

ARTS

Songwriter, singer to play Hult

By Ming Rodrigues
Emerald Contributor

However she makes her music, Nanci Griffith draws not only on her musical roots but her literary ones as well.

She gleans from the folk, country, honky-tonk and soul music she grew up listening to as a kid in Texas, on the poetry that drifted through her family home ("My parents were Beat-generation people," she said), and on her favorite Southern writers such as Eudora Welty and Larry McMurry.

To appreciate Griffith is to appreciate the literary songs she writes and the vignettes of life they tell.

Hailed as "a songwriter's songwriter," Griffith also interprets other songwriter's material with success, particularly those of friends such as Tom Waits, Julie Gold and Vince Bell.

Years before the Persian Gulf war helped turn Bette Midler's version of her friend Julie Gold's song "From A Distance" into a hit, Griffith scored a Number One with it in Ireland in 1986. Actually, her record reached Number One in that embattled country a number of times, and helped her gain stardom there.

Her last album, *The Last of the True Believers*, was nominated for a Grammy for best folk album in 1984. Her songs have been turned into hits by such country artists as Kathy Mattea, and in Ireland by Irish stars Maura O'Connell and Mary Black.

Griffith's songs are known to have a wistful, poignant melancholy born of life on the streets and the road — honest, unassuming and soulful.



Courtesy photo

Nanci Griffith, known for her literary songs and the vignettes of life they tell, will perform Saturday at the Hult Center.

"On one tour we did a few years ago," Griffith said, "we were in hotels in downtown areas on the East Coast, in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Philadelphia was probably the worst, and it hit me real hard. We got into this habit where after a show, we'd take all the catered food from backstage and take it to a shelter for the homeless."

Experiences with the homeless and the less fortunate, and even of Griffith's own sense of loneliness living on the road are what her latest release on MCA, *Late Night*

Grande Hotel, is all about. The singer, whose voice has been described as a "blend of Kate Bush gossamer, Loretta Lynn twang and Woody Guthrie pith," said the album is a statement of what a pain it is to live in a hotel room most of one's life.

Griffith and her five-piece Blue Moon Orchestra will bring their show to the Hult Center on Feb. 22, at 8 p.m. Alabama singer-songwriter Tom Kimmel will open. Tickets, at \$15, are available at the EMU Main Desk or by calling the Hult Center box office at 687-5000.

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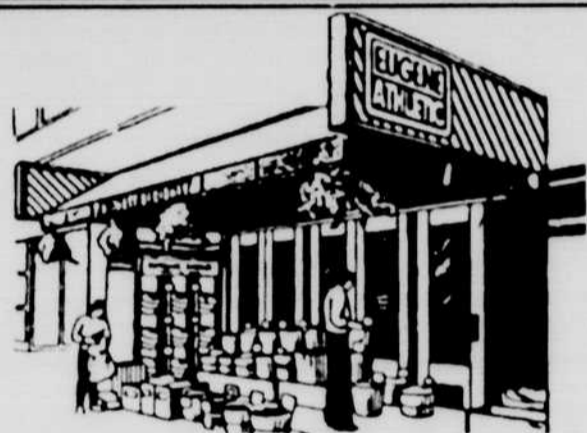


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