

## Live!

**Who:** Todd Snider with the Nervous Wrecks, Stephen Kellogg and the Sixers

**When:** 9 p.m. tomorrow

**Where:** State Theatre, Falls Church

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Some musicians seem to have been born to be onstage. Gregarious, funny and determined to show the audience a good time, they may not top the charts, but they routinely cross the country, drawing in rabid fans who consider each show a party not to be missed.

So it is with the two acts rolling into the State Theatre tomorrow night. Todd Snider, a tall, self-effacing guy with a guitar, dirty-blond hair, a sly grin and a storyteller's charm, could warm the heart of any listener missing the "Alice's Restaurant"-era Arlo Guthrie, though he's also been compared to John Prine and Steve Goodman.

On his 2003 solo live CD, "Near Truths and Hotel Rooms," Snider summed up his career thusly: "I've been driving around 15 years making this [stuff] up, singing it for anybody who will listen to it. Some of it's sad, some of it's funny . . . and sometimes I'll go on for as many as 18 minutes in between the songs."

Snider's latest and seventh release, "East Nashville Skyline," came out last June, 10 years after his "Songs for the Daily Planet" made a gentle commercial splash, thanks to radio airplay for the sardonic and dead-on funny satire of then-current fashion, "Talking Seattle Grunge Rock Blues." Since then, he's toured relentlessly and has heard his tunes covered by the likes of Jerry Jeff Walker (an early inspiration), Jimmy Buffett and Garth Brooks.

For this show, Snider may not be as verbose as usual, since he'll have his sometime band, the Nervous Wrecks, standing with him and maybe encouraging him to get on with it. Then again, when this guy starts weaving his shaggy dog tales, everyone loves to listen. (You can find out more at <http://www.toddsnider.net>.)

A growing number of people have been listening to Stephen Kellogg. "I think of myself like Seabiscuit, an underdog," says the songwriter in his official press bio. "Not because I come from a hard place, but because I come from a very 'normal' place." He's worked hard, though, touring in the same perpetual style as Snider, first solo, then with his musical compatriots, the Sixers, sharing the van.

Playing a blend of classic folk-rock with countrified touches, Kellogg also has a rep for near-stand-up comic bits between songs, while the band kicks the songs up that extra live notch from the way they're presented on the group's recent eponymous album, a Foundations/Universal

Records release that followed several independently released CDs, including last year's "Bulletproof Heart."

Besides a few dates with Snider, Kellogg and company are having a busy early summer season, with a schedule of festival shows, concerts with Carbon Leaf, Pat McGee Band and even a date with the Godfather of Soul, James Brown. Which will probably lead to another interesting onstage story.

-- **MARIANNE MEYER**

The State Theatre is at 220 N. Washington St., Falls Church. Tickets for general admission are \$16 in advance, \$18 day of the show, and are available through Ticketmaster. Doors open at 7 p.m. Food is available. For more information, call 703-237-0300 or visit <http://www.thestatetheater.com>.