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Young Energy and Old-Time Music Coming to the Keystone Theatre

In old-time American music, fiddle and banjo go together like salt and pepper, bread and butter or maybe.... snow and Christmas. On Sunday Dec. 16, 2007 at 7 PM, the Bradford County Regional Arts Council and the Northern Tier Cultural Alliance will present fiddler Laura Orshaw and banjo player Seth Swingle at the Keystone Theatre. Both are young people who have attained virtuoso status in the old-time music world.

The cost of the tickets is \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and seniors. Seating is reserved and tickets can be purchased by calling the Bradford County Regional Arts Council at 570-268-2787 (ARTS)

Laura Orshaw, at nineteen, has become the one of the premier fiddle players in Pennsylvania. Steeped in the strong musical traditions of the Northern Tier, she has been playing since the age of ten with family members throughout upstate New York and northern PA. She has developed a smooth, professional style that ranges from pure old-time to high speed bluegrass. A frequent performer in our area, she has released two highly listenable solo CD's which are available locally at the PA North Country Artisan Center and Store in Towanda and at Yale's Music Store in Sayre. In recent years Laura has also unveiled a wonderful vocal style that is particularly suited to old-time music. Laura finished high school early and is in her third year of college at Penn State University.

Performing with Laura at the Keystone in December will be eighteen year old Seth Swingle of Earlysville, Virginia, currently a freshman at the University of Chicago. Seth has been playing banjo for nearly half his life and winning banjo contests since he was 13. He was the Virginia State Fair Banjo Champion two years in a row, at age sixteen and seventeen. Seth was awarded a year long Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship to study with old time banjo master Mike Seeger when he was fifteen. Beginning in 2004 Seth began studying the ngoni – one of the antecedents of the banjo - with Cheick Hamala Diabate, a master from Mali, West Africa. Monsieur Diabate gave Seth the extraordinary experience of playing with him at The John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center and shared the stage with him at Merlefest in Wilksboro, N.C. when Seth was 16. In addition to being a polished musician, Seth is also a scholar of the African roots of banjo music of the Southeastern United States. He has traveled twice to Mali with his father to study with musicians there.

Although raised in Virginia, Seth has long family roots in Bradford County. Both of his parents, Craig Swingle and Ruth Jolly, graduated from Towanda High School. His grandparents, Mike and Sally Swingle were lifelong Bradford County natives, farming the Swingle farm near Powell and later running M's Market in Monroeton, before moving to Florida about 12 years ago.

In addition to being outstanding musicians with much professional experience between them, both Seth and Laura bring a passion for old-time music that is rare and infectious. Introduced by a mutual friend, they immediately found common musical ground. These two will present a very special night of high-energy old time and bluegrass music on the historic Keystone stage.

Photo:



Seth Swingle and Laura Orshaw bring their award-winning old-time music to the Keystone Theatre on Sunday, December 16, 2007 at 7pm. Tickets are on sale now at the Keystone Theatre.

