

Tom Petty and Co. return in January

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This will be a Gator Homecoming in the literal sense.

The concert by Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers — Saturday, Jan. 27 in the O'Connell Center — will be the hometown boys' first appearance in the university city since February, 1983.

As everybody knows, Petty was born and raised in Gainesville, as was pianist Benmont Tench (he's the son of Circuit Court Judge Benjamin Tench).

Drummer Stan Lynch lived in Gainesville from the age of 5, and guitarist Mike Campbell moved here



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Randy Travis appears Feb. 17 at UF.

Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers last played here in 1983.

as a youngster, too. Three of them — Petty, Tench and Campbell — have been playing together since the late '60s. They were frat-party favorites.

In the years since leaving Florida, this motley crew of musicians has released a handful of critically-acclaimed albums, toured the world with Bob Dylan, played Live Aid and Farm Aid and collected titles like "the best rock 'n' roll touring band in America."

And Petty was assured of a place in the rock history books with his participation in the Traveling Wilburys.

Petty had resisted returning to Gainesville (although he did sing, unannounced, at a downtown club a couple of times in early '84).

As a rule, he and the Heartbreakers are on the road during the summer, when Gainesville isn't much more than a ghost town. Such a homecoming would be half-baked, which nobody wanted; besides, promoters (the people with the money) wouldn't risk booking them here if the audience might be a small one.

That shouldn't be a problem in January.

The band is hitting the road yet again in support of "Full Moon Fever," the phenomenally successful solo album Petty produced last



The Heartbreakers: Benmont Tench, left, Tom Petty, Stan Lynch, Mike Campbell and Howie Epstein.

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spring. It has surpassed even the landmark "Damn the Torpedoes" in national sales, going platinum within six months of its release.

The third single, "Free Fallin'," is at No. 14 this week and will probably be a bigger smash than "Don't Do Me Like That," which reached No. 9 in 1979.

The Heartbreakers toured the States during July and August — even playing a quartet of Florida shows — but today, the album is still so high on the charts (No. 12) that a second leg is justified.

The tour begins Jan. 26 at the USF Sun Dome in Tampa.

Petty's homecoming is a nice feather in the cap of Raul Mateu, the new chairman of Student Government Productions — it goes on the record as his first show. But much of the credit belongs to former SGP head Marisa Gonzales, who had been making overtures to the Petty camp for months, O'Connell Center director Lionel Dubay, who knew what a good deal it would be for Gainesville, and laid out the red carpet, and promoter Marjorie Sexton, whose Silver

Star Productions has booked almost every Petty show in Florida during the '80s.

Sexton helped SGP get the contracts negotiated; Silver Star is officially the concert's co-promoter.

The opening act will be rocker Lenny Kravitz, whose claim to fame is that he's the husband of "Cosby Show" actress Lisa Bonet.

Originally, the original Byrds were going to open on the tour. But then David Crosby began recording sessions with Stephen Stills and Graham Nash, Chris Hillman went in to finish

a new Desert Rose Band album, and Roger McGuinn started work on his first solo album for Arista. Suddenly, they were all too busy.

Tickets will be \$14 for University of Florida students, at the UF Box Office only, and \$18 for the public, at Ticketmaster outlets. They're scheduled to go on sale Wednesday, Jan. 10, but that date may change — watch this space for updates.

Travis returns, too

Country music's main squeeze, Randy Travis, is coming back to