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PAM ORTIZ
singer/songwriter

PRESS RELEASE

Rattle Them Chains:

New Release from Singer-Songwriter Pam Ortiz Features Songs for the 99%

Chestertown, MD, October 19, 2012: Pam Ortiz, who fronted the band Terra Nova, returns to performing with a "songwriter's album." From blues to folk, new grass to jazz, these pieces showcase Ortiz' lyrical depth and rich musicality. To quote a lyric from an earlier release, Ortiz is "no chanteuse draped in silk." She's no ingenue either. After a decade of performing with Terra Nova in the late 80s and through the 90s, Ortiz and husband, Bob Ortiz, focused on raising two kids and managing full lives in this small town on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Bob, a furniture maker, continues to make his own line of furniture. Ortiz, an attorney by training, directs a commission for the Maryland courts, promoting access to justice. While this project has no connection to her other work, the tunes reflect Ortiz' own commitment, touching on themes of racial and economic justice. Her lyrics reflect the realities of working men and women. These are songs for "the 99%."

The title cut, *Rattle Them Chains*, was inspired by a day spent in a beautiful Eastern Shore home, built by slaves. Her lyrics suggest the complexity of our history:

One too many legacies,
One too many fine homes,
Handed up that family tree
On roots tangled in black man's bones

Reflecting on the legacy of oppression upon which much wealth is built, her lyrics connect the chains of the past to the chains of the present, speaking to the racial disparities that prevail in our criminal justice system today.

Other tunes are drawn from Ortiz' own history. *Oil and Bread* tells the answer her great grandmother gave when asked by her eight daughters why she married their father, a hard man.

Other tunes are just for fun and Ortiz seems to be having a lot of it on this project. *Walk the Dog*, highlights Ortiz' guitar playing coupled with the world class dobro playing of National Heritage Fellow, Mike Aldridge, who appears on several cuts.

In *The Conversation*, Ortiz showcases her nascent jazz chops – a real departure for this singer-songwriter with folk roots.

Some of the most animated pieces, including *Working Man* and the title cut, feature vocalists Karen Somerville, Lester Barrett, Jr., and Jerome McKinney, who perform regularly as Sombarkin, an a capella gospel/folk trio.

Ortiz keeps good company on this album, working with a range of featured performers, including a number of local Eastern Shore musicians. Collaborators include members of Ortiz' regular band, husband Bob Ortiz on congas and percussion, Nevin Dawson on viola and violin, and Ford Schumann on guitar. Others not previously mentioned include Vince Evans (piano/keyboards), Michael Bowie (bass), Mark Prince (drums), Seth Kibel (clarinet and tenor sax), Lena Seikaly (background vocals), Jeff Gruber (mandolin, guitars, keyboards), Mary Ashley (background vocals) and Ortiz' teenage daughter, Sofia Ortiz (background vocals).

The album was produced and engineered by Jeff Gruber of Blue House Productions in Silver Spring, Maryland. The project was made possible in part by a grant from the Kent County Arts Council.

You can stream all the songs on the new album by visiting the "Music" page on Ortiz' website: **pamortizmusic.com**. *Rattle Them Chains* can be purchased on her website. The album will be available after November 1 through iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby and other online music distributors.

Ortiz appears with her band on **Friday, November 9** at 8:00 p.m. at Uptown Concert's Cellar Stage in Baltimore for a special Baltimore-area album release. Go to **uptownconcerts.com** for tickets and information.