



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coastal Cohorts Kick Off Concert Tour in Asheboro

Asheboro— The Coastal Cohorts are celebrating the group's 25th anniversary with a statewide concert tour. The tour begins Friday, March 5, at the Sunset Theatre in Asheboro.

The Cohorts will be performing songs and stories from their popular musical *King Mackerel & The Blues Are Running* and the sequel CD *Wild Ponies* at concerts scheduled for Asheboro, Raleigh, Elizabeth City, Manteo and Wilmington.

Concert proceeds will benefit the N. C. Coastal Federation, a nonprofit environmental organization in Ocean in Carteret County. Tickets for the Asheboro concert are available at the Asheboro Cultural and Recreational Services Office at 241 Sunset Ave. and online at www.nccoast.org.

Sally Steele, development director for the federation and an Asheboro native explained why the tour is beginning in her hometown: "The Cohorts and the Coastal Federation want to make the 25th Anniversary special by bringing attention to North Carolina's spectacular coast. When we looked around for a place to start the tour, we decided on Asheboro and the Sunset Theatre. There are a number of Coastal Federation members here and it was an opportunity to bring attention to a great community project - like the Sunset Theatre. As a child, I spent many Saturday afternoons in the Sunset. I love coming back to it."

The Cohorts' original music celebrates life on the Carolina coast with a combination of ballads and upbeat tunes, flavored by humor and the poetry of the natural world. The band's talented musicians are Jim Wann on guitar, Bland Simpson on piano and Don Dixon on bass and other instruments.

"The Cohorts are thrilled to bring our music to coast lovers across North Carolina," said Simpson, who also serves on the federation's Board of Directors. "While we're all having a good time,

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we'll be helping out the Coastal Federation by raising funds and awareness about the need to conserve our beautiful rivers, sounds and seashore."

The late Clive Barnes, an arts critic for *The New York Times* and later for *The New York Post*, called the Cohorts "a pure, salt-watered delight," while Mary Cornatzer of Raleigh's *The News & Observer* described *King Mackerel* as "a musical Valentine to coastal life."

The members of the Coastal Cohorts have each been critically acclaimed over the years for their solo work.

Wann's Broadway musical was a Tony and Drama Desk Nominee for Best Musical and Best Music on Broadway, an Olivier Nominee for Best Musical in London and the longest-running musical in Chicago theater history. His new musical, *The People Vs. Mona*, which was written with Patricia Miller, has just been released on JAY Records.

Dixon of the rock band Arrogance produced *King Mackerel* and *Wild Ponies*. The celebrated singer-songwriter and record producer's other credits include working with REM, Hootie and the Blowfish, Marti Jones, James McMurtry and The Smithereens. His ninth and latest solo CD is *The Entire Combustible World in One Small Room*.

Simpson of the Tony Award-winning Red Clay Ramblers is the Bowman & Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor in the creative writing program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is also the author of the books *Into the Sound Country* and *The Inner Islands* and collaborator on the musicals *Diamond Studs* with Wann and *Kudzu* with Jack Herrick and the late Doug Marlette.

Concert proceeds will be used for the federation's restoration projects. The federation is the state's only non-profit organization focused exclusively on protecting and restoring the coast of North Carolina through education, advocacy and habitat preservation and restoration. Since its founding in 1982, the federation has worked with citizens to safeguard the state's coastal rivers, creeks, sounds and beaches and has protected or restored more than 50,000 acres along the state's coast. Its headquarters is in Ocean, between Morehead City and Swansboro, and it has regional offices in Wilmington and Manteo.

Other Coastal Cohorts concerts will be held March 6 at the Lincoln Theatre in Raleigh, March 26 at the Arts of the Albemarle Maguire Theatre in Elizabeth City, March 27 at Roanoke Island Festival Park in Manteo and June 15 at Thalian Hall in Wilmington.

For concert details visit the North Carolina Coastal Federation at www.nccoast.org or call 252-393-8185.