



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Exchange Club of Naperville  
MONDAY, March 9, 2020

*Cold War Kids, Elle King Join Headliner Fitz and the Tantrums at Ribfest July 5<sup>th</sup>*  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Romeoville, Illinois –

Cold War Kids and Elle King are committed to perform with Headliner Fitz and the Tantrums on the Navistar Main Stage on Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Exchange Club of Naperville’s 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Ribfest, now in Romeoville. Tickets went on sale to the public Monday, March 9, at 10am. Other artists already announced include REO Speedwagon and Styx, with Head East, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>; Nelly with Jesse McCartney plus fireworks by Meijer on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The country artist for July 3<sup>rd</sup> will be announced next week.

**ABOUT COLD WAR KIDS**

For nearly 15 years, Nathan Willett and Cold War Kids have fielded the shifts in the music landscape’s seismic activity as well as the ebbs and flows in their own camp while simultaneously sticking to their game plan. Over the course of a dozen releases on majors and indies alike, non-stop tours and the festival circuit’s biggest stages, massive radio and streaming successes as well as a few lineup changes, Cold War Kids have become a major part of the modern scene.

Coming off of the high water marks of 2014’s *Hold My Home* with its smash single “First” and the Capitol Records-backed LA Divine in 2017 feeling mostly satiated, Willett began to hone in on what was most exciting and integral to him in both the Cold War Kids recipe as well as in the current music climate as he began to write new material. He obsessed over the seemingly never-ending stream of Kanye West-produced records released in the summer of 2018, enamored of their breezy compactness and fresh feeling, which excited him to explore a new working relationship with his own producer of favor, Lars Stalfors (St. Vincent, Foster the People). The pair entered the studio to write a very specific, of-the-moment type of album, encouraged to take the doors off of the idea of what the band was in order to see where it could go.

Willett and Stalfors incorporated some pieces of the core CWK sound while stripping away the rafter-reaching production of their past records, aiming for leaner, tighter tunes. And, taking inspiration from a slogan on a T-shirt made by the band’s bass player and resident visual artist Matt Maust, Willett had the project’s title, lyrical themes, and structure in mind even before any songs had been completed -- three unique eight-song volumes called *New Age Norms*.

Writing from urgent, of-the-moment perspectives in order to respect and reflect the day’s normative behaviors and climate, Willett focused on a bird’s eye view of the current values he was observing all

around him -- the new norms of class, gender, race, and power that are creating our modern world. The first volume's eight songs explore the connective tissue apparent to him in the landscape, with the sense of optimism and uplifting positivity he feels necessary to approach any issue, or song.

One such line -- "Don't sit around and complain about it" -- provided the focal point for the first song on and written for *New Age Norms*, "Complainer," a call to do something constructive rather than dwell on all the things that might drag us down. Co-written with the pop writer Bonnie McKee (Katy Perry, Rita Ora) and Electric Guest's Asa Taccone (whose drummer, Matthew Compton, plays drums throughout *New Age Norms*), "Complainer" sizzles with its fresh mix of modern production and stand-by CWK sonic influences like Can and Talking Heads. The next song, "Fine Fine Fine," recalls The Jam meets Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life," a bouncy rock-and-roller featuring female backup singers and a youthful raging against aging and maturing; "Waiting for Your Love" would sound right at home on an *Emotional Rescue* period Rolling Stones record, but with an update of Mick Jagger's explicit stray cat strut to a version suitable for our times.

"Beyond the Pale," co-written with Mikky Ekko (Rihanna, Clams Casino), is a piano ballad that features Willett at his most emotionally bare as he shares the universal tale of a life spent on the road away from his family, while "Dirt in My Eyes" is another Cold War Kids first: the petulant, reactionary, pissed-off breakup song. "4th of July," with its slowed-down, strutting, 1970's Stevie Wonder vibe, is a song about the mixed feelings Americans can encounter while celebrating patriotic holidays without a context of appreciation. "Calm Your Nerves" is a slow-building anthem about the tendency therapy-givers have to neglect themselves that climbs to its peak while a high-pitched guitar line paves its way. The record ends with "Tricky Devil," an icy, Joy Division inspired tune that asks one of *New Age Norms*'s biggest questions: how can we remain optimistic in this world that has made people so cynical?

The key, as the record exhibits, is in the approach. Two future *New Age Norms* volumes are set to be recorded soon, with the second part featuring production work by Shawn Everett (Alabama Shakes, The War on Drugs) and the rest of the band (Maust, David Quon, Matthew Schwartz, and Joe Plummer) playing live in the room; the third will likely be a combination of styles. For Willett and Cold War Kids, even as today's norms continue to shift at lightning speed -- in daily life, in rock and roll, and beyond -- the band's dedicated approach to its art remains steadfast as it delivers messages of positivity while pursuing new values and a better world.

## **ABOUT ELLE KING**

Singer and songwriter **Elle King** blends pop, blues, and rock'n'roll into a sound that's all her own. She loves banjos and hobos. After hearing the all-girl pop-punk band the Donnas when she was nine years old in Ohio, she decided she wanted to be a singer and musician. By 13, she was playing guitar and later learned to play banjo. King began street busking and gigging around New York at age 16, moved to Philadelphia to attend the University of Arts, and majored in painting and film. After college, she spent time in Copenhagen and Los Angeles before settling in Brooklyn. After signing to FCA Records, she released *The Elle King EP* which featured the Mob Wives Chicago theme song "Playing For Keeps." and she made her network television debut on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. In 2015, King released her debut album *Love Stuff*, featuring the hit single "Ex's & Oh's" which reached the top of Billboard's Alternative Songs chart. She made chart history becoming the second female artist in 18 years to reach #1 at Alternative Radio, and "Ex's & Oh's" earned Elle 2 Grammy nominations. The track made the Top 10 in four different radio formats, and her current feature with Dierks Bentley on "Different For Girls" is now top 10 at Country radio, the 5<sup>th</sup> radio format Top 10 for this unique and distinctive new artist.

Always appreciated **GRAND SPONSORS** for Ribfest 2020 are: Navistar, Great Lakes Coca-Cola, Romeoville Toyota, ABC7 Chicago, D & J Amusements, Meijer, Jewel-Osco, Nathan's Famous Beef Franks, Gnarly Head, Citgo, and Budweiser.

Tickets for July 2, 4 and 5 are on sale now, through [ribfest.net](http://ribfest.net).

#### **ABOUT EXCHANGE CLUB OF NAPERVILLE AND RIBFEST**

*Exchange, America's Service Club, is a group of men and women working together to make our communities better places to live through programs of service in Americanism, Community Service, Youth Activities, and its national program—the Prevention of Child Abuse. Exchange Club of Naperville chartered in 1987. Mission-driven and volunteer run, Exchange Club of Naperville's Ribfest is a premier Midwestern 4<sup>th</sup> of July concert series and celebration. Ribfest, in its 33rd year, now draws more than 150,000 visitors annually. In 2020, the venue has a new home: Romeoville, Illinois. Net proceeds from Ribfest directly support 50+ agencies that work tirelessly to eliminate child abuse and domestic violence in all forms. To date, Exchange has donated over \$18 million to these agencies.*

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