

RED HOUSE RECORDS

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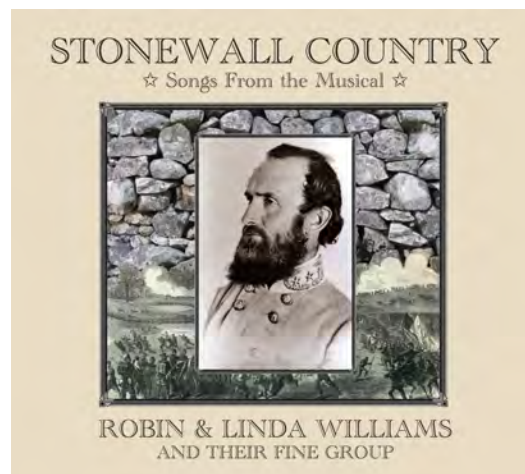
ROBIN & LINDA WILLIAMS AND THEIR FINE GROUP

The folk & bluegrass veterans present songs from their popular musical about the legendary Civil War general...

Stonewall Country

RHR-CD-244 • Release Date: July 12, 2011

Red House Records is pleased to announce the **July 12, 2011** release of *Stonewall Country*, the new album from *A Prairie Home Companion* favorites **Robin & Linda Williams**. A rollicking collection of songs from their popular folk/bluegrass musical about the life and times of legendary **Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson**, the album was produced by **John Jennings** (Mary Chapin Carpenter, John Gorka) and features **Their Fine Group** and special guest **Garrison Keillor**. It is the accomplished mix of folk, country and Americana songs, from rollicking to introspective, that you'd expect from these veteran performers.



In 1984 Robin & Linda were asked to write a musical based on the life and times of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson for the premier season of the Lime Kiln Theater in Lexington, VA. After thoroughly researching their subject, the music for *Stonewall Country* came to fruition. The musical is a richly dramatic account of this historic Confederate general who lived and taught in Lexington before the Civil War. *Stonewall Country* enjoyed a 20-year run at the Lime Kiln before it was retired in 2005.

In conjunction with the Lime Kiln Theater, Robin & Linda revived *Stonewall Country* in 2009 and have continued to perform this popular show each summer since. The album *Stonewall Country* captures the musical's thoughtful and engaging songs that tell the life-story of one of the Confederacy's most iconic generals. A spirited and humorous history lesson, it traces a story-arc that takes you from Jackson's pre-war life in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley ("**Stonewall Country**") to one of Jackson's finest moments during "The Valley Campaign" of 1862 ("**Proud Valley Boys**"). Beautifully capturing the courage that defined Jackson and ultimately brought him to his fate, "**Let Us Cross Over the River**" is based on Jackson's final words and is the album's stunning closer. From the up-tempo gospel song "**Burying Day**" to the haunting old-timey sounds of "**The War's Gone Bad on Me**," the album is a riveting musical journey.

In time for the **150th anniversary** of the beginning of the Civil War, *Stonewall Country* offers a colorful portrait of this critical historical period while shedding light on one of the war's most intriguing figures. With catchy, radio-friendly songs, this album is a significant addition to their impressive catalog and proves why Robin & Linda Williams are two of the most important roots songwriters today.

In celebration of this release, Robin & Linda Williams and Their Fine Group will be presenting special **performances of the musical *Stonewall Country* July 28-31 and August 5-7** in General Jackson's hometown of **Lexington, VA**. They will be featured performers on the week-long *Prairie Home Companion* cruise and can also be seen playing festivals and concerts across the country this summer and fall. For their full tour schedule, visit www.robinandlinda.com or www.redhousetrecords.com.

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ROBIN & LINDA WILLIAMS BIOGRAPHY

"They don't play at being country -- they are country." -No Depression

For over three decades, **Robin & Linda Williams** have made it their mission to perform the music that they love, "a robust blend of bluegrass, folk, old-time and acoustic country that combines wryly observant lyrics with a wide-ranging melodicism." Today some might call it "Americana," but these two revered music masters were living and breathing this elixir 20 years before that label was turned into a radio format. As live performers they are second to none. Their stirring concerts have earned them a huge body of fans over the years. But as gifted songwriters, Robin and Linda have earned an even more rare honor—the devotion and deep respect of their musical peers. The list of artists who have covered their original songs include some of the greats of country music, names like **Emmylou Harris, Tom T. Hall, Tim & Mollie O'Brien, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Kathy Mattea** and **Mary Black**. It is no wonder that their writing has garnered rave reviews from the likes of *Billboard, USA Today, CMT* and *The Washington Post*.

Home for Robin and Linda is an old frame house built around a log cabin in Middlebrook, Virginia, right in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. Linda is a native of Anniston, Alabama and Robin (the son of a Presbyterian minister) was born in Charlotte, North Carolina. They met and fell for each other in 1971 on a visit to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina while Linda was teaching school and Robin was a full-time musician on a national coffeehouse circuit. It wasn't long before they discovered additional magic when they combined their voices in harmony.

Despite being true children of the South, their career got its initial momentum in the Minneapolis folk scene. Robin had made many friends and connections there as a solo artist and in 1975 they recorded their first album in Minneapolis for a local record company. The same year they made their first appearance on a little radio show just getting off the ground called *A Prairie Home Companion* and their rich relationship with that icon of American broadcasting has continued for over three decades.

Over the next 15 years they recorded several fine albums and continued to crisscross the country, past miles and miles of highway signs, thrilling audiences with their songs and harmonies. Folk and country fans alike loved their honest heartfelt music. In 1989 a major breakthrough came with their signing to Sugar Hill Records, with whom they would go on to record nine albums. It would be a fruitful relationship and, amazingly, each succeeding recording (beginning with 1989's *All Broken Hearts Are the Same*) would top the previous one in artistry and quality. Around the same time, they began to tour with a band called **Their Fine Group**, and their already big sound grew all the more. 1993 saw increased exposure through a major tour with Mary Chapin Carpenter and the now large national audience of *A Prairie Home Companion*. With their career then at its 20-year mark, Robin and Linda entered into a prolific period of artistic productivity. Within six years they released several CD's, including a gospel album, which garnered two nominations for **Gospel Album of the Year**.

In 2004, Robin & Linda were signed to Red House Records, returning to their Minnesota roots. They have released five albums with the Grammy-winning label, including *Deeper Waters* (2004), *The First Christmas Gift* (2005), *Radio Songs* (2007), *Buena Vista* (2008) and their new album *Stonewall Country* based on a musical about the life and times of Civil War General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

Robin & Linda have made appearances on such major programs as *The Grand Ole Opry, Austin City Limits, Music City Tonight, Mountain Stage*, and they continue to make frequent appearances on *A Prairie Home Companion* as a duo and with **The Hopeful Gospel Quartet**. They were also prominently featured in the motion picture written by Garrison Keillor and directed by critically acclaimed filmmaker **Robert Altman**. The movie is a fictional story based on the set of *A Prairie Home Companion* and stars such notable actors as **Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones, Lily Tomlin, Woody Harrelson, John C. Reilly, Kevin Kline** and **Lindsay Lohan**.

Robin & Linda tour constantly with Their Fine Group. Band members include **Jim Watson** on bass, vocals and mandolin, who has been with them since the group's beginning. Jim was a founding member of **The Red Clay Ramblers** and played with them for over 15 years. Recently, the fourth chair in The Fine Group is being occupied by a rotation of superb musicians including **Jimmy Gaudreau** (mandolin, mandola), **Chris Brashear** (fiddle), **Tom Corbett** (mandolin) and **Tony Williamson** (mandolin).

In addition to their busy touring schedule, Robin & Linda Williams organize and present an annual festival with **Jimmy Fortune** (of the **Statler Brothers**) in their hometown of Staunton, VA. Going strong for the last 8 years, the **Fortune-Williams Music Festival** brings together some of the top names in traditional country, Americana and bluegrass music including acts like **Mary Chapin Carpenter, Marty Stuart, Jim Lauderdale**, and **Rodney Crowell**. For more information about this year's festival and Robin & Linda's busy tour schedule, visit their website: www.robinandlinda.com.

QUOTES

“Robin and Linda Williams...still deliver fresh and exciting music via stellar original songs and indelible performances.”

-- *Vintage Guitar*

“this long-standing duo has grown sweeter over the years, but you can still hear the lonesome echo of Hank Williams in their gorgeous harmonizing.”

-- *Utne Reader*

“half of the hacks on Music Row should sit at this act’s feet for song-writing lessons. This is that legendary thing. The Real Deal.”

-- *Music Row*

“Underlying their sound are lyrics that pluck at the nerve center of emotional experiences.”

-- *Billboard*

“This is music that is both comfortable and thoughtful – a rare combination that explains why and how the Williamses are able to keep on an even keel while musical trends come and go. They don’t play at being country – they are country.”

-- *No Depression*

“This is the real deal, the kind of heartfelt, genuine musical performance that built the foundation of all country and bluegrass music decades ago yet remains timeless and appealing across the ages.”

-- *Bluegrass Unlimited*

“Robin & Linda Williams shine like a diamond amid rhinestones...their sound is so sincere as to give the listener chills.”

-- *Boston Globe*

“no-frills, boiled-down country”

-- *Houston Press*

“Robin and Linda Williams just make it look easy. They consistently put out beautifully produced recordings”

-- *Sing Out!*

“Virtually every song is a stand out performance.”

-- *Bluegrass Now*

“the songs possess the ageless ache of memory.”

-- *USA Today*

“Music and meaning are seamless, genuine, and first-rate”

-- *Dirty Linen*

“they are masters of harmony singing”

-- *The Orlando Sentinel*

“Both Robin and Linda understand that country music is about soul. They have managed not just to revisit the past, but to let country music develop as intended by its pioneers.”

-- *iBluegrass Magazine*

2011 TOUR DATES

July 1 - American Tobacco Campus Amphitheatre (Durham, NC)
July 2 - Ashland Coffee and Tea (Ashland, VA)
July 3 - Oak Leaf Bluegrass & Mountain Music Festival (Luray, VA)
July 9-16 - A Prairie Home Companion Cruise (Boston to Montreal)
August 12 - American Theatre (Hampton, VA)
August 13 - Blue Ridge Mountain Music Fest (Wintergreen, VA)
September 4 - Delaware Valley Bluegrass Festival (Woodstown, NJ)
September 23-24 - Fortune Williams Music Festival (Staunton, VA)
October 14 - Goodloe Center at Mt. Empire Community College (Big Stone Gap, VA)
October 15 - Jennie Baker Center (Clintwood, VA)
October 21 - LVD's Concert Hall (Goshen, IN)
October 22 - Joseph Stripe Auditorium (Grayling, MI)
October 23 - The Ark (Ann Arbor, MI)
October 27 - Blue Ridge Community College (Weyers Cave, VA)

PERFORMANCES OF THE MUSICAL *STONEWALL COUNTRY*

July 26-31 - Lime Kiln Theater Bowl (Lexington, VA)
August 5-7 - Lime Kiln Theater Bowl (Lexington, VA)

For more tour info, visit www.robinandlinda.com or www.redhouserecords.com.



Robin & Linda Williams and Their Fine Group - Photo by Keesha Dickel
(From left to right) Chris Brashear, Jimmy Gaudreau, Robin Williams, Linda Williams, Jim Watson