ARTISTS
Phillip Phillips, vocals and guitar
Dave Eggar, cello

PROGRAM
Tonight’s program will be announced from the stage.

Singer-songwriter Olivia Davis will perform a 30-minute set at 7:00 pm in the Gunn Atrium.

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and turn off all phones, pagers, and watch alarms, and unwrap all lozenges prior to the performance. Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.
PHILLIP PHILLIPS

While touring the United States and beyond throughout 2013, singer-guitarist Phillip Phillips kept up with a songwriting practice built on his lifelong passion for rugged, rootsy rock-and-roll music. The follow-up to 2012’s The World from the Side of the Moon (a platinum-plus-selling album that debuted at number four on the Billboard 200 and featured the five-times-platinum smash hit “Home”), Phillips’ sophomore album Behind the Light finds the 23-year-old Georgia native offering up a batch of songs marked by a more ambitious and refined sensibility but still powered by the earthy authenticity that has long shaped his sound. With each song written or cowritten by Phillips, Behind the Light also showcases the guitar skills he began honing by learning to play at age 14 and recently sharpened by joining Matchbox Twenty and John Mayer on tour and sharing the stage with Bruce Springsteen at the 2013 Rock in Rio festival.

To record Behind the Light (19 Entertainment/Interscope Records), Phillips again teamed up with Gregg Wattenberg (the Grammy-nominated producer behind The World from the Side of the Moon as well as releases from Five for Fighting, Goo Goo Dolls, Train, and O.A.R.). Holing up in New York City’s Quad Studios in the middle of 2013’s brutal winter—and joining forces with the musicians who form his tight-knit live band—Phillips dedicated himself to broadening his impassioned brand of rock with an edgy ingenuity he’s newly explored through such artists as Radiohead and Peter Gabriel. Moody and more darkly charged but full of arena-sized rock anthems, Behind the Light features lead single “Raging Fire,” an epic and urgent love song that debuted in the Billboard Hot 100 upon its March 2014 release and quickly earned raves for Phillips’ stirring vocal delivery and thrilling guitar work.

Like “Raging Fire,” all of Behind the Light backs its big emotion and unbridled energy with sprawling arrangements and melody-minded songcraft. After opening with a cascade of guitars on “Searchlight” (a lush and harmony-laced number that shimmers with a sense of redemption), the album soars on to capture a powerful spectrum of moods. Tracks like the gorgeously string-accented “Unpack Your Heart” embody hope and joyful courage, while dream-like imagery and mournful cello lend “Thicket” a shadowy cinematic feel, and “Fly” emerges as a glorious all-out rocker fueled by tense and nervy pedal steel guitar. And although Behind the Light has its share of brash and brooding moments (such as on “Trigger,” a pained love song intensified by Phillips’ scorching guitar solo), a triumphant spirit prevails throughout the album, a testament to Phillips’ warm yet commanding grasp as a songwriter and performer.

For Phillips, the scope and power of Behind the Light owes much to his taking time to feel out each song and push into territory he hadn’t charted before. “I don’t believe in forcing a song, so if I start out with a particular vision and then it takes a different turn, I’m going to follow that and see what happens,” says Phillips. “With this album, I felt like I was growing with the songs as I was writing them, and because of that, the music’s more complex and there are some really cool changes all over the record.” In terms of the lyrical content on Behind the Light, Phillips drew inspiration from musing on the passage of time and all its pain and wonder. “A lot of the songs are about growing up and starting to feel that gravity’s making its way into your life,” explains Phillips. “It’s a scary thing, but at the same time, it’s also kind of beautiful.” When it came time to record Behind the Light, Phillips first gathered his band together to further mold each of the songs selected for the album. “We spent some time just playing everything really roughly, sort of jamming it all out, which I think helped a lot in making this album sound more like a band record,” Phillips says.

That band-centric dynamic has long been key to Phillips, who formed his first group as a teenager in Leesburg, Georgia. An acoustic outfit, the band included Phillips’ older sister and her husband Benjamin Neil, through whom Phillips first learned to play guitar and soon found himself mastering riffs from classic-rock tracks like Deep Purple’s “Smoke on the Water” and Ozzy Osbourne’s “Crazy Train.” After graduating from high school, Phillips started studying industrial systems technology at Albany Technical College in Georgia and continued playing music and cultivating his own sound and style. “I grew up on musicians and bands from the ’60s and ’70s, stuff like Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin,” states Phillips, who also names Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan as two top inspirations for his guitar work. “Then as I got older, I found Damien Rice and Dave Matthews and John Butler, which is what really set it off for me in terms of finding my voice as a musician.”

In the summer of 2011, with much encouragement from his family and friends, the then-20-year-old took a break from working in his family’s pawnshop to audition for the 11th season of American Idol. After tearing through full-throated performances of songs by artists like Creedence Clearwater Revival and Wilson Pickett on the Idol stage, Phillips finished out the season as its winner. Released the same day that he claimed his coronation song of any Idol winner—as well as
the highest-ever debut on the Billboard digital songs chart, with 278,000 downloads sold.

After touring extensively since his American Idol experience, Phillips notes that he developed each of the songs on Behind the Light with an eye toward their impact in a live setting. “One of the reasons I took more time with these songs is that if you force it, then you might not feel it, and it’s really important to me that all the songs have so much emotion that I might even feel something new and different every time I play them,” he says. “What I’m most proud of with this album is it really represents how I play live,” Phillips continues. “It’s very jam oriented and free and true to the rock side of things, and the band and I always just try to keep everything as organic and raw as we possibly can.”

DAVE EGGAR
A musical prodigy as a child, Dave Eggar began playing the cello and piano at age three, performed on Broadway and with the Metropolitan Opera at age seven, and debuted at Carnegie Hall at age 15. He is a graduate of Harvard University and the Julliard School’s doctoral program.

Egger has performed worldwide as a solo cellist and pianist. A virtuoso of many styles, Eggar has performed and recorded with artists in numerous genres, including Evanescence, the Who, Michael Brecker, Josh Groban, Coldplay, Beyoncé, Pearl Jam, Fall Out Boy, David Sanborn, Kathleen Battle, Ray LaMontagne, Roberta Flack, the Spin Doctors, Dianne Reeves, Brandy, Carly Simon, Phil Ramone, Hannah Montana, Duncan Sheik, Sinéad O’Connor, Bon Jovi, the Manhattan Transfer, Corinne Bailey Ray, and many more.

His list of accomplishments includes accolades and awards from Time magazine; the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers; the National Endowment for the Arts; and the Geraldine R. Dodge and Leonard Bernstein Foundations. At 15, he was the youngest winner in the history of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions competition. He also won the Sony Records Elevated Standards Award in classical music.

Egger’s fourth solo release, Kingston Morning, was recorded in Brooklyn, New York; Kingston, Jamaica; and Big Stone Gap, Virginia. It was released on Domo Records in 2010. Eggar’s mission to “not just cross over but cross through” multiple genres of music is apparent with all his releases. Whether it’s classical, reggae, bluegrass, jazz, pop, or world music, he finds a common voice within his musical vocabulary and introduces it with his own unique, imaginative vision.

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