

Claude Russell Bridges was born in Lawton, Oklahoma, April 2, 1942, and began playing the piano at the age of four. He graduated from Will Rogers High School in Tulsa. His genres included pop, rock, blues, country, bluegrass, standards, gospel and surf records. His collaborations rank as some of the most successful in music history. As a touring musician, he performed with hundreds of notable artists and recorded 33 albums and at least 430 songs.

Over the course of his 60-year career Bridges was awarded a Grammy and six gold records. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame in 2006 and made a member of the Will Rogers High School Hall of Fame in 2009. In 2011, he was inducted into both the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame.



Leon Russell

Bridges began his musical career at the age of 14 in the nightclubs of Tulsa. He was an original member of the Starlighters, formed by classmate Johnny Williams, with Chuck Blackwell, Lucky Clark and Leo Feathers. Others, including J.J. Cale and Jimmy Markham, joined at various times. The group toured with Jerry Lee Lewis and was instrumental in creating the style of music known as the "Tulsa Sound." Bridges also played with David Gates in high school as the Accents and, later, the Fencemen. He took the name Leon Russell from a friend who lent him an ID to get into clubs, where he was legally too young to perform.

He moved from Tulsa to Los Angeles in 1959 where, as a first-call studio musician, he played on many of the most pop-

ular songs of the 1960s. He played piano with the Wrecking Crew, an informal name for the top L.A. session musicians of the '60s. He wrote "Delta Lady," recorded by Joe Cocker, and organized and performed with Cocker's "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" tour in 1970. His "A Song for You" has been recorded by more than 200 artists, and "This Masquerade" by more than 75. Russell produced and played in recording sessions for Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra, Ike & Tina Turner, the Rolling Stones, and many others.

He performed at the Concert for Bangladesh in 1971 along with George Harrison, Dylan, and Eric Clapton. The list goes on.

One of his biggest early fans, Elton John, said Russell was a "mentor" and "inspiration." They recorded their album "The Union" in 2010, which earned them a Grammy nomination.

Russell moved back to Tulsa where he opened The Church Studio at 3rd Street and Trenton Avenue, home to Shelter Records, bringing top artists to record from 1972-76. He had a home in the historic Maple Ridge District as well as Grand Lake of the Cherokees. In addition to The Church Studio, he had recording studios at his mid-town home and his lake house.

Before leaving Tulsa again, Russell had operated for a short time the 1938 vintage art deco Delman movie theater at 15th Street and Lewis Avenue as an entertainment venue, adding the word Apollo to its signage. He moved back to Los Angeles then to suburban Nashville.

Russell died quietly in his sleep on Nov. 13, 2016, at age 74. He is interred at Memorial Park Cemetery in Tulsa.



LEON RUSSELL
PIANO DEDICATION & TRIBUTE CONCERT
Historic Will Rogers High School
 Tulsa, Oklahoma • February 9, 2019

Will Rogers High School (its traditional name) was completed in 1939 during the Great Depression as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project. This art deco masterpiece is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its balconied auditorium resembles a luxury theater, seating 1,406. The elaborate stage is curved and fluted with brass onsets of a fan and a floral design in terracotta red, brass, gold leaf and tan.

Brass lights and false balconies add to the theatrical atmosphere. The plaster ceiling is ornate, decorated with painted, cast plaster beams.

Dominating the west wall of the auditorium is a mural. The John Greenleaf Whittier verse about westward expansion is illustrated with figures of pioneers and Native Americans. This auditorium is a spectacular venue, beautifully maintained in its original condition, and recently outfitted with state of the art audio and lighting systems. It is acoustically perfect, an ideal place for this concert.



Historic Will Rogers Auditorium

The Will Rogers High School Community Foundation, Inc., formed in 2010, is the underwriter of this concert. Its primary mission is to raise and receive charitable contributions from friends and alumni of Will Rogers High School and from the general public, to manage and invest the contributed property and funds, and to make distributions to the school in support of the school's mission and priorities.

The foundation has granted more than a half-million dollars for projects requested by faculty members; provides academic scholarships, supplies and equipment; conducts public tours of the historic building; supports organized athletics and other extra-curricular activities; and is responsible for the continued operation of the Hall of Fame, which not only honors distinguished alumni, but also inspires current students. The Hall of Fame corridor is on the west side of the main (second) floor.



Unveiling Hall of Fame Display

The Will Rogers High School Community Foundation, Inc., is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an I.R.C. § 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. Donations are tax-deductible and may be sent to the Treasurer, P.O. Box 52845, Tulsa, OK 74152.

A veteran journalist who launched his writing career by selling comic book scripts, John Wooley has covered a wide range of topics, not only in his newspaper career, but also in his books. In 2003, Wooley became the first writer to be inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. In 2009, he was an inductee into both the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Cartoonists Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame in 2015.



John Wooley

John is also the producer and host of "Swing on This," Tulsa's only western-swing radio program, that airs every Saturday night on NPR affiliate KWGS 89.5 FM. John is our show's master of ceremonies.



We are grateful to Teresa Knox, Steve ('59) and Dollie ('62) Chesebro', The Mervin Bovaird Foundation and the Oxley Foundation for their generous financial support.

Leon Russell's posterized image was created for this event by Randy Riggs.

The 1937 Baldwin model F grand piano #86190 being played in today's concert was acquired by Tulsa Public Schools when the school opened in the fall of 1939. Over the first 79 years, it saw a lot of abuse and was in bad shape externally until last spring, when the Will Rogers High School Community Foundation came to its rescue, contracting with local registered piano technician John Miller for a complete restoration. "I only coordinated the project," Miller admits, crediting four specialized craftsmen who actually did the restoration work.

"Travis Jenkins of Jenkins Piano Company replaced the pin block, repaired the soundboard, refinished the plate and did the restringing," says Miller. "Travis Moore of E.A. Moore Refinishing repaired and refinished the case. Greg Lynch installed new action parts and regulated and voiced the piano. The keys were sent to Yvonne Ashmore, Ashmore Piano Keyboard Restorations, of Grass Valley, Calif., for recovering and restoration of the keys."

When Russell Bridges, as he was then known, was a student at Will Rogers High School in 1956-59, he would come onto the stage during his lunch periods, push back the cover and play. Students would gather and encourage him. He was a classically trained pianist by the

time he was in high school, but he used this opportunity to hone his techniques in rock and roll music that would later inspire other musicians such as Elton John and earn him a place in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. His unique sound can be heard on numerous hit recordings

by other artists, some made when he was a member of the "Wrecking Crew" session musicians group in Los Angeles.

The restoration was performed through the generosity of Preston C. Caruthers, class of 1945. After he finished his junior year at Will Rogers, where he was class vice president, like scores of his classmates he answered the call to arms for World War II. Concurrent with his induction into the Will Rogers High School

Hall of Fame, he was awarded his diploma in 2011, under an Oklahoma statute recognizing wartime service.

The instrument was delivered in September 2018. Cost was \$23,790. Dr. Darryl DeBorde, immediate past president of the foundation, describes the restoration as an act of support for the arts in Tulsa, hoping it will produce another Leon Russell. Fittingly, this piano is dedicated in honor of Claude Russell Bridges, class of 1959, professionally known as Leon Russell, for his significant contributions to music, with appreciation to Preston C. Caruthers.



Preston C. Caruthers



Church Studio Memorabilia Collection Items on Display

Several items from The Church Studio Archive are on display at this event.

This is a rare collection of over 4,000 artifacts, documents, recordings and memorabilia

associated with Leon Russell, Shelter Records, "Tulsa Sound" musicians and the historic Church Studio.

The collection will be housed in a new wing on the south side of the original building at 3rd Street and

Trenton Avenue in Tulsa's Pearl District. It is a celebration of love, life and music, according to owner Teresa Knox. Materials will be available to view on-site when The Church

Studio, under complete renovation, opens in late 2019. Due to high demand, access to the archive will be granted only by appointment to individuals with qualified research projects.



Concert Being Recorded in Ultra High Definition

Oklahoma State University's School of Media and Strategic Communications student media department, headed by Max Andrews, who has nearly 50 years' experience in commercial television, is capturing this concert in ultra-high-definition (UHDTV or 4K) with multiple cameras. The audio is being recorded separately on a 32-channel digital mixer, then will be mixed at Teegarden Studios. The video will be merged with the audio master in post-production. Award-winning photojournalist and cinematographer Kelly Kerr, also with OSU, will direct the recording and supervise the editing.

"We consider the preservation of this event very important, not just for archival purposes, but to have the footage available for future educational projects," explains Dick Risk, the show's producer. "We sincerely appreciate the sponsors who underwrote this project."

The O'Colly Media Group is a student-run, faculty-supervised independent news and information organization on the Oklahoma State University campus. The student group delivers content to interested readers and viewers using print and digital distribution, including a campus newspaper and magazine, and television, radio, and online outlets.

The student media organization's mission is to offer students real-life media experience outside the classroom. "OMG students are excited to be a part of the production of the Leon Russell Tribute. The experience will serve as a valuable part of a student's education," says Andrews.



Paul Benjamin
Guitar, vocals



Ann Bell
Vocals



Jared Tyler
Vocals, guitar



Brian Lee
Piano, vocals



Johnny Williams
Saxophone



Brandon Holder
Drums



Frank Padilla
Percussion



Beau Charron
Guitar



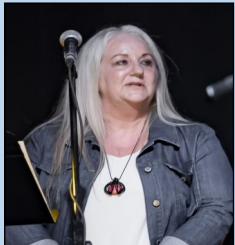
Alan Ransom
Bass



Jennifer Marriott
Background vocals



Pete Marriott
Background vocals



Wanda Watson
Background vocals



Jamie Oldaker
Drums



Peter de les Dernier
Keyboards



David Teegarden
Drums



Billy Estes
Drums

Lineup of artists and songs subject to change.

Photos of current musicians courtesy of Phil Clarkin.



Bobby Taylor
Vocals



Corey Mauser
Keyboards



John Wooley
Emcee

LEON RUSSELL

PIANO DEDICATION & TRIBUTE CONCERT

Tight Rope †

C.R. Bridges; Irving Music, Inc. (BMI)

Out in the Woods †‡

C.R. Bridges; Irving Music, Inc. (BMI)

Prince of Peace †

Greg Dempsey, Leon Russell; Irving Music Inc. (BMI)

Stranger in a Strange Land †

Don J. Preston, Leon Russell; Irving Music, Inc. (BMI)

Hummingbird ‡

Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Reservoir One America (BMI)

Roll Away the Stone ‡

Greg Dempsey, Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Reservoir One America (BMI)

Shoot Out on the Plantation ‡

Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Irving Music, Inc., Reservoir One America (BMI)

This Masquerade +

Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp. (BMI)

Superstar

Bonnie Lynn Bramlett, Delaney Bramlett, Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Reservoir One America (BMI)

Honky Tonk Women

Michael Phillip Jagger, Keith Richard; Abkco Music, Inc. (BMI)

Jumpin' Jack Flash

Michael Phillip Jagger, Keith Richard; Abkco Music, Inc. (BMI)

A Song for You ✕

Leon Russell; Irving Music, Inc. (BMI)

Sweet Emily ✕

Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Reservoir One America (BMI)

Over the Rainbow ✕

Screen Gems-EMI Music, Inc. (BMI)

Home Sweet Oklahoma †

Leon Russell; Embassy Music Corp., Reservoir One America (BMI)

Performed by: † Paul Benjamin, ‡ Jared Tyler, + Johnny Williams and Bobby Taylor, # Ann Bell, ✕ Brian Lee

*Still and video photography are permitted, if unobtrusive.
Please do not use flash. Please silence cell phones.*



(L-R) THE ACCENTS: David Gates, Don Kimmel, Gerald Goodwin, Russell Bridges (sitting); THE STARLIGHTERS: Leo Feathers, Chuck Blackwell, Ron Ryles (substituting for Lucky Clark), Johnny Williams, Bridges, "Jumpin'" Jack Dunham, Jimmy "Junior" Markham; THE FENCEMEN: Blackwell, Gates, Bridges

PRODUCTION STAFF: Richard (Dick) Risk ('59), producer; Teresa Knox, co-producer and marketing; Paul Benjamin, music director; John Wooley, master of ceremonies; Jo Anne Lewis, '55, location coordinator; Karen Miller, stagecraft and house manager; Kent Harris, lighting; Max Andrews and Kelly Kerr, O'Colly Media Group, video capture and post-production editing; Ben Bruce and Steven Smalley, Axiom Audio, audio capture and house mix; David Teegarden and Brett Baldwin, Teegarden Studios, post-production audio mixing; Phil Clarkin, still photography.

WILL ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: Loretta (Lori) Roberts ('81), president; Darryl DeBorde, immediate past president; Richard (Dick) Risk ('59), founder and authorized representative; Jo Anne Lewis ('55), production liaison; Nicolette (Nikki) Dennis, principal (ex officio).