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For Immediate Release

Waiting for a Train: The Life and Songs of Jimmie Rodgers opens April 1 at Undermain in Dallas

Before Walk the Line, before Lost Highway, Jimmie Rodgers was Waiting for a Train

The Undermain Theatre, Dallas' premiere experimental theatre company, will present the world-premiere of *Waiting for a Train: The Life and Songs of Jimmie Rodgers*, the Father of Country Music on Saturday, April 1, 2006 (which marks the UMT's 22nd anniversary). Bruce DuBose wrote and will star in this production as the Country Blues innovator along with Matthew Posey, Walter Hardts, Carrie Bourne, Kevin Grammar, Brandi Andrade, Ben Bryant, and musicians Lyle Hathaway and Jeff Whittington.

Undermain Artistic Director Katherine Owens will direct. Designers are: Happy Yancey, costumes; Bryan Wofford, set; Russell Dyer, lights; and Sara Romersberger, choreography.

Waiting for a Train will open Sat. April 1, 2006 at 8:15 p.m. at the Undermain Theatre's Basement Space at 3200 Main St. in the Deep Ellum area of downtown Dallas and will run through May 13. The play will be performed Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays at 8:15 p.m. Reservations and information are available at 214-747-5515 or www.undermain.com. Ticket prices are Wed and Thurs \$15, Fri \$20, and Sat \$25. Discounts are available for seniors, students and KERA members.

One of the first recording artists to sell a million records, Jimmie Rodgers was born in Mississippi, but performed more in Texas than anywhere else in the world. His 111 recorded songs include "Blue Yodel (T for Texas)", "Waiting for a Train" and "In the Jail House Now". He built his home in Kerrville and had several recording sessions in Dallas at the Jefferson Hotel. In 1931 he toured Texas with Will Rogers in a Red Cross benefit for drought relief. His influence on popular music was profound and inspired countless artists. Tom Piazza of the New York Times writes "his career was a meeting point for images and folk material from the American South and West, from black and white traditions, and it offered clues to ways in which that material could be blended into the mainstream of popular music."

In recent years his work has inspired numerous tribute albums by the likes of Merle Haggard and Bob Dylan, who wrote in his liner notes: "Jimmie Rodgers is one of the guiding lights of the 20th century ... a blazing star whose sound was and remains the raw essence of individuality in a sea of conformity, par excellence with no equal." The first artist to be inducted in the Country Music Hall of Fame, Rodgers' success helped the popularity of phonograph machines, recordings and guitars. An East African tribe even chose him for a deity. In 1986 he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The Undermain's play follows Rodgers' path through drama, song and dance along with images of the early 20th century. The play explores Rodgers' childhood adventures performing in medicine shows, his work on the railroad and his early tutelage from black musicians he encountered in these formative stages. The interwoven plot provides brief glimpses of his partnership with Ralph Peer who produced his recordings for the Victor label, his relationship with his wife Carrie and his collaborations with other songwriters and recording artists including Louis Armstrong and the Carter Family.

Bruce DuBose is a founding member and Executive Producer of the Undermain Theatre where for the past 22 years he has been acting and directing as well as composing and performing his music, arrangements and sound designs. Most recently, he arranged and performed the music for Undermain's wildly popular *Margo Veil*. At the Ohio Theater in New York he did the same for *Swedish Tales of Woe* by Eric Ehn, of which the Village Voice said "The beauty of director Bruce DuBose's original guitar and percussion compositions ambush us in landscapes of wordless fright".

In 1999 he formed a Middle Eastern influenced folk/rock band called Plato's Kave along with Nick Brisco of the '80s band Fever in the Funkhouse. The band played at Dallas area clubs such as Club Dada and Muddy Waters as well as in the Dallas Theater Center's 2000 Big D Festival of the Unexpected and in various New York venues.

Winning numerous acting honors from the Dallas Critics Forum DuBose's credits include *Blasted* by Sarah Kane and Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*. In New York he was seen in *Man's Best Friend* at Soho

Rep, The Inner Circle by Colin Pink and as Robert Graves in Glamour at the Ohio Theatre. Other Undermain performances include St. Nicholas by Conor McPherson, Therese Raquin, Trigorin in The Seagull, the title role in Macbeth, and many others. He has also toured Eastern Europe in productions of Sarajevo and Judges 19 and Los Angeles in Erik Ehn's Erotic Curtsies. He has directed productions of Swedish Tales of Woe in both Dallas and New York. Film work includes Late Bloomers, Midsummer, Thompson's Last Run, and Myopia.

Television appearances include Walker Texas Ranger and Dangerous Curves. He is the broadcast voice for the PBS affiliate KERA-TV Channel 13. He narrated the Emmy-winning PBS documentary The U.S.-Mexican War as well as Justice for My People, and America's Deadliest Storm: The 1900 Galveston Flood.

Katherine Owens is the Artistic Director of the Undermain Theatre. She directed the regional premieres of Margo Veil by Len Jenkin and A Number by Caryl Churchill at Undermain last season as well as the New York premiere of A Mans Best Friend by Jeffrey Jones at Soho Rep. Other Undermain directing credits include Shakespeare's Macbeth, Chekhov's The Seagull, Goose and Tom Tom by David Rabe, A Murder of Crows and Cat's- Paw by Mac Wellman and Silence by Moira Buffini. In New York, she directed Lenora Champagne's Coaticook at Soho Think Tank's Ice Factory 2000 and John O'Keefes Glamour at the Ohio Theatre. She designed the video for Gold Into Mud at HERE Arts Center's American Living Room Festival, part of the Lincoln Center Festivals. She has appeared in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury adapted by Erik Ehn, The Possibilities and The Castle both by Howard Barker. Owens directed the world premiere of Mac Wellman's The Lesser Magoo for Bottom's Dream theatre in Los Angeles. She also appeared in the films Late Bloomers and Only in America. In 1995 Owens traveled with the company to the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia to perform the play Sarajevo for the Ohrid Summer Theater Festival, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. She has won numerous Dallas Critics' Forum Awards for her work. In addition, Owens narrated Mark Birnbaum's documentary, Las Mujeres del Valle, for CARE Ecuador.

ABOUT THE CAST AND DESIGNERS

Brandi Andrade (ensemble) has a PhD in Theatre and American Women's History and teaches at UT Arlington. She is a producing partner at Echo Theatre, where she is the artistic director of a popular staged reading series introducing audiences to important women playwrights from the past and present. She has worked as actress or dramaturg at most of the area theatres, most recently playing Edith in Contemporary's The Women. Brandi does her commercial and film work through Linda McAlister Talent.

Ben Bryant (ensemble, production manager) Waiting For A Train marks Ben's debut on the Undermain stage. Previous work includes roles with Dallas Children's Theater (A Laura Ingalls Wilder Christmas), Pocket Sandwich Theater (Shades of Gray), Dallas Hub Theater (History of Drama), Theatre Quorum (Dealer's Choice) and Contemporary Theatre of Dallas (The Dining Room). He is a 2003 graduate of Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Carrie Bourn (ensemble) last appeared at the Undermain in Len Jenkin's Margo Veil: an Entertainment. She was recently awarded Outstanding Performance by an Actress 2004-05 by the Dallas Critics Forum for her title role portraying an Irish blind woman in Molly Sweeney. Other shows include Uncle Vanya, Night Must Fall, To Gillian on her 37th Birthday, For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls, The Marriage of Bette and Boo, As You Like It, and All in the Timing. She has also worked in independent films in front of and behind the camera. Russell Dyer (lighting designer).

Kevin Grammer (ensemble) is making his debut with Undermain Theatre. A graduate from Texas Tech, he has acted and directed for numerous theatres around town. Acting credits include: Mike in The Oldest Living Graduate, Andrew Aquecheek in 12th Night, 2nd Murderer in Richard III, Van Sweiten in Amadeus, Narrator in The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Freddie in Picasso at the Lapin Agile, and Peter in No Sex Please.We're British. Directing credits include Cowboy Mouth, Red Sedum Creeper, Ontological Proof of My Existence, and the recent Molly Sweeney.

Walter Hardts (ensemble), a veteran in roles with over twenty theatre companies in Dallas, is honored to make his second appearance with the Undermain Theatre, where he was last seen in Homework with company member Rhonda Boutte. Other roles include: Henri in Dallas Theater Center's acclaimed production of South Pacific; Nanyanami in African Tales of Earth and Sky with Dallas Children's Theater (Best supporting actor Leon Rabin award winner); Eddie in X Stage R Die with Pegasus Theater. National principled television roles include: Reede Jamison on Walker Texas Ranger. Veeder in CBS's Dangerous Curves, and Lonnie Edwards in Fox's Final Justice. Walter holds a B.A. in theatre and psychology from the University of North Texas and is employed with The Dallas Symphony.

Lyle Hathaway (ensemble) last played and composed music for the Undermain's production of Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*. He has been playing guitar since age nine, and by age eleven, was playing children's productions at his local church. Preferring to play for productions rather than bands, Lyle still found the time for folk bands in high school and rock bands thereafter, shortly before he earned his degree in electronics from Mountain View College in Dallas.

Lyle has attended music seminars on both U.S. Coasts, studied music with a Sufi teacher, and listened and observed to the gypsies play music all across Europe. Locally, Lyle has contributed short videos for the Dallas Video Festival, and has worked as an audio/video recording engineer for 20 years. In the late 1980s, inspired by the poster for Shepard's play *Lost Coyote Highway*, Lyle traveled west to find that very road.

Matthew Posey (ensemble) has appeared at the Undermain in Len Jenkin's *Margo Veil* and as Earl in Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*. He spent a decade in Los Angeles pursuing an acting career. His list of television movie credits include Jim in *Lonesome Dove*, Harry James in *Sinatra*, and various and sundry roles in *Movie of the Week*. His film credits include roles in films such as *True Stories*, *the Life of David Gale*, *JFK*, and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2000*. He was also founder and Artistic Director of the Deep Ellum Theatre Garage in Dallas, where he wrote, produced, and directed numerous stage plays. He received his MFA at American Film Institute and has recently directed *The Bottom Line* and *Waterclock*. Sara Romersburger (choreography).

Jeff Whittington (ensemble) has written music and played in rock bands his whole adult life. He's toured and performed with Adam's Farm, Deep Blue Something and most recently *The Hundred Inevitables*. Whittington holds a bachelor of arts degree in Music and English from the University of North Texas. He's a talk show producer and occasional on-air host at KERA 90.1 and he's a certified Starbucks barista - or at least he was 5 years ago.

Bryan Wofford (set designer) returns to the Undermain where he has previously worked on *Margo Veil: An Entertainment*, *A Number*, *Blasted*, *The Deatherians*, *A Por Quinly Christmas*, *Polaroid Storics*, and *Therese Raquin*. Other theatrical work includes, assistant technical director at the Dallas Theater Center, lead scenic artist for DS Arts, and resident designer at Plano Repertory Theatre. He is also a freelance set designer and scenic artist and has worked on numerous films including: *Air*, *The Operator*, and *Slap Her She's French*. Awards include: two Leon Rabin awards for best scenic design, two Critic Forum Awards, and one Readers Poll Award. Bryan recently worked on *The Time of Your Life* at Collin County Community College and *Sweeney Todd* at Bishop Lynch High School.

Happy Yancey (costume designer) is a long-time member of the Undermain Ensemble. She has designed the UMT productions of *Margo Veil: An Entertainment*, *A Number*, *Blasted*, *Silence*, *Beginner*, *The Red Plays*, *Wallpaper Psalm*, *Therese Raquin*, *A Murder of Crows*, *The Seagull*, *The Joy of Going Somewhere Definite*, *The Castle*, *Coaticook* (Soho Think Tank's Ice Factory Festival at The Ohio Theatre), *Glamour*, *A Man's Best Friend*, *The Late Henry Moss*, and *Two September*. She has also created numerous other costume and set designs for theatre and opera.

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