Arts Award for Literature, Paul Zarzyski, Montana's rodeo poet laureate, has been "spurring the words wild across the open range of the page," as he puts it, for 35 years. When asked to describe himself, Paul Zarzyski (rhymes with "whiskey") says that he's a "rodeo poet, if any handle has to be hung on me at all." In fact, Paul is one of the best known, and best, of the "rodeo poets," a genre that his artistry both expands and transcends. Zarzyski grew up in a small town in northern Wisconsin where his father mined iron ore. At 22, he moved out to Montana to study under the well-known poet Richard Hugo in Missoula and within a year found himself pursuing his twin passions for poetry and a second "lucrative" career, bareback bronc riding. Paul spent more than a dozen



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years on the rodeo circuit, both amateur and professional, until a bad back (“the motor mounts rusted out”) ended his bronc riding days. He now makes his living, he says, borrowing the title of a James Dickey essay, “Barnstorming For Poetry.” Unlike most rodeo

poets, who use traditional rhymed verse forms, Zarzyski usually prefers free verse, although he has written some rhymed poems in the style of his mentor, NEA National Heritage Fellow Wally McRae. Nine collections of his poetry have been published. Recent works include *Wolf Tracks on the Welcome Mat*, winner of The Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, *Blue-Collar Light*, and *All This Way for the Short Ride*, which received The Western Heritage Award for Poetry from The National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

TOUR PACKAGE

Available for booking in the Western U.S. February/March 2012, The *Don't Fence Me In: Songs, Music and Poetry of the American West* tour package includes all costs for artists, management, travel and accommodations; a professional sound system; audio engineers; excellent promotional materials including poster artwork and beautifully designed educational program books for free distribution to all audience members. Thoughtful curation and production will help frame the program in ways that deepen understanding and appreciation of the artists and the traditions they represent. The tour is designed to play in venues of all sizes. As with all NCTA tours, *Don't Fence Me In* will include top quality K-12 programs, master classes and workshops, among others. NCTA will design outreach and residency activities tailored to the specific needs of each presenter's local community.

***Don't Fence Me In: Songs, Music and Poetry of the American West* is produced by the National Council for the Traditional Arts in partnership with California Presenters.**

Limited fee support available to California Presenters members.
www.calpresenters.org

About the Tour Producer

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is a private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. Founded in 1933, it is the oldest folk arts organization in the nation. Its programs celebrate and honor arts that are deeply rooted cultural expressions - music, crafts, stories and dance passed down through time by families, communities, tribal, ethnic and occupational groups. The NCTA stresses quality and authenticity in presenting traditional artists to the public in festivals, national and international tours, concerts, radio and television programs, films, recordings and other programs.

About the NCTA and California Presenters

Touring Partnership

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) has a 33-year history of producing outstanding national tours of folk and traditional artists. In 1989, at the urging of a California Presenters member who had attended an East Coast performance of NCTA's acclaimed “Masters of the Folk Violin,” the NCTA brought its first tour to California Presenters. This marked the beginning of a long, productive and valued relationship. The NCTA's commitment to artistic excellence, authenticity, careful curation, high production values and educational/community outreach remains steadfast. Since 1989, the NCTA has brought 12 of its diverse traditional arts tours to the West.

National Council For the Traditional Arts

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