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Stephin Merritt & The Magnetic Fields Bring Theatrical 50 Song Memoir to Durham, Perform Musical Autobiographical Extravaganza Over Two Nights

February 9, 2017, Durham, NC — Duke Performances, in association with The Carolina Theatre of Durham, presents Stephin Merritt & The Magnetic Fields in 50 Song Memoir, a series of two concerts of autobiographical songs, with one song for each year of Merritt’s life. Night one will cover songs 1-25; night two, songs 26-50. This fully staged concert extravaganza, directed by José Zayas, features fifty years of artifacts both musical (vintage computers, reel-to-reel tape decks) and decorative (tiki bar, shag carpet, vintage magazines). The seven members of the newly expanded Magnetic Fields will each play seven instruments, ranging from the traditional (cello, charango, clavicord) to those newly invented within the last five decades (Slinky guitar, Swarmatron, synthesizer). The concerts come hot on the heels of the March 10 release of 50 Song Memoir on Nonesuch Records, produced by Merritt with additional production by Thomas Bartlett and Charles Newman. Merritt plays one hundred instruments on the new album, from the abacus to the ukulele.

50 Song Memoir comes to town Tuesday, March 21 (songs 1-25) & Wednesday, March 22 (songs 26-50), at 8 PM at The Carolina Theatre of Durham. Tickets are available at carolinatheatre.org

STEPHIN MERRITT

To date, Stephin Merritt has written and recorded 12 Magnetic Fields albums, including the popular and critically acclaimed 69 Love Songs, released by Durham’s Merge Records. A song from that record, “The Book of Love,” has been covered by Peter Gabriel and has appeared in numerous TV shows and films; notably, the Nairobi Chamber Orchestra performed the song at an official state dinner in Kenya, before Presidents Barack Obama and Uhuru Kenyatta delivered their toasts. Merritt has also composed original music and lyrics for several music theater pieces, including an off-Broadway stage musical of Neil Gaiman’s novel Coraline, for which he received an Obie Award. In 2014, Merritt composed songs and background music for the first musical episode of public radio’s This American Life. Stephin Merritt also releases albums under the band names the 6ths, the Gothic Archies, and Future Bible Heroes.

DUKE PERFORMANCES

Duke Performances is at the forefront of university performing arts presenters nationwide, attracting artists of the highest caliber and commissioning, developing, and producing a growing number of new works for the world stage. A few of the artists and ensembles from whom Duke Performances has commissioned new work are Gerald Clayton (Piedmont Blues), Jason Moran (In My Mind: Monk at Town Hall, 1959), The Bad Plus (On Sacred Ground: Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring), Brian Blade & Daniel Lanois (The Hallelujah Train), The Campbell Brothers (performing John Coltrane’s A Love Supreme), Jenny Scheinman (Kannapolis: A Moving Portrait), and the Billy Childs Chamber Ensemble featuring Dianne Reeves (Enlightened Souls).

DUKE PERFORMANCES MEDIA CONTACT

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