

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 24, 2014

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<http://www.mahaiwe.org/press.html>

**Mahaiwe Presents Natalie Merchant
July 5**

Great Barrington, Mass.— Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center will present Natalie Merchant and her band on Saturday, July 5 at 8:00pm. “Natalie Merchant is a new Mahaiwe audience favorite, having sold out her performance here with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic last year,” said Mahaiwe Executive Director Beryl Jolly. “We are delighted to welcome her back to Great Barrington to celebrate the release of her new album.”

Over her 30-year career, Merchant has earned a distinguished place among America’s most respected recording artists with a reputation for being a prolific songwriter with a compelling artistic vision and a unique and captivating performance style. With her latest and highly acclaimed Nonesuch recording entitled, *Leave Your Sleep*, which debuted on the Billboard Top 200 at No. 17, she embarks on a new artistic path, creating songs from literary inspiration which are composed for expanded musical ensembles and orchestra.

Merchant began her musical career as the lead vocalist and lyricist of the pop music band 10,000 Maniacs and released two platinum and four gold records with the group between 1981 and 1993 (*The Wishing Chair*, *In My Tribe*, *Blind Man’s Zoo*, *Hope Chest*, *Our Time in Eden*, and *MTV Unplugged*). Together with artists like R.E.M., they defined college rock and created the first wave of alternative rock bands and what became known as the alternative rock format on FM radio.

In 1994, Merchant began her solo career with a self-produced debut album, *Tigerlily*. In the years following, she released *Ophelia* (1998), *Natalie Merchant Live* (1999), and *Motherland* (2001). In 2003, she independently released an album of American and British folk music, *The House Carpenter's Daughter*, on her own label, Myth America Records.

Merchant has also collaborated both on stage and in the studio with a wide range of artists, including Philip Glass, Wynton Marsalis, David Byrne, The Chieftains, Mavis Staples, R.E.M., Daniel Lanois, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Tracy Chapman, Dan Zanes, Billy Bragg, and Wilco.

Tickets are \$40 to \$90. Note: This concert is nearly sold out. The Mahaiwe is located at 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Box office hours are Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 6:00pm and three hours before show times. For tickets and information, see www.mahaiwe.org or call 413.528.0100.

About the Mahaiwe

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, “Live in HD” broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905 and has been in continuous operation for over 100 years. In 2005, the theater experienced a renaissance as a beautifully restored 681-seat venue to offer a broad range of cultural and community events. Today’s “Mahaiwe Mix” of diverse, high quality programming strives to provide meaningful, memorable entertainment for all ages and interests.

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