

# Former Student performs country folk songs for benefit concert

By Atlantis Tillman  
The Battalion

An old Ag's stories of sitting on the front porch of his house on Church St., across from the A&M Presbyterian Church, will be relived in a benefit concert for The Main Street Project.

Robert Earl Keen, Jr. will perform his Texas-style folk songs in a benefit concert at the Stafford Opera House at 8 p.m. Wednesday night. Keen, who calls himself a "country music, rock and folk monster," graduated from Texas A&M in 1980 with a degree in English.

Keen co-wrote "This Old Porch" with another Aggie, Lyle Lovett. The two wrote the song together, but apart Keen explains.

"I wrote the first half of the song and then a few months later, Lyle wrote the second half.

"All of the things I liked best about being at A&M are in that song," Keen said.

Keen also loves the Association of Former Students, saying Aggies are such a tight group of people, even after graduation, it's always exciting to see another Aggie.

"I love being a Former Student," Keen said. "I didn't love being a student."

Keen's songs are not your typical country songs, rather most of them are detailed, humorous recollections about Keen's colorful past. He describes fishing trips, skipping classes in high school, dipping in Copenhagen, and deciding what to do when your parents get your grades.

Keen's songs are based on his own memories, which he compares to snapshots, that he tries to describe in his songs, adding some amount of fiction that is inspired along with the memory.

"Most of my songs are based on truth, anyway. I try to steer away from too much truth and add a little Hollywood when I can," Keen said.

A little Hollywood goes a long way for Keen, whose songs have been recorded by such country names as Eddie Raven, Kelly Willer, Joe Ely and Nancy Griffith. Joe Ely does a version of "The Road Goes on Forever" a song about Keen's friends, a wait-



ress, Sherry and Sonny, a loner who couldn't get into the Navy.

Nancy Griffith recorded "I Would Change My Life," one of Keen's more serious songs about a particular relationship where neither party was willing to sacrifice enough to keep the relationship together.

Keen is now working on songs for a new album he hopes will be out this year.

"I'm really working hard," Keen said. "I want a big chart buster this year, I hope."

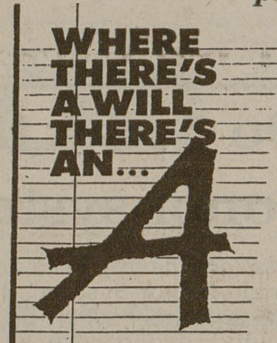
Tickets are available at Marooned Records for \$10 each.

**"I try to steer away from too much truth and add a little Hollywood when I can."**

**- Robert Earl Keen, Jr.**

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