



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Jefferson Center announces the premiere of its North American Festival of Traditional Arts tour**

Jefferson Center announced that it is producing its first touring performance, **The North American Festival of Traditional Arts (NAFTA)**. Featuring Heidi Clare (Reeltime Travelers) & AtaGallop, Grupo Mono Blanco and Rapetipetam, the tour brings together heroes of folk music and dance from the Southern Appalachians of the United States, Mexico and French Canada in a vibrant demonstration of the enduring strength of Spanish, French and English heritage on our continent. The participating artists represent the most esteemed practitioners of the old-time fiddle and clog dance of the American South, Veracruzano son jarocho and the traditional music and gigue of Québec.

“We are really excited about producing our first touring concert,” said Jefferson Center’s Artistic Director Dylan Locke. “NAFTA is a one-of-a-kind concert experience featuring expert musicians and dancers who are at the top of their game. The concept of a tri-lingual, tri-cultural traditional music tour is so unique—not just in Roanoke, but throughout the United States. It reminds us that all our cultures are connected in one way or another.”

The NAFTA tour makes its debut at Roanoke’s Jefferson Center on Wednesday, October 10 at 7:30 p.m. The tour will feature interwoven performances by:

### **Heidi Clare & AtaGallop** (Old-Time Appalachian string band from Tennessee, USA)

This is *the* hot young band currently at the pinnacle of Southern Appalachian old-time music. Fiddler and clogger Heidi Clare was featured in the film soundtrack to “Cold Mountain” and the national tour of “Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?” Heidi’s vocal style is straight out the mountains, and her clog dancing adds a dynamic excitement to her performances. She’s joined by a team of players who are at the top of their form and deliver all the no-holds-barred, old-timey energy an audience could want.

### **Grupo Mono Blanco** (Son jarocho pioneers from Veracruz, Mexico)

Led by Gilberto Gutiérrez, a champion of the movement to revitalize son jarocho, Mono Blanco is acknowledged as among the great exemplars of this dynamic style. They have performed extensively throughout Mexico and on numerous international tours as ambassadors of Mexican culture. Their music features virtuoso lead jarana (the guitar-like instrument of Veracruzanos), juxtaposed with passionate improvised vocal dialogues and accompanied by energetic rhythmic dance and percussion played on a donkey’s jawbone.

### **Rapetipetam** (Heroes of French-Canadian music and dance from, Québec, Canada)

Led by Pierre Chartrand, recipient of the Traditional Dancing Medal of the Jeux de la Franco-phonie, Rapetipetam is an explosive sextet of expert musicians and masters of percussive dance. Their Québécois music—played on fiddles, accordions and piano—is driving and precise, and is matched by flamboyant and complex step dancing that is the hallmark of French culture in the New World. This is utterly infectious, joyful music and dance performed by award-winning pros.

The first half of the performance will consist of separate presentations by each of the three ensembles. The second half of the show will be organized as a traditional *fandango*, with musicians performing in mixed and continually rotating combinations—highlighting both the similarities and distinctions among the traditions.

**NAFTA Matinee**

In addition to the evening performance, Jefferson Center is offering an educational matinee for K-12 students. The matinee on Wednesday, October 10 at 10:30 a.m., is a chance for school groups to see different styles of traditional music and dance side-by-side – while absorbing lessons about history, geography and culture. Teachers will be given study guides to help them incorporate the performance into their lesson plans. More information about the matinee (including teacher resources) is available at [www.jeffcenter.org/matinees](http://www.jeffcenter.org/matinees)

**NAFTA Percussive Dance Workshop**

Jefferson Center is also offering a Percussive Dance Workshop the night before the concert, Tuesday, October 9, from 7-8:30 p.m. Attendees should bring their dancing shoes for instruction by the dancers from the three performance groups in the tour. Tickets for the workshop are \$10, and combination tickets (the workshop plus the concert) are \$19. Combo tickets for students and children are available for \$13.

After its Roanoke debut, the concert will travel to nine additional locations throughout the eastern United States, including stops in Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania.

*The North American Festival of Traditional Arts* (NAFTA) tour is a production of Jefferson Center, Roanoke, Virginia, and is supported, in part, by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's ArtsConnect Program; Cultural Institute of México; and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

Jefferson Center is a non-profit performing arts center that enriches and educates Western Virginia by producing high quality performing and visual arts programs including concerts, dance parties, exhibitions, lectures and artist residencies. Find out more about Jefferson Center at [www.jeffcenter.org](http://www.jeffcenter.org).

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