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***LISTEN TO ME: BUDDY HOLLY* CELEBRATES 75TH BIRTHDAY OF ONE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL'S
MOST INFLUENTIAL PIONEERS**

**COLLECTION FEATURES MODERN TAKES ON HOLLY'S CLASSIC HITS PERFORMED BY
RINGO STARR, STEVIE NICKS, THE FRAY, IMELDA MAY, ZOOEY DESCHANEL, JACKSON BROWNE,
NATALIE MERCHANT, JEFF LYNNE, BRIAN WILSON, AND MORE**

STAR-STUDED NEW ALBUM EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY PETER ASHER

**SONGMASTERS' CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES MUSIC'S *TRUE. GREAT. ORIGINALS.* WITH
PROCEEDS BENEFITTING MUSIC INDUSTRY CHARITABLE PROGRAMS FOR NEXT GENERATION
OF MUSIC GREATS**

YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN INCLUDES CONCERTS, TALENT COMPETITION, PBS SPECIAL, MORE

***LISTEN TO ME: BUDDY HOLLY* ARRIVES VIA VERVE/ FORECAST IN US AND eOne MUSIC
CANADA ON SEPTEMBER 6TH**

(New York, NY) Songmasters announces the upcoming release of *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly*, an extraordinary new collection featuring contemporary takes on songs originally written and performed by the late, great Buddy Holly. The album – presented as part of Songmasters' innovative *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* multi-media campaign – arrives in stores and at all digital retailers via Verve/Forecast Records in the US and in eOne Music Canada **on September 6th**. International release follows.

Listen To Me: Buddy Holly features a remarkable line-up of artists paying tribute to the iconic work of an artist many consider to be the first true “singer/songwriter” performer of the rock ‘n’ roll era. Among those contributing brand-new recordings to the collection are Stevie Nicks, Patrick Stump, Jeff Lynne, Natalie Merchant, Imelda May, Lyle Lovett, Jackson Browne, The Fray, Cobra Starship, Brian

Wilson, Chris Isaak, Pat Monahan (of Train), Zooey Deschanel, Eric Idle, and the one and only Ringo Starr. The album will include the incomparable version of “That’ll Be The Day” recorded originally by Linda Ronstadt and produced by Asher. Never bested, this track remains, according to Asher, the most outstanding version of that Holly classic available.

“We are trying to keep Buddy Holly’s name alive so younger generations can appreciate it the way I do,” says Brian Wilson. “Buddy is unique. He matters because his music is timeless.”

Listen To Me: Buddy Holly is Executive Produced by multiple GRAMMY Award-winning producer/artist/manager/executive Peter Asher, whose own personal connection to Holly’s music goes back to 1965, when Peter & Gordon’s timeless cover of “True Love Ways” proved a massive hit both here and in the U.K. In addition, Asher produced Linda Ronstadt’s smash renditions of “It’s So Easy” and “That’ll Be The Day,” both of which served to further bolster the amazing durability of Holly’s legacy.

“Buddy showed us how brilliant and unforgettable songs could be written using the simplest of chords,” says Asher. “He taught us the value of a lyric which came from the heart and the importance of making records the way you heard them in your head. His music has never ceased to play a major role in my life and work.”

Boasting a line-up hailed by Holly’s widow, Maria Elena, as “fantastic,” *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* stands tall among the many tribute albums devoted to Holly’s work. These exceptional interpretations, produced by Asher and performed by artists whose own noteworthy careers span three generations of post-Buddy rock ‘n’ roll, create an innovative collection of “modern authentics” that showcase the versatility, range, and across-the-board appeal of Buddy’s music.

“Nothing that’s happened since [the beginning of rock] can really obscure the power and influence of Buddy’s original records and his contribution to music,” declared Jackson Browne in his studio session for the album. “Things that are immortal have a way of continuing to be born in the world.”

Ringo Starr (who contributes a delightful take on “Think It Over” to the album) put it plainly: “In the whole of rock ‘n’ roll history, he’s in the top 10!”

The *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* campaign celebrates what would have been Holly's 75th birthday by honoring his brief but brilliant life and career through an astonishing range of events, recordings, and charitable programs over the next year. September 7th – Holly's birthday – will see the long awaited unveiling of Holly's much-deserved star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame – a permanent public monument to a genuinely noteworthy artist. Peter Asher will be among the featured speakers at the event, which will be hosted by the owners and publishers of Holly's catalog.

That evening, a number of the stars featured on *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* – along with special surprise guest artists and friends and family from Holly's too-brief life – will team up for Songmasters' "Ultimate Buddy Party," an invitation-only V.I.P. concert event to be held at The Music Box in Hollywood. Asher will serve as the evening's musical supervisor, with the performers backed by a stellar house band led by renowned session guitarist, Waddy Wachtel. The concert event will be shot live in HD for broadcast starting with PBS' December 2011 pledge drive, followed by a deluxe DVD/CD release. Further details will be announced prior to that release.

The *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* celebration continues in October with the kick-off of the *Listen To Me "True. Great. Original. National Talent Competition,"* a distinctively formatted search for the next generation of true, great, original music artists. Conducted in collaboration with OurStage, the contest will see participants competing in three performance categories reflecting Holly's lasting musical legacy.

"Buddy did everything he could to make sure that talented young musicians and songwriters got a real chance," explains Maria Elena Holly. "He even started his own label – he called it 'Prism' – to make this possible. He would be especially thrilled, as I am, that so many outstanding artists are part of this effort to honor his personal commitment to recognize and help great young musical talent."

Listen To Me: Buddy Holly marks the inaugural event of Songmasters' *Listen To Me* series of year-long multi-media celebrations of the *True. Great. Original.* artists who forever changed modern music and culture. Each future campaign will feature today's leading and emerging artists paying tribute to their musical forebears to raise support and awareness for the next generation of songwriters, performers, and entrepreneurs.

Songmasters' continuing support for emerging talent carries on Holly's legacy of boosting and

empowering new artists. Since 2009, Songmasters has endowed *The Holly Prize*, an annual award juried and presented by the Songwriters Hall of Fame to recognize and support the “all-in-one songwriter,” an exceptionally talented and inspired young musician/singer/songwriter whose work exhibits the ambition and artistic qualities of Holly's music. *Listen To Me: Buddy Holly* will also benefit numerous music-related organizations – including The GRAMMY Foundation’s “GRAMMY Camps”, Songwriters Hall of Fame, and Artists’ House Music – each of which support the artistic growth and professional development of young musicians and industry innovators. Additionally, the winners of the *Listen To Me* talent contest will receive grants, cash and product awards, and performance opportunities to help launch their professional careers in music.

Buddy Holly is, of course, one of rock ‘n’ roll’s true pioneers, the original “all-in-one songwriter.” In an era when most artists performed songs penned by leading songwriters of the day, Holly wrote and recorded his own uniquely personal material, establishing the creatively independent tradition that defines the genre. What’s more, as leader of his own band, Buddy Holly and The Crickets, Holly set the template for one of rock’s ultimate archetypes, the singing, guitar-playing frontman of a two-guitars-bass-and-drums combo. As if all that weren’t enough to confirm Holly’s lasting influence, he was also a forward-thinking businessman who had started his own artist-run independent label at the time of his tragic death, anticipating by a half-century the need for artists to both control their creative expression and the commercial value of their work. In both his music and career innovations, Buddy Holly has become more than just a legend or an icon – his influence can be seen and heard in most every aspect of modern popular music.

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