

**BURNSVILLE, N.C.** — RiddleFest promises musical excellence with a talented lineup performing at Burnsville Town Center on Saturday, June 22, for the annual event honoring the legacy of Yancey County native and musician Lesley Riddle.

Grammy-winning musician Dom Flemons headlines the concert. Flemons was a founding member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops who won a Grammy for Best Traditional Folk Album in 2010. In 2014, Flemons left the group to pursue his solo career. His 2018 album, “Dom Flemons Presents Black Cowboys,” received a Grammy nomination. Flemons is a music scholar, historian, record collector and multi-instrumentalist, and is known as “The American Songster” because his repertoire covers more than 100 years of American folklore, ballads and tunes.

“When you look at popular music like this, it’s so inviting for everyone,” says Tim Babb, a board member for Traditional Voices Group, which puts on RiddleFest. “It doesn’t matter if you’re just a listener or a scholar, this is a wonderful musical experience for the whole community.”

Bill and the Belles, the house band for The Birthplace of Country Music Museum, in Bristol, Virginia, open for Flemons. The band draws its musical style from the East Tennessee old-time traditions popularized in the 1920s, ’30s and ’40s.

The Griffith Chapel Singers, a local choral group with connections to the Riddle family, kick off the evening with gospel tunes.

The festival’s namesake, Lesley Riddle, traveled the Appalachian region with A.P. Carter in the 1920s on song-collecting trips. Carter gathered the lyrics, while Riddle learned the music. The Carter Family went on to record those songs and form the beginnings of today’s country music, while the contributions by Riddle, an African-American, went overlooked for decades.

“Lesley Riddle was part of the foundational work of what we consider country music,” Babb says. “Understanding who Riddle was helps us appreciate where we are right now.”

The concert starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20. To purchase, go to [www.EventBrite.com](http://www.EventBrite.com) and search “RiddleFest,” or call Burnsville Town Center at (828) 682-7209.

At 3 p.m., Flemons and Kris Truelsen, band leader for Bill and the Belles, lead a free seminar titled “Old Songs, Fresh Voices.”

For more info: [www.TraditionalVoicesGroup.com/RiddleFest-2019](http://www.TraditionalVoicesGroup.com/RiddleFest-2019) or (828) 682-9654.

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