

KETCH & CRITTER

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 24 at 9:00pm

Ketch Secor, *fiddle, harmonica, banjo, and vocals*

Critter Fuqua, *slide guitar, banjo, guitar, and vocals*

Morgan Jahnig, *double bass*

PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.



KETCH & CRITTER: Ketch Secor and Critter Fuqua first met in the seventh grade in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The boys were 13 and began making mostly garage rock and roll. But within a couple

of years they had a small repertoire of mostly old-timey, country, and folk songs, and were developing as performers at open-mic nights at the Little Grill diner in Harrisonburg, Virginia. They were also writing songs of their own, some quite advanced considering their age. Secor wrote “Wagon Wheel” at age 17, and Fuqua wrote “Take ‘Em Away” at age 18. Secor heard a Bob Dylan outtake of an unfinished song from the recording sessions for the *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* movie soundtrack, and proceeded to finish and name it “Wagon Wheel.” When he went to copyright the song years later, Secor discovered that Dylan credited part of the lyric to bluesman Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup who, in turn, may have taken it from a Big Bill Broonzy recording. “In a way,” says Secor, “it’s taken something like 85 years to get completed.” He now shares a co-writing credit with Dylan for the song, and it has become one of the most recorded works by other groups in recent times.

Another singer on the Little Grill mic was Robert St. Ours, whose performances helped Secor set his mind on music as a career. The two would eventually form a band named the Route 11 Boys that spent the winter of 1997 crisscrossing the Canadian border, playing anyplace that would have them. After the breakup

of the Route 11 Boys, Secor attended college in Ithaca, New York, and invited Fuqua to join him there. In 1998 they formed a new band, the Old Crow Medicine Show, named to honor the tradition of minstrelsy, and busked their way across Canada and then back East, settling in the Appalachian Mountains outside of Boone, North Carolina. One day while they were busking outside a pharmacy in Boone, the daughter of folk-country legend Doc Watson heard them, and soon Watson invited them to perform in his annual MerleFest in Wilkesboro. This break led the band to Nashville in 2000, where they were embraced and mentored by musicians Gillian Welch and David Rawlings. The band made their Grand Ole Opry debut on the Ryman Auditorium stage in 2001, and Rawlings produced their first two albums. Their music has since taken them to leading stages—from the Telluride Bluegrass Festival and New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival to Bonnaroo and *A Prairie Home Companion*.

During a break in the band’s work in late 2011, Nashville’s *Tokens* radio program invited Secor to perform at Ryman Auditorium. He asked Fuqua, who had been away from Old Crow for some time, to join him for this performance. Intended to be a one-time engagement, the two old friends had so much fun that they decided to accept more invitations to play, including their first performance at Spoleto Festival USA. While this is Secor’s first performance at Spoleto, it is not his first concert. In 1985, he and his mother made a special trip to the Festival, driving from Aiken, South Carolina, in, as he recalls, a white station wagon. “I have always cherished my early childhood memories of that spring in Charleston,” he says, “and I am so thrilled to be returning this year. So is my mother, who will be in attendance.”