

For immediate release:

Marjorie Thompson's *Right By Me* brings together all-star musicians in perceptive, ironic, and touching country blues and folk journey

A lifetime of experience and observation, plus homage to her musical heroes, come together in *Right By Me*, the new album from country blues and folk artist Marjorie Thompson.

She is joined in the CD's 13 songs by some of the best and most notable musicians performing today.

Right By Me is scheduled for release July 20.

It builds on the songwriting ability and instrumental skill Marjorie displayed in her earlier albums, *Never Let Me Down* (2005), *Driving Live* (2005), and *Add Some More* (2003), all of which achieved notice in the industry, considerable press coverage for a new artist, and airplay at many AAA and folk/Americana stations.

For *Right By Me*, Marjorie is joined by legendary instrumentalists that include Buddy Cage on pedal steel and mandolin virtuoso Barry Mitterhoff. The CD was produced by Michael Falzarano and engineered by Jon Marshall Smith. It was recorded in New Jersey and North Carolina.

Listeners will discover that Marjorie's perception and precision, in writing, singing, and playing, have become even sharper, shaped by experience on the road and a closer examination of the world around her and her own life within. Each song in *Right By Me* -- the 11 originals and two covers -- tells a story, be it a comment on religion, a protest song for today, a murder mystery, or the anguish of a broken dream. Many of the songs have ironic twists; some are the soul laid bare; some are just plain fun.

The album opens with "Don't Look Back" a homicide story. "This is the murder mystery centerpiece of my song collection," she says. "It is full of fun, spike-heel shoes and tainted spice."

"America the New" is, in Marjorie's words, "a nonpartisan, intentionally scathing political commentary that is ironic, rueful, and yet as deeply, proudly American as can be. Shame on the forces that would subvert our indomitable spirit."

The title song, "Eat Right By Me," comes next. "Inspired by the imitable themes of Bo Carter, this one takes food to the ribald extreme," she laughs. "It is about as racy as a sausage can get."

Marjorie's take on religion is characterized in the syncopated, quirky "Come to the

River,” which holds the view that those who are helped are those who help themselves. “It is about finding strength and salvation first by looking to oneself, no crutches allowed,” she says.

In “Watch the North Wind, Marjorie pays homage to and extends the work of her musical mentor, Jorma Kaukonen. “This, Jorma’s quintessential love song, speaks to me,” she says. “Its bluegrassy feel is a departure from the original.”

“Ernie and Grace” is “based on a steamy night in July, a few years ago. I was tuning a guitar before a show and the back lot was dark and seamy, a strip club across the way, a bar next door. A man was suddenly there; he kissed my hand and struck up a conversation.”

The deeply touching “How To Be” sums up the loss and devastation that everyone has experienced at one time or another, “when one is uncomfortable in one’s own skin, sad and scared to the deepest fiber.”

High power and a sense of foreboding characterize the next song, “Dead or Alive Blues,” “a song that details the consequences of late loving times.”

Slow, deep, stark, and ethnically influenced, “Dignity” is, in Marjorie’s words, “the autobiographical piece that describes some inner strength that sustains even when mortification is paralyzing.”

“Light of Day” addresses how easy it is to get lost and “recounts that feeling of being rendered invisible, in that confounding way that may give us pause about appearances and disappearances.”

Another song that has nothing to do with its words, “Weather Report,” is a sultry “single entendre disguised in a lyric that is just plain fun. It smokes of summertime, and other seasons too.”

Anyone who doesn’t know “When I’m Sixty-Four” has to have been paying no attention for the last four decades, but Marjorie brings a fresh, new guitar rag flavor to it. “The ragtime progression suits fingerstyle just right,” she says, “and I discovered a few runs that lent interest.”

The final cut on the CD, “Life of Me,” is “a song to the rock of ages that sustains us, whoever and whatever it may be.”

Melodic and catchy, yet thought-provoking and as deep as the listener cares to venture, *Right By Me* promises breakthroughs for both Marjorie and her fans.

Marjorie Thompson -- *Right By Me*

Marjorie Thompson	vocals, acoustic guitar, banjitar
Greg Franklin	bass
Barry Mitterhoff	mandolin
Buddy Cage	pedal steel
Mike Levine	resonator guitar, Dobro
Jon Marshall Smith	keyboards
Michelle Smith	background vocals

Produced by Michael Falzarano

Engineered and mastered by Jon Marshall Smith

Recorded at JMS Studios, Hendersonville, NC, and
Kaleidoscope Studios, Union City, NJ

All songs by Marjorie Thompson, except "Watch the North Wind Rise," by Jorma Kaukonen, and "When I'm Sixty-Four," by John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

The Songs:

Don't Look Back	3:00
America the New	4:25
Eat Right By Me	3:02
Come to the River	3:13
Watch the North Wind Rise	3:50
Ernie and Grace	4:58
How to Be	3:27
Dead or Alive Blues	3:58
Dignity	3:53
Light of Day	2:54
Weather Report	3:26
When I'm Sixty-Four	3:00
Life of Me	4:08

About Marjorie Thompson

Marjorie Thompson has worked hard and excelled at three careers, any one of which would cause many to bow under the pressure. What she has in common with the fingerstyle guitarists and songwriters and singers of the blues, country blues, and folk traditions is that she has lived life fully and made pointed and poignant observations about it.

Originally from New York City, she took up the guitar in the mid-1960's. A desire to study piano was thwarted by the constraints of small apartment living in Brooklyn and Queens; the "consolation prize," at her mother's suggestion, was the \$16 department store guitar she received at age 10. Taught by local teens who wore the cool hippie look and forayed into the jungle of Greenwich Village, she became a passionate and fairly adept young player, in the traditional styles of the Blues artists of the 20s and 30s as well as New York street singer Rev Gary Davis and the rediscovered Mississippi John Hurt (icons of Piedmont-style picking, they were dramatic influences on popular artists emerging in the 1960s).

After a year of determined and constant playing, she was rewarded with a Guild F-30, similar to John Hurt's, which she still owns.

By age 12, Marjorie could pick a solid alternating thumb groove with a detailed melody line, no mean feat even for older, more experienced players. And she loved it.

At the same time, she discovered a strong attraction for science, borne of a precollege program in 1969 that galvanized her passion for biology by the age of 15.

Life's paths brought college and graduate school, and the pursuit of studies at Brown University during the 1970s. Each year she wished for additional achievement in her playing, but each year was largely devoted to studies, and to the demands of "real life."

In 1974, Marjorie received a degree in Biochemistry, followed by a PhD in Biology in 1979. The biological knowledge was quickly put to practical use: the first of her seven children was born in 1980.

A pivotal event in the music world of 1970, and especially Marjorie's music world, was the release of Hot Tuna's first album. Hot Tuna was a spinoff of the popular psychedelic band Jefferson Airplane, bringing together its lead guitarist, Jorma Kaukonen, and bassist Jack Casady in an acoustic duo that drew its themes from the country blues that had shaped and propelled Marjorie's own playing.

And while academia and, later, a new and growing family meant even less time with the guitar, the spark remained. Each New Year's, she would resolve to learn "Hesitation Blues" (a Rev. Gary Davis piece) the way Jorma played it so famously.

Beginning in 1983 -- and still going strong -- she has been part of the biology faculty and deanery at Brown, doing what she also loves: teaching and advising students.

But something special and important happened in 1999.

"That spring, I noticed an ad in *Acoustic Guitar* magazine," she remembers. "A photograph of Jorma Kaukonen himself! He had opened a guitar camp in rural southeastern Ohio. Did my eyes deceive? No, it was true." The Fur Peace Ranch Guitar Camp was offering weekend workshops with Jorma and other master musicians (including Jorma's Hot Tuna partner, Jack Casady).

“I was terrified, but wrote the deposit check immediately.”

The first visit to the camp in August 1999 returned her musical pursuits to the fore. She rediscovered the passion and desire to play that she had experienced as a teenager. Something dormant had sprung back to life. She returned repeatedly to the camp in the ensuing year -- she still holds the record for the most-frequent student -- to study with Jorma, now her master teacher and good friend. “Hesitation Blues” was comfortable at last, but she still thought of herself as a guitar hobbyist.

Then things changed again:

Marjorie had played a lot of guitar over 35 years, but had never written a song. In the summer of 2001, she heard songs that were demanding to be written -- the Rev. Gary Davis used to say that songs were “revealed” to him, and the muse now was so strong she understood what he had meant. Past and present influences met and a unique style, a metaphorical voice, emerged. By November of that year she had written 40 songs. There are over 100 now). Jorma’s wife and manager and Marjorie’s friend, Vanessa, pronounced the songs and Marjorie’s performance of them good and urged her to seek an audience.

The diminutive Marjorie, 48 years old, and with a full time academic job and a full house -- to say nothing of stage fright -- became her own booking agent and producer. A demo CD opened the door to a year's worth of bookings -- 92 the first year out.

Since then, she has recorded four studio albums of her songs with a proper producer and engineer, and her career as a country blues artist has continued to grow, with neither end nor plateau in sight. She continues to play scores of concerts each year both in the U.S. and overseas. More recently, she has served as Jorma Kaukonen’s teaching assistant at Fur Peace Ranch. In 2007 she appeared in the Fur Peace Ranch course list as an instructor in her own workshop, “Songcrafting and Country Blues Essentials,” which was quickly filled. Also in 2007 she recorded her fifth album, which like the previous four is filled with quirky, humorous and heartfelt original songs.

It’s a remarkable story of talent, hard work, patience, and drive. And it’s all true.

“I’m still the dean, too,” she laughs, “loving and exulting in all of this.”

JPEGs and album art are available at:

http://www.marjoriethompson.com/presskit/presskit_photos.htm

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