

# Makin' music at the museum

Top acts inaugurate 'Concerts on the Green' series

By Bill Anderson  
Free Press Staff Writer

**F**our big-name entertainers — Willie Nelson, Tracy Chapman, Alison Krauss and Garrison Keillor — will perform this summer at the Shelburne Museum in a budding "Concerts on the Green" series to be announced today.

The series emerges from last summer's one-shot "Jamgrass" festival and will partly fill the need in northwest Vermont for a small-scale outdoor summer venue. The region lacks what the concert business refers to as a "shed" — a fresh-air amphitheater with a fixed stage, permanent seats under a roof, and a grassy hill for lawn chairs and blankets.

The Shelburne site falls short of that — it is missing the most crucial ingredient, a roof. But it has a size, about 3,000 capacity, to attract high-quality musicians who tour primarily in the summer and might currently skip past Burlington for lack of a suitable venue.

Alex Crothers, a spokesman for co-producers Higher Ground and GEG Concerts, says the series will naturally have to see how things go this summer before deciding about the next. But he said three or four concerts a summer would be about what the Shelburne Museum would want and what the market could handle.

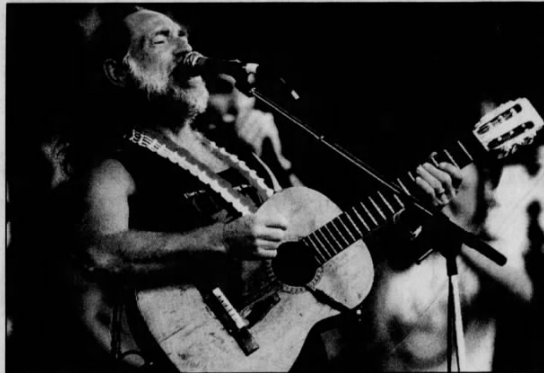
As for a permanent facility with a stage and roof, he said "we've talked about it ... but it's very expensive to build."

With respect to amenities at the site this summer, he promises ample free parking, a high number of portable toilets that are "fresh" at the start of the event, access to free water, food sold by local vendors, and a "family atmosphere" with kids younger than 12 free, and a ban on glass, pets and alcohol.

"Whatever the conveniences, the natural setting is spectacular and it's the aesthetics that really push it over the top," Crothers says.

"There is a gently sloping, grassy lawn atop a hill that has a panoramic, westerly facing view of the Champlain Valley. Gates open at 5, and the shows start at 6:30, so you'll essentially be watching the sun set behind the majestic Adirondacks while you watch Willie Nelson."

Unless it rains. In which case, the show goes on anyway.



File photo  
Willie Nelson will play June 23 outdoors at the Shelburne Museum as part of the new "Concerts on the Green" series. Higher Ground and GEG Concerts are co-producers of the summer series.

## Coming this summer

Here are particulars on the four artists confirmed:

■ **Willie Nelson, June 23:** The weatherbeaten Texas troubadour would be carved into the Mount Rushmore of American music if one existed. He's a founder of the "outlaw" country music movement and steady campaigner for Farm Aid; his fans range from those who ride new Harleys to those on old John Deeres.

■ **Tracy Chapman, July 20:** Best known for the song "Fast Car," Chapman's debut album made a big impact on college audiences in the late '80s and helped revitalize the slumbering singer-songwriter genre. She landed another Top 10 hit in 1996 with "Give Me One Reason."

■ **Alison Krauss and Union Station, Aug. 15:** The most successful roots music group in America began to expand the reach of bluegrass in the mid-'90s, then took it to new heights of popularity in 2000 by hitching its wagon to "O Brother, Where Art Thou," a surprise hit film and soundtrack. Vermont native Dan Tyminski, a native of West Rutland, is the guitarist in the band.

■ **Garrison Keillor, Aug. 19:** The folksy humorist of National Public Radio fame leads "A Prairie Home Companion: The Rhubarb Tour." His popularity is such that his show will probably sell tickets fastest in the series.



Gannett News Service  
Alison Krauss and Union Station, featuring West Rutland native Dan Tyminski, arrive Aug. 15.



Associated Press file photo  
Garrison Keillor of "Prairie Home Companion" fame appears Aug. 19.

## Tickets

Tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. Friday. Call 863-5966 or visit [www.flynrtix.org](http://www.flynrtix.org). "Early bird" ticket discounts are available.

- **Willie Nelson,** \$45 (early bird: \$35)
- **Tracy Chapman,** \$40 (early bird: \$30)
- **Alison Krauss and Union Station,** \$45 (early bird: \$35)
- **Garrison Keillor,** \$45 (early bird: \$40)