

Librarian's Shelf
1-15-22

Contemporary Folk & Western Music at Columbus Public Library

Two balladeers are coming to Columbus for a special afternoon of contemporary folk and western music at the Columbus Public Library on Saturday, February 19th, when award-winning songwriters Kerry Grombacher and Aspen Black will perform their "Two Troubadours: Stories in Song" concert at 2:00 p.m. They are both multi-instrumentalists, and their works draw vivid portraits and tell fascinating stories that they accompany with guitars, bass, and mandolin.

"This will be our duo's first concert in Columbus," said Kerry Grombacher recently. "I was here for a solo concert in March 2021, and I am honored to be returning. As a writer, a student of history, and a guy who drives tens of thousands of miles every year, I like the idea of visiting this gateway to the west, and to driving on US Highway 30 – the Lincoln Highway of legend – through the Platte River basin."

Aspen Black added, "I'm really looking forward to performing in Columbus. I'm a Virginia cowgirl, and it's awe-inspiring for me to spend time on the Great Plains, with the big sky and long horizons that signify the West in our imaginations."

Kerry Grombacher and Aspen Black, both successful solo artists, have worked together as a duo since 2014, performing nationwide for arts councils, house concerts, festivals, museums, and libraries. Their songs are influenced by the English ballad tradition, the string-band music of Aspen's Appalachian home, and the *corridos* of the desert Southwest, where Kerry has lived and worked.

Kerry Grombacher plays guitar and mandolin. The title track of his 2021 CD, "Range of the Buffalo," was named Song of the Year by the International Western Music Association, and the CD is a Top Ten nominee for the 2022 Album of the Year award from the Academy of Western Artists. His songs have been featured

on the ABC-TV adventure travel show, "Born to Explore," and on the Putumayo World Records CD "Cowboy Playground," which was released in over 60 countries. He has released five albums of original songs, and his songs have been recorded by a list of artists that includes Jim Jones, Belinda Gail, The Texas Trailhands, Gary Prescott, and Trails & Rails. He notes, proudly, that there is a room named for him at the Sands Motel in Grants, New Mexico, on Historic Route 66.

Nalini Jones, of the Newport Folk Festival, says "Kerry Grombacher is the best kind of songwriter, with lyrics that take us on journeys to places we've never visited before, and melodies so pure and true that they seem to rise up from the plains..."

Aspen Black plays guitar and bass. She received a 2019 Will Rogers Medallion Award for Cowboy Poetry, for her CD of Cowboy Poetry, "Tales from the Road." Aspen's "Lovin' the West" won the Rural Roots Music Commission's 2017 Classic Western CD of the Year award, and her "Eastern-Western Cowgirl" was the 2015 Female Country-Western CD of the Year. She was a Top Five finalist for the International Western Music Association's Female Poet of the Year in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and her poetry CD, "Invisibility," was a Top Five finalist for Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year in both 2015 and 2016.

Dick Shoemaker, of YNN-TV, in Franklin County, Virginia, says "Aspen Black has the voice of an angel. I could listen to her sing all day, and just sit back and smile."

The free concert on Saturday, February 19, 2022 will take place in the Columbus Public Library's temporary location, 2419 14th Street, in Columbus, and it will begin at 2:00 p.m. For information, please phone the Columbus Public Library at (402) 564-7116, or visit either www.columbusne.us/library or www.facebook.com/columbuspubliclibrary.