University of Florida Performing Arts

presents

The Piano Men – Starring Jim Witter
A musical journey through the ’70s
featuring the music of Billy Joel and Elton John

Friday, June 27, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by
PROGRAM

Act One

Your Song
Movin’ Out
Rocket Man
My Life
Just the Way You Are
Crocodile Rock
Only the Good Die Young

Intermission

Act Two

Don’t Ask Me Why
Don’t Let the Sun Go Down On Me
TV Theme Songs of the ’70s
(Jim and the band take requests for theme songs from popular TV shows of the ’70s)
Candle in the Wind
Honesty
Philadelphia Freedom
Piano Man

JIM WITTER

Jim Witter has been entertaining for more than 20 years. Whether it be his country music, contemporary Christian, or the music of Billy Joel and Elton John, Jim’s versatility as an artist has allowed him the opportunity to reach out and share his music and his infectious personality with audiences of all ages across Canada and the United States. His unique approach and comfortable rapport makes each member of his audience feel as though they are a part of a private concert in the comfort of their own living room. This, along with his rich, powerful voice and ease of manner at the piano, make him a favorite with theatergoers everywhere.

It all started at a very early age, as Jim began performing in the comfort of his own living room. His mother would play piano, and Jim would belt out the hits, everything from The Beatles to Broadway musicals. Not bad for a four year old! All through his school years, Jim knew that he was destined to have a career in the music business. “I never really thought of doing anything else,” he says, “and neither did my parents because they always encouraged me to follow my dream.”

And follow it he did. Jim paid his dues, playing in the clubs and bars around Southern Ontario for years. He would write songs and record demos during the day, and play in the clubs at night to pay the bills. Jim met his wife Rebecca in 1985. Together, they worked tirelessly to promote Jim’s talent and music in hopes that one day their efforts would be recognized. Finally in 1990, one of Jim’s demos came to the attention of a Sony Music Canada executive, which really got Jim’s recording career rolling. A record deal with a smaller independent label in Canada soon gave way to a multi-record deal with Curb Records of Nashville, home of Tim McGraw, LeAnn Rimes and Wynonna Judd. From his first self-titled record, to All My Life and Forgiveness, Jim has had 10 Top Ten radio hits in Canada, seven hit videos on CMT, and impressive chart action in the United States on Billboard and R&R.

Jim’s music and songwriting have been recognized on both sides of the border, earning him multiple awards and nominations from the Canadian Country Music Association, the Juno Awards, and most recently the Dove Awards in Nashville, where Jim’s album Forgiveness was nominated for Inspirational Album of the year. “Songwriting has always been a real love of mine,” says Jim. “I feel very fortunate
to have been able to work with so many incredible songwriters over the past years, such as Steve Wariner for instance. Not only have the collaborations produced songs that I am very proud of, but I have gained an invaluable education and created lifelong friendships along the way.

A few years ago, Jim came up with the concept for the show The Piano Men — A musical journey through the '70s featuring the songs of Billy Joel and Elton John. “I was always a big fan of acoustic music, especially the folk of the '70s...James Taylor, Harry Chapin,” he reveals, “but my real mentors were Billy Joel and Elton John.” This multimedia rock musical has turned out to be a hit, receiving rave reviews from music critics all across North America. There are even plans to take the show overseas to London and Japan in the near future.

Jim still lives in southern Ontario with his wife, Rebecca, and their four children, James, Roslyn, Ryan and Luke. A devoted family man, Jim is also very active in his community, supporting numerous charities and organizations, especially those which benefit children and their families. “All I’ve ever wanted from this business is to be able to support my family and to make people feel a little better when they hear my music. To help them forget about their troubles for a while and enjoy the moment,” he concludes. “If I can continue doing this five, 10, 15 years down the road, I’ll be perfectly happy.”