Meet Dan Zanes & Claudia Elias

Grammy Award-winner Dan Zanes occupies a unique place in American music. Referred to by Time Magazine as “the family-music genre’s most outspoken and eloquent advocate,” and by NPR as, “The Gold Standard in kid’s music,” his critically-acclaimed work has been featured on Sesame Street, Playhouse Disney, Nickelodeon, HBO Family and Sprout. In the 1980s, Zanes was a member of The Del Fuegos, a roots rock band. After becoming a father in 1994, he began trying to create music that he and his daughter could enjoy together as a shared experience, an updated version of the Folkways records he grew up on. In 2017, Zanes and his wife, Haitian-American jazz vocalist Music Therapist Claudia Eliaza, premiered Night Train 57: A Sensory Friendly Comic Folk Opera at The Kennedy Center, the first piece commissioned by The Kennedy Center to be created as a Sensory Friendly experience. Dan and Claudia believe that Sensory Friendly is the future of family entertainment and have committed to presenting their work in this inclusive manner. Zanes and Eliaza are currently touring for Night Train 57 and the new album, Lead Belly, Babyl, which celebrates the children’s music of his childhood inspiration Lead Belly – the Godfather of modern family music. In between tours, Zanes teaches guitar and ukulele on Sonic Junction, the leader in online instructional videos, and lists obsessively to Haitian music.

About the Book

Zanes has curated a rich selection of 64 soulful songs from an essential cross-section of folk styles while highlighting their multicultural roots. The book includes background narratives for each song, essays on the nature of music-making in the home and community, notation and chords by Eliaza, and inspired inspirations from longtime collaborator Donald Saaf. More than just a collection of songs, it is part music book, part history lesson, part conversation with an old friend, and a work that all ages can enjoy—together.

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