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ARTIST BIO: LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III (revised September-2021)

Born in Chapel Hill, N.C. in 1946, Loudon Wainwright III came to fame when “Dead Skunk” became a Top 20 hit in 1972. He had studied acting at Carnegie-Mellon University, but dropped out to partake in the “Summer of Love” in San Francisco, and wrote his first song in 1968 (“Edgar,” about a lobsterman in Rhode Island).

He was soon signed to Atlantic Records by Nesuhi Ertegun, and was lured by Clive Davis to Columbia Records, which released “Dead Skunk.” His songs have since been recorded by Bonnie Raitt, Johnny Cash, Earl Scruggs, Kate & Anna McGarrigle, his son Rufus Wainwright, and Mose Allison, among others. Wainwright has recorded 27 albums including his 2010 Grammy Award-winning ‘High, Wide & Handsome.’

In October of 2020 Loudon unveiled the album ‘I’d Rather Lead A Band,’ in which he is featured as a vocalist with Vince Giordano and The Nighthawks. The 14 -song collection of classic songs from the 1920s and ‘30s was widely acclaimed. During the pandemic, Wainwright has produced a number of virtual shows, including “The Special Relationship” (presented by the Royal Albert Hall) and “The Great Unknown,” a musical tribute to his friend, the late George Gerdes. Also featured in that show were Richard Thompson, Suzanne Vega, Steve Forbert, and the members of Spinal Tap.

In Fall 2018, Loudon released ‘Years In The Making’ (StorySound Records), a 42-song treasury of rare and unreleased Loudoniana. This 2-disc, 60-page hardbound audio-biography of his 40-year career includes orphaned album cuts, lovingly lo-fi home recordings, radio appearances, demos, live performances and beyond. It features appearances by Kate McGarrigle, Suzzy Roche, Bill Frisell, Van Dyke Parks, Chaim Tannenbaum, David Mansfield, and the Wainwright children Rufus, Martha, Lucy and Lexie.

In 2017, Wainwright published his memoir, ‘LINER NOTES’ (Blue Rider Press), which led to appearances on Fresh Air with Terry Gross and WTF with Marc Maron. The NY Times said the book “makes your heart wobble on its axis.”

Wainwright also created a one-man theatrical show, *Surviving Twin*, which combines his songs and the writings of his late father. Initially developed as part of University of North Carolina's Playmakers series, it focuses on fatherhood—both being a father and having one—and also explores the issues of birth, self-identity, loss, mortality, fashion, and of course, pet ownership. *Surviving Twin* has been performed in limited theater engagements and is available as a Netflix special, produced by Judd Apatow and directed by Christopher Guest.

Additionally, Wainwright has co-written with songwriter/producer Joe Henry on the music for Judd Apatow’s hit movie *Knocked Up*, written music for the British theatrical adaptation of the Carl Hiaasen novel *Lucky You*, and composed topical songs for NPR’s *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* and ABC’s *Nightline*. An accomplished actor, he has appeared in films directed by Martin Scorsese, Hal Ashby, Christopher Guest, Tim Burton, Cameron Crowe and Judd Apatow. Wainwright has also starred on TV in *M.A.S.H.* and *Undeclared*, and on Broadway in *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. More recently, he appeared in the film *Pleased To Meet You* (with fellow music legends John Doe, Aimee Mann and Joe Henry), and the television series, "Mosaic," directed by Steven Soderbergh.