

JOHN FORD COLEY
by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Ever since the opening lyrics, "Hello, yeah, it's been awhile," topped the pop charts in 1976, John Ford Coley fans have continued to say, "I'd Really Love To See You Tonight."

"It seems like only yesterday that we released our debut single, I'd Really Love To See You Tonight," says Coley, a former member of the Grammy-nominated 70's pop duo, England Dan and John Ford Coley. "

Coley, now a solo artist, will perform a dual headlining show with 70's-80's pop group, Ambrosia, at the Center For The Arts in Springfield on Wednesday.



Ambrosia -- whose name reflects all the shades, textures, colors, and styles of their music -- are best known for the hit singles "Holdin' On To Yesterday," "Magical Mystery Tour," "How Much I Feel," "Biggest Part Of Me, and "You're The Only Woman (You And I)."

"Ambrosia and I will probably be performing separate sets at this show," Coley says. "But we'll both be providing an evening of acoustic entertainment. It's great to go on stage -- just a musician with a piano or guitar -- and play the songs in their raw form. It allows the audience to hear the songs as the songwriter heard them when they were originally written."

John Edward Coley was born in Dallas, Tx, and grew up playing classical and rock piano and listening to the Grand Ole Opry and early rock and roll. At 16, Coley and Dan Seals toured the Texas music scene as members of the group "Theze Few" which later became "The Southwest FOB" (Freight On Board). While in the band, Seals and Coley started their own acoustic duo, Coley and Wayland, later renamed England Dan (because of Seal's penchant for imitating the English accent of The Beatles) and John Ford Coley (in reference to a Texas General, John Ford).

"We wanted to have a different name that would catch the listener's ear," Coley says. "Actually, it was Dan's brother, Jim Seals of the music group, Seals & Crofts, who helped us craft the name."

The duo's successful debut release of "I'd Really Love To See You Tonight" was followed by such hit singles as "Nights Are Forever Without You," "It's Sad To Belong," "Gone Too Far," "We'll Never Have To Say Goodbye Again," "Love Is The Answer," and "What Can I Do With This Broken Heart?"

When the duo disbanded in 1980, Coley began acting in teen films and wrote songs for film and TV.

Moving to Nashville in 1999, Coley became an active member of the music, songwriting, and lecture community, and is the author of two books in progress, "John Ford Coley's Backstage Pass" and "Love Is The Answer."

Current endeavors for Coley include producing Nashville country acts and actively touring with such groups as Terry Sylvester (formerly of The Hollies), Lou Gramm (of Foreigner), Poco, Alice Cooper, and Ambrosia.

"Ambrosia are some of the finest musicians I've ever seen, or had the pleasure of working with on stage," Coley says. "As a matter of fact, one of Ambrosia's founding members, Joe Puerta (vocals, bass), played bass in Bruce Hornsby & The Range. You can't step on stage with a genius like Bruce Hornsby and be an amateur bass player. I believe the Springfield audience will enjoy their songs and find them to be wonderful and fun entertainers."