



Entertainment > Visit St. Louis > Story

Highlights June 16-22

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Todd Snider

10:30 p.m. (doors open at 9:30) at Mississippi Nights, 914 North First Street. \$15. 314-421-3853. Over-21 show.

Some artists employ full bands on their CDs but shuffle alone from town to town as a matter of economics. Not Todd Snider. This folk-alt country-talkin' blues singer, inspired by a Jerry Jeff Walker performance 15 years ago, prefers to perform solo because it gives him more space to tell his stories. And with a wry, slightly warped sense of humor, Snider has been telling his stories now for seven CDs, from tracks such as 1994's "Talkin' Seattle Grunge Rock Blues" - the one about the "alternative alternative" band that was so alternative it got up onstage and refused to play a note, earning a huge advance from a major label - to last year's "Conservative Christian, Right-Wing Republican, Straight, White, American Males." Snider is touring behind "East Nashville Skyline," a fine album about his neighborhood, his battles with drugs and alcohol and mortality. That these topics leave a listener smiling is testament to Snider's honesty and sharp tongue. (BG)