

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

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## Folk Icon Keeps Her Edge

More than 50 years after her debut, singer-activist Joan Baez maintains the charisma and political edge that initially made her a star.

Baez will bring her three-octave vocal range and trademark vibrato to Portland, Friday, Aug. 14, when she performs as part of the Oregon Zoo's summer concert series presented by NW Natural.

Baez has released more than 30 albums and recorded songs in eight different languages. In addition to her own body of work, she is known for her re-

◀ Joan Baez

markable interpretations of songs by artists such as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and especially Bob Dylan - whom she famously dated for several years in the 1960s.

Baez's most recent album, "Day After Tomorrow," builds on and interprets contemporary tales of social injustice by songwriters such as Tom Waits, Elvis Costello and Steve Earle.

"Joan Baez's voice is radiant and righteous," said Krista Swan, the zoo's events coordinator. "And with such a vast catalogue of great songs to draw from, she's sure to put on an amazing show."

## Remembering Sam Cooke

Soul, Gospel legend was ahead of his time

(AP) -- More than 40 years after his tragic, violent death, Sam Cooke is still known as the legendary soul and gospel singer who penned "A Change is Gonna Come," which found a new audience with the election of America's first black president.

But Cooke's brother, L.C.

DeCurtis, a contributing editor at Rolling Stone magazine.

"The language of the artistry coupled with a kind of vision of a better world is something the song stands for," DeCurtis said.

"Certainly his influence extends to contemporary artists. It would be hard to think of people like Alicia Keys and

sound that melded blues and gospel. He co-founded his own record label, SAR Records, in 1961, signing such artists as Bobby Womack, Johnnie Taylor and Billy Preston.

L.C. Cooke said his brother had formed his publishing company around 1959. Sam Cooke's contract with RCA Victor stipulated that after 30 years all of his masters would belong to him, his brother said.

Contemporary artists would do well to follow Cooke's path, said DeCurtis.

"To this day, artists struggle with the business aspect of their work. He signed artists and he wrote for artists. He did it in a time when it was much more difficult for artists, specifically black artists," DeCurtis said.

Unfortunately, Cooke didn't live long enough to realize the significance of his breakthrough, said DeCurtis.

At age 33, Cooke was shot to death on Dec. 11, 1964, at the Hacienda Motel in Los Angeles. Details of the shooting are still disputed, but the hotel's manager told police she killed Cooke because he threatened her.

An abbreviated life and the circumstances surrounding his death have not diminished his legacy. Last year, "Rolling Stone" ranked Cooke No. 4 on its list of the 100 greatest singers of all time, and he's in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

L.C. Cooke recalled being stopped at an airport a few years ago by a disc jockey, who told him his brother's music gets more airplay than any other deceased celebrity.

"Somebody is always giving something in his honor, and they call me to give interviews," L.C. Cooke said.



Forty years after his tragic death, Sam Cooke is a soul and gospel legend.

Cooke, says the late singer should also be known for his pioneering business acumen that put him years ahead of his time in the music industry.

Cooke was among the first black performers to own the rights to his music and to form his own recording and publishing company.

"If they look at it, Sam was first in everything," L.C. Cooke said. "All his masters belong to Sam, and that was unheard of. He was Motown before Motown was even invented."

President Barack Obama's rhetorical nod to "A Change is Gonna Come" after his 2008 election victory was a testament to Cooke's enduring significance, said Anthony

John Legend without Sam Cooke."

Born Jan. 22, 1931, Cooke was son of a Baptist minister. His mother was a native of Mound Bayou, Miss., a town founded by two former slaves. Sam Cooke was 2 years old when his parents and six siblings boarded a Greyhound bus to Chicago.

Cooke began his writing and recording career with the "Soul Stirrers" in 1951, making albums at Specialty Records. Tall and handsome with a smooth, melodious voice, Cooke drew crowds of swooning young women at gigs in auditoriums and larger venues that included the Apollo Theater.

After six years, he made the leap to secular music with a



Michelle Obama

## First Couple Best Dressed

(AP) -- Barack and Michelle Obama are edging out Hollywood stars on Vanity Fair's International Best-Dressed List.

The president makes the list for the first time in the magazine's latest issue, joining his wife, who has been named twice before.

No longer on the list is Angelina Jolie, although her husband Brad Pitt remains, based on a poll of fashion insiders. Other stars getting the honor are Penelope Cruz, Anne Hathaway, NBC correspondent Tiki Barber and James Bond star Daniel Craig.

The Obamas weren't the only stylish political dressers named. French first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy made the list along with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his companion, Diana Taylor.

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## Pie Contest at Peninsula Park

A pie contest and community celebration will take off when the second annual Portland Pie-Off takes place on Sunday, Aug. 16 at 1 p.m. at Peninsula Park, located at North Albina Avenue and Rosa Parks Way.

The event offers a chance

to meet other pie lovers, win fun prizes, swap recipes and eat pie!

Why pie? Pie is egalitarian. Pie stands for sharing. Pie is humble and Pie is versatile. Pie is community!

The rules are simple: make a homemade pie (or several pies)

and bring it along with your friends and family to the park to enjoy an afternoon. Participants are strongly encouraged to register online at portlandpieoff.com but in the spirit of pie, it's all very simple. Step up to enter your pie, \$5 donation per pie appreciated.

## Cocaine Contributed to Death

An autopsy report says cocaine contributed to the death of TV pitchman Billy Mays. The 50-year bearded TV personality died of a heart attack in his sleep. His wife found him unresponsive June 28 at their condo in Tampa, Fla. A release from the Hillsborough County medical examiner's office Friday said Mays had last used cocaine days before



TV pitchman Billy Mays died of a heart attack, his death.

The report said that although Mays died from heart disease, cocaine use was a contributing cause of death.

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