



# GUY DAVIS'S GUMBO GRITS & GRAVY

## *Featuring Christine Balfa & Balfa Toujours*

Southern music, like the cooking, is a succulent blend of spices, fresh ingredients and cultural influences. Years ago French Acadians brought their language, culture and adventurous culinary tastes to the bayous and plains of rural Louisiana where, mingling with Creole (French-African) and eventually Scotch-Irish-Appalachian cultures, they created the thumping Cajun grooves that fill dance halls today. Meanwhile in nearby Mississippi, African-American sharecroppers applied ancestral West African rhythms and scales to European chordal instruments, blending western ballad and African Griot traditions into the blues. Blues pilgrim Guy Davis curates a musical exploration of these traditions, in a concert that is at once delicious and enlightening.

Handy Award winner Guy Davis has combined a theatrical legacy, as the son of stage legends Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, with a deep sense of the blues as the central trunk of African-American culture. He has portrayed Robert Johnson on stage, and also appeared on Broadway in *Mule Bone* (music by Taj Mahal) and in the highly acclaimed revival of *Finian's Rainbow*. At the same time, as *Playboy* magazine noted, "Davis reminds you that the blues started as dance music. This is blues made for humming along, stomping your foot, feeling righteous in the face of oppression and expressing gratitude to your baby for greasing your skillet." He has appeared at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and a host of international festivals.

The famous Balfa Brothers took their soulful music from the prairies of Mamou to the far corners of the earth. Balfa Toujours ("Balfa always") is making sure the name will maintain its place for generations to come. Led by Christine Balfa, daughter of the legendary Cajun fiddler Dewey Balfa, the group has taken generations of inspiration and created a vibrant sound all their own. Since coming together after Dewey's passing in 1992, they've grown from a band known for its youth and passion into pillars of the traditional music community not only in Louisiana but throughout the folk music world. It is this ability to unite it all and keep the soul intact that makes the band, in the words of critic Barry Ancelet, "the future of Cajun Music."

Offered jointly with Piedmont Talent.

