

# Queen heads festival's list of 2013 talent

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press  
colby.society@nwkansas.com

The Queen of Bluegrass, Rhonda Vincent, headlines this year's Pickin' On the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival, bringing her nationally recognized talent to the festival. Vincent is a multi-instrumentalist, often playing the mandolin.

Vincent will be on stage at 8:55 p.m. Saturday and 11:45 a.m. Sunday.

Vincent is widely recognized for her enthusiasm and good humor, along with her musical polish, giving her performances an effortless, energetic feel.

The Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America honored Vincent as its Entertainer of the Year for 2011. It has named Vincent as Female Vocalist of the Year 22 times.

Her awards date back to 1974 when her single, "Muleskinner Blues," was recognized as the best single recording of the year.

The International Bluegrass Music Association named Vincent the Female Vocalist of the Year seven times, along with other awards for album of the year, song of the year and recorded event of the year.

Vincent has also been nominated for dozens of awards for her craft, including five Grammy nominations.

In 2004, she was officially crowned Queen of Bluegrass by the Everhart Foundation.

Vincent and her band, The Rage, have won the most awards in bluegrass music, with over

80 combined honors.

Vincent grew up in Greentop, Mo., in the fifth generation of a musical family. She began performing at age 3 on her family's local television and radio shows, called *The Sally Mountain Show*.

Susan McLemore, one of the founders of Pickin' on the Plains and a bluegrass musician, fondly remembers seeing Vincent and her family perform when McLemore was just getting started in bluegrass music.

Vincent has recorded nearly 30 albums throughout her career. Her most recent album, "Sunday Mornin' Singin'," was recorded in the Greentop Methodist Church, the same church Vincent attended as a child. The album features hymnal favorites and newly penned gospel songs.

Vincent's Bluegrass Express bus, decorated with images of baking mixes from sponsor Martha White, travels across the U.S. each year, taking Vincent to festivals like Pickin' On the Plains.

Travel is not always easy, according to Vincent, but it is part of the reality of performing.

"The real test isn't when everything works out," she told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "It's when the bus breaks down and then you have to drive 48 hours without stopping to eat or lying down to sleep, and you're just on a constant quest to get to the show."

"It's being able to go through something like that, throw on some fresh clothes in the restroom, jump onstage with a smile on your face and a good attitude and make it look easy."



Queen of Bluegrass Rhonda Vincent brings enthusiasm, polish and versatility to the stage, where she's been performing since she was a child.

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