

Many artists, musical and otherwise, use their craft to provide a visible platform for the issues they believe in. Their activism becomes interwoven with their art. Indigo Girls have long been known for voicing their political and social views in both their actions and song. From their early days in the 1980's of raising funds for soup kitchens and HIV/AIDS support in Atlanta, and their co-founding of the indigenous environmental justice organization Honor the Earth in the early 1990's, Indigo Girls have continued to evolve as activists. In recent years, they have continued to focus on Honor the Earth as well as immigrant rights, voter advocacy, the anti-death penalty movement, gun violence prevention, queer youth rights and support, as well as support for mentally ill populations. They have emphasized the need to work against sexism, racism, queer-phobia, and to work across the lines of rural and urban definitions, within all of their community-based activism, to build coalitions in order to bring true liberation to us all and truth to power.

**Amy Ray** teamed up with Emily Saliers while in high school, and soon the duo became a staple in the Atlanta music scene. In 1981, their independent music career began with a basement recording called Tuesday's Children. One thing led to another, and they signed with Epic Records in 1988. Despite almost polar-opposite styles, they met on the common ground of harmony and the love of meaningful music. Ray brought fire and earth, Saliers the wind and water. The alchemy proved magical, and their brand of folk-rock hit at just the right time alongside the successes of Tracy Chapman, Suzanne Vega, and 10,000 Maniacs.

With an extremely loyal and passionate fan base, they sold millions of albums and garnered numerous awards over the years, but that was never really the point. More importantly, they expressed themselves creatively, poetically, politically, and spiritually. Each release pushed The Indigo Girls' musical boundaries. They incorporated elements of folk, country, rock, pop, punk, and soul into their evolution, giving each album a fresh sound without losing sight of their art or themselves. To give back what was given to them, Ray founded the not-for-profit Daemon Records in 1990. The label's mission is to support local artists at a grassroots level, to teach young artists how to further their own careers, and to keep the independent spirit alive. Ellen James Society, Kristen Hall, Gerard McHugh, James Hall, Rose Polenzani, pH Balance, John Trudell, Utah Phillips, Danielle Howle, Three Finger Cowboy, and The Rock\*A\*Teens, among others, have all passed through the school of Daemon.

Inspired by the music of these bands and the Southern punk/indie rock scene, Ray embarked on a solo adventure in 2000. Traveling around the Southeast with guitar and amp in tow, she wrote, rehearsed, and recorded **Stag**, teaming up with The Butchies, The Rock\*A\*Teens, Danielle Howle, and 1945, with a quick stop in NYC to play with Joan Jett, Kate Schellenbach, and Josephine Wiggs. **Stag** hit the streets in March 2001, and changed her trajectory from that point on. The depths and intensity of her artistry and emotions are revealed in awe-inspiring punk performances on its ten songs, giving Ray a forum to more fully express her political stances and questions of self. **Stag** was followed by the similarly themed **Prom** in 2005. Ray issued **Live from Knoxville** in 2007. Following several well-received Indigo Girls albums, she released the introspective solo offering **Didn't It Feel Kinder** in 2008, **MVP Live** in 2010, and **Lung of Love** in early 2012 - all on Daemon. The latter contained guest vocal spots from Brandi Carlile and My Morning Jacket's Jim James. In early 2014, Ray released **Goodnight Tender**, her first country album. Guests on the set of tunes include Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, and Susan Tedeschi. Her current release is a live record from a 2014 show at Seattle's Triple Door theater, a riff on **Goodnight Tender**, **The Tender Hour** covers songs from her country record plus her earlier releases with her stellar and versatile band.

In 2015, Indigo Girls released **One Lost Day**, and **Indigo Girls Live With the University of Colorado Symphony Orchestra** in June 2018, and will be recording a new album in January of 2019 in the U.K. Amy Ray and her band's new country album, **Holler** will be released on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2018. It was recorded live to tape at her mainstay Echo Mountain Studio in Asheville, NC, with the added power and swagger of horns and strings that harken back to the country music of the late 60's. **Holler** features special guests: Alison Brown on banjo, Kofi Burbridge on keys, Derek Trucks on guitar; Vince Gill, Brandi Carlile, The Wood Brothers, Justin Vernon, Lucy Wainwright Roche and Phil Cook on harmonies. Amy and her band will be hitting the road throughout the Fall of 2018 and beyond.