

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

May 10, 2022

**Arts Council Contact: Rosalyn Thackston**

410-848-7272

[Rosalyn@CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org](mailto:Rosalyn@CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org)

**Artist Contact: Penny Guyon**

[penny@firefly-media.net](mailto:penny@firefly-media.net)

## **Singer-songwriter A.J. Croce in concert at the Carroll Arts Center**

Acclaimed piano virtuoso A.J. Croce closes out the 21/22 season at the Carroll Arts Center with a concert on Friday, June 10 at 8pm. The son of famed folk singer Jim Croce, A.J. has earned his own reputation as a talented songwriter, a dynamic pianist, and a serious vocal stylist.

Over his ten studio albums, it's clear that A.J. Croce holds an abiding love for all types of musical genres: Blues, Soul, Pop, Jazz, and Rock n' Roll. Croce toured with B.B. King and Ray Charles before reaching the age of 21, and over his career, he has performed with a wide range of musicians, from Willie Nelson to the Neville Brothers; Béla Fleck to Ry Cooder. A.J. has also co-written songs with such formidable tunesmiths as Leon Russell, Dan Penn, Robert Earl Keen and multi-Grammy winner Gary Nicholson. The Nashville-based singer/songwriter has landed 18 singles on a variety of Top 20 charts. His newest album, "By Request," was born of memories — of favorite artists and shows, but mostly, of late-night gatherings with groups of friends, many of them fellow musicians, with Croce at the piano taking requests. Croce revisits these musical evenings on "By Request" with 12 personally curated covers that traverse decades and genres, propelled by his spirited, piano mastery and emotive vocals. It's a tribute to Croce the music fan and Croce the musician.

A.J.'s deep love for music is understandable considering that his mother, Ingrid, was a singer/songwriter as was his father, the late Jim Croce. His father died in a tragic plane crash just before his second birthday. A.J., who started playing piano at a young age, purposely avoided his father's music in order to establish his own identity as a musician. A.J.'s relationship with his father's music began changing around a dozen years ago, when he began digitizing his father's tapes. One old cassette contained a bar performance of Jim Croce playing blues tunes that had influenced him. These were deep-cuts by folks like Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Blake, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, and A.J. was amazed since these songs were the ones that he had been playing since he was 12. A.J. Croce's family musical legacy is just part of his very unique life story. Around the age of four, he went blind due to horrific physical abuse from his mother's then-boyfriend. A.J. was totally blind in both eyes for six years. It was during this time that he started playing piano, inspired by blind pianists like Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. Croce, who regained sight in his left eye when he was ten, went on to spend his early teen years performing, including at his mother's establishment, Croce's Jazz Bar.

As he celebrates 30 years as a career musician, he says of his newest album, "'By Request' is my way of inviting you over for a private gathering at my place. We listen to great music, laugh, make great food and after a few drinks and maybe a few more we end up in my music room and I start taking requests of every genre and era. The music is always fun and completely diverse. We'll play and sing all kinds of music. Some of my friends are professional musicians, some do it for fun and many friends are just serious music fans. So you'll fit right in. Welcome to my home, by request, you're hereby invited to join the party."

Face masks are optional inside the Carroll Arts Center. These health policies may be modified in the future. Read the Carroll Arts Center's most current health and safety protocols at [CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org/covid-19-policies](http://CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org/covid-19-policies).

Tickets are \$35 Adults / \$32 ages 25 & Under and ages 60 & Up. CCAC Members get an additional 10% off. Tickets can be purchased online at [CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org](http://CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org) or by calling the box office at 410-848-7272. The Carroll Arts Center is located at 91 West Main Street in Downtown Westminster.

###

CALENDAR LISTING (please list under Live Music or related category)

"A.J. Croce." Fri. June 10 at 8pm. Acclaimed pianist and singer-songwriter A.J. Croce continues his family's musical legacy with a concert of originals and twists on classic songs traversing all genres. \$32-\$35. Carroll Arts Center, 91 W Main Street, Westminster, MD 21157. [410-848-7272](tel:410-848-7272). Tickets and more info at [CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org](http://CarrollCountyArtsCouncil.org).

PHOTO CREDIT: Joshua Black Wilkins