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Residence Halls Association Presents:

**Rufus Wainwright**  
**A Benefit Effort for the victims of Hurricane Katrina**

**Dates/Times:** Saturday, October 8, 2005  
8:00 p.m. Wharton Center Great Hall  
**Tickets:** \$10 MSU Students / \$20 Public  
**Box Office:** 517.432.2000, 1.800.WHARTON  
[www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

**EAST LANSING, Mich.** — Rufus Wainwright was born in Rhinebeck, New York, USA, to folk singers Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle. He began to play the piano at age six, and by age thirteen he was touring with his sister Martha, mother Kate, and Aunt Anna as the "McGarrigle Sisters and Family." His song "I'm Running," which he performed in the movie *Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller*, was nominated for the 1989 Genie Award for Best Original Song and earned him a nomination for the 1990 Juno Award for Most Promising Male Vocalist.

Coming out as a homosexual while still a teen, Wainwright found solace through opera throughout his adolescent years. He also became an enthusiast of such performers as Edith Piaf, Al Jolson and Judy Garland. Often being the supposed "rival" of mid 90's legend Jeff Buckley, Wainwright sent tapes to Sin-e' (the club Buckley won over Wainwright to perform at), but later befriended Buckley; sadly, this was shortly before Buckley's death. Rufus said "he was lovely."

Wainwright's first main exposure to the American public came as an opener to singer Tori Amos in 2001 and 2002. He garnered praise for his performance and began touring as a main act shortly afterwards. He has frequently toured as the opener for Sting and co-headlined with Ben Folds and Guster in the summer of 2004. He still often performs with his sister Martha Wainwright (now herself an emerging artist) on backup vocals. Despite a growing cult following and critical acclaim, Wainwright has experienced only marginal commercial success in the United States.

In addition to being a pianist, Wainwright is a guitarist, often switching between the two instruments when performing live; however, his mastery of the guitar does not approach his talent with the piano. While some of his most moving songs feature just Wainwright with his piano, many of his songs display complex layering and harmonies, occasionally comprising hundreds of individual parts. Wainwright is an avid opera fan, and the influences on his music are evident, as well as his love of Schubert 'Lieder'; his music has been described as "Popera" (Pop Opera) or "Baroque Pop." His lyrics are filled with allusions to opera, literature, pop culture, and, more recently, politics (in songs such as "Gay Messiah" and "Waiting for a Dream"). Wainwright is a recovering crystal meth addict and a rape survivor; he uses the press to bring awareness to these societal problems.

His talent has been widely recognized and praised by such artists as Elton John, Morrissey, John Mayer, and Sting, and he continues to influence artists like Keane, Alanis Morissette, Scissor Sisters, and Ben Folds.

Wainwright's newest album, *Want Two*, from which four songs were released as the EP *Waiting for a Want*, was released from DreamWorks/Geffen on November 16, 2004. It is a companion to the 2003 release *Want One*. His latest, a live iTunes Sessions EP entitled "Alright Already", was released March 15, 2005. A DVD entitled "All I Want," featuring a biographical documentary, music videos, and live performances, is scheduled for U.S. release in late summer 2005. He made his motion picture debut in *The Aviator*. He also appears in the film, *Heights*.