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## **Keeping the Beat Launches at American Roots Music Festival with “Roots & Branches,” a Multimedia Carter Family Celebration**

*Funding for Rural Oregon School Music Programs Extends to Salem/Keizer, Jefferson, Cascade Districts*

Stayton, Ore. (September 26, 2007) – On Saturday, October 13, Keeping the Beat, a new nonprofit organization formed to support school music programs in rural Oregon, will present the premier of *Roots & Branches: A Multimedia Celebration of the Carter Family Tree* at the American Roots Music Festival. Proceeds from the event, taking place at the Turner Tabernacle in Turner Ore., will now extend beyond the North Santiam School District to benefit Salem/Keizer, Jefferson and Cascade district music programs.

The Carter Family celebration will feature John Carter Cash (son of June Carter and Johnny Cash), national fiddle champion and Oregon native Laura Cash and Dale Jett (grandson of A.P. & Sara Carter) in a rare “family reunion” musical showcase. The event will also debut never-before-seen footage from a documentary by Northwest filmmaker Beth Harrington about the Carter Family, including the last on-camera interview with Johnny Cash prior to his death. Newly added to the bill is Larry Perkins, a Nashville session musician who has appeared on four Grammy winning albums, including the “Oh Brother Where Art Thou” soundtrack.

The show will highlight the extensive influence of the Carter Family, “the first family of country music,” and their vast catalog of seminal recordings. It is written and produced by Keeping the Beat founder Steve Gehlen, along with Mary McDonald-Lewis, a Portland-area producer and writer who is also the voice of the OnStar navigation system and a co-founder of Readers Theatre Repertory, and Harrington, a Grammy and Emmy nominated filmmaker who has produced several programs on PBS, including *Welcome to the Club – The Women of Rockabilly*.

The American Roots Music Festival has raised \$14,500 for North Santiam School District music programs over the past three years. The formation of Keeping the Beat is aimed to extend financial support for school music programs in other areas of Oregon, to develop an educational school assembly program and other music education and fundraising activities. One such effort is the American Roots

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Music Festival ticket sales program, through which participating schools sell tickets to the event and keep 100% of the proceeds to benefit their specific music programs.

*Roots & Branches* is the featured performance for the day-long event's evening showcase, taking place from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. The event kicks off at 2:30 p.m. with performances from various local schools music programs, followed by afternoon acts the Total Experience Gospel Choir from Seattle and the Black Swan Classic Jazz Band.

Tickets are available online ([www.americanrootsmusicfestival.org](http://www.americanrootsmusicfestival.org)) and at select locations in Salem, Stayton and Albany. Those interested in attending are strongly encouraged to purchase tickets ahead of time as the 1,000 person venue is expected to be sold out.

Keeping the Beat is also seeking interested festivals, schools, performers, sponsors and donors, as well as volunteers for this year's event. For more information or to register for participation, visit: [www.keepingthebeat.org](http://www.keepingthebeat.org).

This year's American Roots Music Festival and the launch of Keeping the Beat are supported by a generous grant from the Doris J. Wipper Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation. Sponsors include SCTC, JELD-WEN, Norpac Foods, Holiday Retirement Corp. and West Coast Bank.

For complete details, visit [www.americanrootsmusicfestival.org](http://www.americanrootsmusicfestival.org).

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