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ROBERT PLANT'S BAND OF JOY TO PERFORM AT MERLEFEST 2011

WILKESBORO, N.C. (February 8, 2011) — **MerleFest 2011**, presented by Lowe's and slated for April 28-May 1, has added legendary musician **Robert Plant's** new Grammy®-nominated project, **Robert Plant and the Band of Joy**, to the festival's lineup.

Robert Plant and the Band of Joy's eponymous album, released in the fall of 2010 and nominated for two Grammy awards, was roundly praised by critics. *Rolling Stone* stated that "Plant uses an 'A' list of country voices and players (Patty Griffin, Buddy Miller) and an inspired mix of vintage and modern songs," and the *Los Angeles Times* lauded Plant's embrace of "the ancient roots of country and folk music, a haunted place where broken hearts rarely heal and where restless spirits find little peace."

In concert, the band is also winning over the critics. "The concerts are an eclectic mix pulled together by the charm and force of Mr. Plant's personality, the wonder of his voice and his spirited band, featuring Buddy Miller and Patty Griffin on guitar, Darrell Scott on stringed instruments, Byron House on bass and Marco Giovino on drums," stated the *Wall Street Journal*. *The Boston Herald* declared, "The most versatile group of musicians Plant has surrounded himself with since Led Zeppelin, the band easily followed his detours into English folk, Delta blues and North African rhythms, while always helping him find his way back to his Americana foundation."

While originally known for his work with the legendary Led Zeppelin, Robert Plant has since put his wide-ranging musical talents to brilliant use on solo albums with Jimmy Page and in recordings with bands like The Honeydrippers, Priory of Brion and Strange Sensation. His performances have reflected his embrace of West Coast psychedelic rock, roots blues, African music and traditional folk. Plant continued to expand his horizons with 2007's *Raising Sand*, a collaboration with Alison Krauss. Produced by T-Bone Burnett, the album earned innumerable

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critical raves as well as six Grammys, including Album of the Year and Record of the Year (for "Please Read the Letter," a Plant/Page song).

Robert Plant and Band of Joy and the [previously announced lineup of artists](#) will join host Doc Watson on the campus of Wilkes Community College for a celebration of "traditional plus" music—a term Doc coined to describe the unique mix of traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music and expanded to include Americana, country, "plus whatever other styles we were in the mood to play," Doc explained.

With over 90 artists performing on 14 stages during the course of the event, MerleFest is an entertainment value. Ticket purchases can be made on the web at www.merlefest.org or by calling 1-800-343-7857. **An early bird ticket discount is available through March 13, 2011.** Additionally, up-to-the-minute information about the festival can be obtained through the festival's e-newsletter and through Facebook and Twitter.

MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of Eddy Merle Watson as a fundraiser for Wilkes Community College Endowment Corporation and a celebration of "traditional plus" music. Scheduled for April 28 – May 1, 2011, the event is held on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

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