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Livingston Taylor, Reading Pops team up for Sunday concert

by Susan L. Pena • Jan. 11, 2016 • 3 min read • [original](#)



| Singer-songwriter Livingston Taylor.

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Reading, PA

If you go

Event: Reading Area Community College's Downtown Performing Arts Series Partner Program presents the Reading Pops Orchestra with Livingston Taylor.

Where and when: Sunday at 4 p.m. in the Miller Center for the Arts, 4 N. Second St.

Tickets: \$40, adults and students; \$35, members. Call the Miller Center box office at 610-607-6270 or go to the [website](#).

Singer-songwriter Livingston Taylor will join the Reading Pops Orchestra, conducted by Willis Rapp, for the orchestra's season opener Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. in Reading Area Community College's Miller Center for the Arts. The concert is a Partner Program of RACC's Downtown Performing Artists Series.

In a recent telephone interview from his home in Boston, Taylor said he performs with orchestras "not often, but I love it," and he jumped at the chance to perform with the Reading Pops. While he hasn't worked with Rapp before, he said, "he has a very good reputation." "I love the enthusiasm of a regional orchestra," he said. "It's not that the Boston Symphony isn't great, but a regional orchestra has an extra kick." Taylor, who has been performing since he was a teenager, and has released 18 albums, beginning with his eponymous 1970 album on Capricorn Records, released his latest, "Blue Sky," on Whistling Dog in 2014. He said his part of Sunday's program will include the Marvin Fisher/Jack Segal song "When Sunny Gets Blue"; "Over the Rainbow"; James Taylor's "Carolina in My Mind"; and a "banjo extravaganza" in which he will put down his guitar and play banjo. It also will include some of his own songs, such as "Blind" and "Everybody's Just Like Me." Born in Boston and raised in Chapel Hill, N.C., Taylor was the son of a physician (Dr. Isaac M. Taylor, dean of the Medical School of the University of North Carolina). His mother Trudy, a trained opera singer, "never discouraged" her five children from pursuing music, each in his or her own way, he said. Alex, the eldest (who died at age 45 of a lethal dose of

alcohol after a long struggle with alcoholism), introduced his younger siblings to the music of Ray Charles and many other R&B and rock/gospel artists, Taylor said. James, the next brother, who became a superstar in the 1970s with his landmark album "Sweet Baby James," "was very important to my musical development," Taylor said. In fact, James taught him guitar, and was a strict teacher. Livingston came along in 1950, and he picked up his guitar when he was about 12. At age 16, he said, "that's when I committed to playing, and I started writing songs. Then I played some live shows, and people were enthusiastic about what I was doing." After finishing high school, he went on to pursue a successful career, with a steady output of songs, some of which James performed and recorded, and well-received concerts. His younger brother Hugh and older sister Kate, also performed music. Hugh was a singer but, after leaving home at 15 to live on Martha's Vineyard, runs an inn there with his wife. Kate is a singer-songwriter with half a dozen albums to her name. Taylor said the five siblings have performed together only once, at the South Seaport Museum in New York. He and James have performed together occasionally; James and Carly Simon sang backup on Livingston's third album, "Over the Rainbow." Livingston Taylor began teaching stage performance at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in 1989 and is now a full professor there. On the phone and in concerts, he has the perfect enunciation and warm manner of a born teacher; his accent is neither Boston nor Carolina, but something in between. When teaching his popular class, he said, he has students perform, and "we discuss it, and ways to improve things, and what an audience is looking for," he said. "I tell them they must keep studying music all the time. And when you perform, you have to watch it land." When asked to explain, he said a performer should be watching the effect he or she is having on people. When they like something you do, he said, do it again; if they don't like something, don't do it. "You go onstage not so you can be seen, but so you can see," he said. "You're giving people the chance to express enthusiasm or their broken heart, and you must be aware of them. That's why they give you money. People want to be seen." Email Susan L. Pena: weekend@reading-eagle.com.

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