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Mariposa re-welcomes Steve Goodman

Updated third printing in hand, biographer Clay Eals brings music/literary workshops to festival that Goodman once played

The inspiring musical story of the late singer/songwriter Steve Goodman – who played the Mariposa Folk Festival in 1973, 1974, 1976 and 1978 – will be brought to life during the 2012 festival.

Veteran Seattle journalist Clay Eals, the author of the celebrity-filled "Steve Goodman: Facing the Music," will take part in two Mariposa workshops about the career of Goodman, one of the most mesmerizing entertainers of the 1970s and early 1980s. An updated third printing of Eals' 800-page biography, published by ECW Press of Toronto, will be released this month and will debut at Mariposa.

Eals will lead a reading/music workshop at 1 p.m. Sunday, July 8, 2012, featuring Goodman and Goodman-related songs performed by Canadian musicians James Keelaghan, Rob Lutes, Steph Dunn, Paul Court and Mike Hill. He also will take part in a literary workshop at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, July 7, 2012, with author/musician Dave Bidini, whose "Writing Gordon Lightfoot: The Man, the Music and the World in 1972" was published in 2011.

Eals' biography of Goodman — who is best known for writing "City of New Orleans," "Banana Republics," "You Never Even Call Me by My Name" (a co-write), "A Dying Cub Fan's Last Request" and "Go, Cubs, Go" and who was a familiar presence in concert halls, festivals and clubs and on radio and television — will be available for purchase throughout the festival.

The 2007 book's first printing sold out in eight months, and its second printing sold out in 2011. It won a 2008 IPPY (Independent Publishers Association) silver medal for biography.

Weighing in at 4 pounds, the book comes with a bonus option to download 18 tracks with songs written and performed by others in tribute to Goodman, including "Richer for the Time" by the late Toronto singer/songwriter Norm Hacking. The list price is $39.95 in both Canada and the United States.

With 400,000 words and 616 photos, including a 16-page color section, the large-format biography is a comprehensive look at the captivating, Chicago-based troubadour. It also is a portrait of an era and delves deeply into the social and political milieu of the baby-boom generation.

Eals interviewed more than 1,100 people for the book, ranging from musical celebrities to Goodman's most famous high-school classmate, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who performed with him in a variety show at their suburban Chicago school in 1964.

The late Studs Terkel, a best-selling author and longtime radio host, wrote the book's preface. Arlo Guthrie, who popularized "City of New Orleans" in 1972, penned the foreword.

Besides Terkel and Guthrie, the book's interviewees include John Prine, Steve Martin, Jimmy Buffett, Kris Kristofferson, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, Willie Nelson, Emmylou Harris, Randy Newman, Paul Anka, David Allan Coe, Judy Collins, Tom Paxton, Pete Seeger, John Sebastian, Leo Kottke, Gordon Lightfoot, John Hartford, Phoebe Snow, Jackie DeShannon, Marty Stuart, Maria Muldaur, Mimi Fariña, Tom Rush, Bobby Bare, Lily Tomlin, Michael Smith, Fred & Ed Holstein, Janis Ian, Bryan Bowers, Martin Mull, Chad Mitchell, Rosanne Cash, David Amram, Samantha Eggar, Tom Dundee, Howard Armstrong, Jim Post, Carl Reiner, Doc Watson, Jo Mapes, Len Chandler, David Geffen and Loudon Wainwright III.

Throughout his career, Goodman's music ranged from hilarious to touching to provocative, and he displayed his talent for impromptu performance in 1974 at Mariposa, when he Goodman began the composition of "Moby Book," a recounting of the Herman Melville novel "Moby Dick," during an "Improving Lyrics" workshop with composer/musician David Amram.

Goodman made Toronto a frequent stop in concert tours, playing Massey Hall, Maple Leaf Gardens, Ontario Place in the round and Yorkville's old Riverboat Coffeehouse. He also guested on several Canadian television shows.

A major theme of Eals' biography is living with the awareness of mortality, as Goodman did for his entire adult life. Diagnosed with leukemia at age 20 and not expected to live much longer, he managed to survive and thrive while privately, then publicly, fending off this fatal disease for more than 15 years.

Goodman was a popular presence four times in the 1970s at the Mariposa Folk Festival and was slated to return to perform in July 1984 but was too ill to do so, dying on Sept. 20 of that year.

Eals, 60, who has worked for four Northwest newspapers and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and taught community-college journalism, is the author of a 1996 biography of the child actress who played Zuzu in the 1946 film "It's a Wonderful Life." That book is titled "Every Time a Bell Rings: The Wonderful Life of Karolyn Grimes." For the past four years, he has worked as communication officer for a Seattle-area children's services nonprofit called Encompass.

The updated third printing of "Steve Goodman: Facing the Music" soon will be available for purchase at a discount rate at Eals' website. For more info, visit Eals' website, www.clayeals.com, and the ECW Press website, www.ecwpress.com, or e-mail Eals at ceals@comcast.net.