

## Thacker Mountain Radio returns to Clinton June 18

Special to The Clinton Courier

One of Mississippi Public Broadcasting's longest-running musical variety shows is returning to Clinton this summer.

The Arts Council of Clinton (ACC) will present the *Thacker Mountain Radio Hour (TMR)* on Saturday, June 18, at 6 p.m., as part of a "Father's Day Eve" performance for MPB listeners in Mississippi, Alabama, and western Tennessee. While this will be the fifth year that *Thacker* has started their summer season in Clinton, it will mark the first time MC has hosted the show, which has traveled to Clinton for Father's Day Weekend broadcasts annually from 2016-19.

"We're really excited about *Thacker* returning to Clinton and very excited about having the show performed on the Mississippi College campus," said Arts Council of Clinton President, Bob Blanton. "Hopefully, this will be the beginning of more projects between the Arts Council and MC."

Hosted since 2000 by Jim Dees, author of *The Statue and the Fury*, recipient of the 2017 Independent Publishers Association's Bronze Award for best non-fiction in the South, the weekly program consists of author readings sandwiched between a pair of musical guest performances. It gets its name from a fire observation tower that resembles a radio tower on Thacker Mountain in Lafayette County.

*Thacker Mountain Radio Hour* received the Mississippi Governor's Award for Broadcast Excellence in 2005 and a Citation of Merit from the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters in 2017.

A performance by Southern singer, songwriter and "community cultivator" Beth McKee will open the broadcast. The Orlando musician and former member of bayou-country band Evangeline has recorded several solo albums and is the founding principal of Swamp Sistas, a group of more than 2,700 Southern women artists who collaborate, mentor, and perform in the Swamp Sistas Songwriter Circle to support their home communities.



The story of how Jones County resident Tom Landrum, an MC graduate, infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in the 1960s on behalf of the FBI is the topic of Mississippi author Curtis Wilke's latest novel, *When Evil Lived in Laurel*. Wilke will discuss his true-crime tale of Civil Rights-era Mississippi during the broadcast.

The Shotgun Jazz Band, a seven-piece ensemble from New Orleans, will round out the broadcast with its original brand of bluesy, Crescent City-style music.

Marla Dixon, one of the city's strongest vocalists, leads the band's particular flavor of fun, no-nonsense New Orleans jazz.

*Thacker Mountain Radio Hour's* house band, Yalobush-whackers, fronted by Paul Tate with bassist Slade Lewis, pianist Mark Yacovone, and drummer Ricky Burkhead, also will perform during the broadcast.

Ricky Nations, a local insurance agent and past-president of the Arts Council of Clinton, has been instrumental in establishing and continuing the city's relationship with the *Thacker Mountain Radio Show*.

"MC is a great place for this show," said Nations, himself an MC graduate.

For the third year, the Arts Council of Clinton will have an After Party on the Brick Streets in Olde Towne Clinton from 7:45 until 9:30 p.m.

"If you have a ticket to *Thacker*, then you have a ticket to the After-Party. It should be a lot of fun," said Blanton.

*Thacker* is an hour-long show recorded live and broadcast on Mississippi Public Broadcasting and Alabama Public Broadcasting at 7 p.m. each Saturday. The show is generally recorded in Oxford, Mississippi.

"We are fortunate to have *Thacker* back again. They only have four or five live shows per year outside of Oxford, and it is an entertaining and fun event," said ACC Past-President Ricky Nations.

Tickets for the event are \$20 and can be purchased online at [ticketpeak.co/artsCouncilofclinton/events](https://ticketpeak.co/artsCouncilofclinton/events) or at the door. Proceeds from the event will be used for scholarship awards to students, teacher grants to local teachers, art exhibits and contests and additional education and entertainment events.



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