

Blue County aids Criterion

By Mark Good

County music fans will get a rare opportunity to see the duo Blue County in concert tonight, Thursday, Aug. 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the Criterion Theatre in Bar Harbor.

Blue County – Aaron Benward and Scott Reeves – has been pretty much taking it easy after touring in support of their self-titled debut album, which included the hit, “Good Little Girls.”

“We decided to stay home, take the year off,” Mr. Benward said in a recent telephone interview. “It’s allowed us to reconnect with our families.”

But Blue County hasn’t forgotten about its fans. The duo has scheduled a few select concerts, including the appearance in Bar Harbor, which is a fund-raiser for the nonprofit theater and arts center.

This will be Blue County’s third appearance at the Criterion.

“It’s always fun when we play the theater,” Mr. Benward said. “I love Bar Harbor. It’s amazing.”

Mr. Benward said the set list for Bar Harbor would include the group’s hits, new songs and a few Blue County tunes that were never



recorded. Backing the duo will be Oscar Cary on bass and Rob Mitchell on drums.

Blue County’s appearance at the Criterion is sponsored by The Swan Agency Sotheby’s International Realty. Swan Agency owner Kim Swan has been a Blue County fan since meeting Mr. Benward through a mutual friend.

“She’s been a believer in me since the beginning,” Mr. Benward said of Ms. Swan.

Last year, he and Ms. Swan formed a music publishing company, Maineville Music. With Blue County basically on hiatus, the gig has become Mr. Benward’s day job. Most mornings he gets up and starts writing songs.

“It’s like clocking-in in some ways,” he said.

Through an association with Kobalt Music, Mr. Benward has been shopping Maineville Music songs around, trying to get other Nashville talents interested in recording them. Those expressing interest include Trisha Yearwood and Montgomery Gentry, he said.

Mr. Benward also is one of the hosts of a monthly “Nashville Unplugged” show at the Green Valley Ranch in Las Vegas. He and co-host Brian McComas launched the show in June. “Nashville Unplugged” features a guest songwriter who performs with the hosts and talks about the process of writing songs. One of the highlights of the evening is “Songs from a Hat,” in which guests make up song titles, write them down and put them in a hat. The featured songwriter picks a title from the hat and, along with the hosts, uses it to write a song on the spot.

“It’s cool, man. It’s lots of fun,” Mr. Benward said.

A local band, The Tumblers, will open for Blue County.

Tickets for Blue County are \$20 and available at the Criterion box office or online at www.criteriontheatre.com.

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