

Troubadour Matt Campbell returns for Raton concert

By Tim Keller – For the Comet | Posted: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 9:46 am

RATON – Matt Campbell isn't one to sit still long. The Coloradan served in the U.S. Coast Guard, moved to New York City, then moved to Chicago to establish dual careers as stage actor and singer/songwriter—both of which have kept him moving. He recently moved to Nashville but has shuttled between Raton's Shuler Theater and Indiana's Brown County Playhouse for stage roles. Between plays, he tours the west as a solo singer/songwriter.

Friday night, Campbell brings his acoustic guitar to Raton for a free concert at the Isabel Castillo Performing Arts Center, next to the Shuler Theater downtown. An August concert in Ripley Park demonstrated Campbell's easy way with an audience, chatting between songs and whistling after a chorus. The songs come from his several albums, including the recently released "Live at the Old Town School of Folk Music," recorded at the fabled Chicago venue.

Campbell's voice soars to follow his bounding melodies while his lyrics spin finely wrought stories. Stylistically, he's firmly grounded in bedrock American country music—think Hank Williams and John Prine, Ernest Tubb and Johnny Cash, rather than Keith Urban or Jason Aldean.

His songs occasionally get topical in a homespun kind of way, and he recently announced that he's running for President of the United States in 2016. Until he can be seen in person Friday night, it will be hard to tell how deeply he's planted his tongue in cheek. He did smile a lot during his August show.

Meantime, Campbell is southbound from shows in Minnesota and Montana. He plays the Clayton's Hotel Eklund Thursday night, then follows his Friday night Raton show with others at Cimarron's Express St. James Hotel and the Taos Inn and Taos Mesa Brewing Company before continuing westward to Arizona.

He wants a good crowd in Raton so there won't be a cover charge, although pass-the-hat donations will be happily accepted. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. Friday night, Oct. 24, at the Isabel Castillo Performing Arts Center, next door to the Shuler Theater at 131 N. 2nd St. in downtown Raton.



Matt Campbell returns to Raton on Friday for a free concert

Matt Campbell during a performance in Raton earlier this summer. He returns to Raton for a free concert Friday night at the Castillo Performing Arts Center.