

 Outlook

[Draft] (No subject)

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Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum



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**JUNE 25-28, 2025**

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**WYNONNA JUDD**

*Head of the Line Performers*

**DEL McCOURY BAND • SAM BUSH • THE DILLARDS**

**MOLLY TUTTLE • DANIEL DONATO'S COSMIC COUNTRY**

**THE STEELDRIVERS • MOUNTAIN GRASS UNIT**

**WILLIE WATSON • TOWN MOUNTAIN**

**AJ LEE & BLUE SUMMIT • BEN SOLLEE • BIG RICHARD**

**FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE • KODY NORRIS SHOW**

**TRAY WELLINGTON BAND • DIRTY GRASS PLAYERS**

**JOHNNY & THE YOOAHOOS • VICKIE VAUGHN BAND**

**SHERIFF SCOTT & THE DEPUTIES**

**BUFFALO WABS & THE PRICE HILL HUSTLE**

**KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS ALLSTARS**



## ARTIST FEATURE

### WILLIE WATSON

Soon before Willie Watson turned 18, he met God in an apple orchard. Or at the very least, he met there a man named Ruby Love, the older friend of a high-school buddy who had an enormous Martin guitar and a seemingly bigger understanding of the American folk songbook. Watson was existentially thirsty: A high-school dropout from upstate New York's Finger Lakes, he was fast on his way to his first heartbreak and in a first band that didn't take itself seriously enough. But that night in an apple orchard that had always seemed magical, at a graduation party for one of his bandmates and best friends, Watson and Love sang a few of those old songs together—"Worried Man Blues" and "Tennessee Waltz." It was the

first time Watson had cried while singing, the first time he had made the connection between making music and making sense of his life. He never saw Ruby Love again, but within months of that foundational 1997 rendezvous, he met the musicians with whom he'd soon start Old Crow Medicine Show. Call it revelation, fate, resurrection, whatever you will; for Watson, more than a quarter-century later, it was a duet with the divine.

As told in the talking-gospel masterpiece “Reap ’em in the Valley,” that scene is the transfixing finale of Watson’s self-titled debut as a songwriter and as a human at last making music to make sense of his life. Yes, Watson has released two albums since he left Old Crow Medicine Show a dozen years ago and since his long-term collaborations with David Rawlings and Gillian Welch. But those records, both titled *Folk Singer*, were sets of tunes he knew, interpretations of the songbook he has diligently mined since even before that night in the apple orchard. At 44, however, he feels that *Willie Watson* is his first-ever true album, having finally lived and lost and simply witnessed enough to know he has something to sing with his exquisite rural tenor. Watson has not abandoned those old songs entirely. He dazzles during a robust take on the forever-curious “Mole in the Ground” and treats “Harris and the Mare,” the standard of tragic Canadian singer Stan Rogers, with total tenderness. But by and large, these are his stories of heartbreak and hurt, backlit by the corona of hope that only growth can provide.

**TICKETS & INFO**

Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum  
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JAGOE HOMES  
AFTER PARTY STAGE

<p><b>WEDNESDAY</b></p> <p>BUFFALO WABS &amp; THE PRICE HILL HUSTLE</p> <p>SHERIFF SCOTT &amp; THE DEPUTIES</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY</b></p> <p>FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE</p>	<p><b>FRIDAY</b></p> <p>DIRTY GRASS PLAYERS</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY</b></p> <p>BIG RICHARD</p>
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June 25-28, 2025



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