



For Immediate Release

LUTHER DICKINSON CELEBRATES HILL COUNTRY BLUES TRADITION AND SINGS HIS LIFE STORY ON *BLUES & BALLADS (A FOLKSINGER'S SONGBOOK: VOLUMES I & II)* DUE OUT FEBRUARY 5 ON NEW WEST RECORDS

VINYL VERSION FEATURES LIMITED EDITION SONGBOOK

"HURRY UP SUNRISE" PREMIERING AT THE BLUEGRASS SITUATION

LOS ANGELES, CA, December 14, 2015 – An ambitious double album, **Luther Dickinson's *Blues & Ballads (A Folksinger's Songbook: Volumes I & II)***, due **February 5, 2016** on **New West Records**, features twenty-one tunes from throughout the Memphis musician's impressive life and inimitable career—brand new songs, songs he wrote with his rock & roll band the North Mississippi Allstars, songs he learned from friends and family, songs passed down to him by his heroes and mentors, songs that have lived in the American subconscious for decades now—presented in a similar, stripped down palette of voice, guitar, drums and some blues fife and Beale Street piano. "This acoustic collection of songs interpreted simply, recorded live, solo or with a small group of friends reflects my relationship between music, songs, the written word and legacy," Dickinson explains. "*Blues & Ballads* celebrates the American oral tradition of blues and folk songs, not only being passed down and evolving but being transcribed (the original recording technique) and entered into the discipline of written sheet music and songbooks." To that end, the vinyl version of the album will come with a limited edition songbook complete with transcriptions for each song. Vinyl, CD and digital pre-orders are available now at lutherdickinson.com

Album opener, "**Hurry Up Sunrise**," premiering at **The Bluegrass Situation**, perfectly encapsulates the record's spirit. A song that Dickinson worked up from tapes of the late hill country blues fife-and-drum-master **Otha Turner**, it originally took the shape of an electrified rocker on the Allstars' 2005 album, *Electric Blue Watermelon*, but has been reinterpreted by being pared down to its irreducible elements. "Otha and I would spend evenings on his porch, playing hill country riffs on guitars, drinking moonshine, and shooting the breeze," reveals Dickinson. "Otha would berate us for playing without feeling, but would reward spirited playing by singing along improvising his corn field blues. Only his corn liquor got the neighborhood as excited as Otha busting into song, throwing his hat down, jumping up, and dancing. Otha passed at age 94, after which I transcribed a few recordings of these nights. 'Hurry Up Sunrise' is a collection of his improvised couplets. My father recognized the song as a duet, and it was a pleasure to record the song with Otha's granddaughter Shardé Thomas." Listen here:

<http://www.thebluegrassituation.com/read/listen-luther-dickinson-hurry-sunrise>

Dickinson is joined on the album by a host of friends including **Jason Isbell, Jim Lauderdale, Amy LaVere, Shardé Thomas, JJ Grey, Charles Hodges, Jimbo Mathus** and **Mavis Staples** who helps take "**Ain't No Grave**," a song Luther wrote after the passing of his father, the late, great music maverick, **Jim Dickinson**, to gorgeous new heights. It was this performance with Staples that sent Dickinson down the road toward *Blues & Ballads*, which he describes as a community project: "This is the most casual record I ever made. I'd record one or two songs at a time, very effortlessly and unstrategically. Then I started recording songs with different groups of friends, wherever I happened to be." Where he was included the Dickinson family studio in Mississippi, Zebra Ranch, Memphis' Sun Studio and Royal Studios as well as studios in Chicago and Nashville.

Of the songs, Dickinson says, "They tell my story of growing up in the modern day rural south amongst first generation Memphis rock 'n rolling, song collecting, folk bohemians, disapproving pre-rock 'n roll holy rollers, citified punk rockers and modern day blues giants, experiencing the miracle that was Fat Possum Records and Hill Country Blues in the '90s, singing my song in a language near extinction,

barely pre-Internet, when community, word of mouth, firsthand experience, books, records and art still ruled. When the elders began passing on, I realized that my family, friends and heroes should be made into folk heroes and their vernacular and stories should be sung.”

A lifelong lover and collector of songbooks, the vinyl version of the album fulfills a longtime desire of Dickinson's. “The vinyl art includes my dream come true – my songbook, a printed collection of my tunes (my life), transcribed and made to look legitimate. The limited pressing makes the legitimacy fleeting and as it should be: rare and underground. I represent the Memphis underground and the mid-south region's music. This art is not for the masses. It is meant to wither and fade and then rise from the ashes again and again, evolving and mutating.”

LUTHER DICKINSON ON TOUR

January 28 – New York, NY @ City Winery

February 4 – Jacksonville, FL @ Florida Theatre Jacksonville

February 5 – Tallahassee, FL @ Ruby Diamond Concert Hall

Blues & Ballads (A Folksinger's Songbook: Volumes I & II) Track Listing:

Volume I

- 1 Hurry Up Sunrise 3:53
- 2 Up Over Yonder (featuring JJ Grey) 3:19
- 3 Bang Bang Lulu 3:43
- 4 Moonshine 4:40
- 5 Jackson 3:46
- 6 Mean Ol' Wind Died Down 4:00
- 7 How I Wish My Train Would Come 4:32
- 8 Ain't No Grave (featuring Mavis Staples) 3:51
- 9 Let It Roll 4:02
10. My Leavin' 2:25

Volume II

1. Horseshoe (Reprise) 3:01
2. Highwater (Soldier) 3:06
3. And It Hurts 3:58
4. Storm 4:38
5. Mojo, Mojo 3:33
6. Ol' Cannonball 2:44
7. Devilment 3:21
8. Blow Out 1:59
9. Mayor Langford Birmingham Blues 2:49
10. Shake (Yo Mama) 3:19
11. Horseshoe 3:46

For press materials please visit: press.newwestrecords.com/luther-dickinson

Publicity Contact:

Tim Plumley

Sr. Director, Media Relations

New West Records

818-563-7553 | tim@newwestrecords.com