

America's Mountain Festival Songwriters Competition Draws Full House at Tava House River Room

Original music, mountain-town energy, and community spirit filled the River Room at recently opened Tava House

WOODLAND PARK, CO, UNITED STATES, May 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Original music, mountain-town energy, and community spirit filled the River Room at the recently opened [Tava House](#) on Saturday evening as the 2026 [America's Mountain Festival Songwriters Competition](#) brought together performers, judges, families, friends, and music fans from across the region.



(Photo collage courtesy of Perini & Associates)

Held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the competition featured 10 songwriters performing original material before a live audience and a panel of judges that included Ben Garcia, Dillon Hooch, and Laura Buckallew. Contestants included Sandy Wells, Jessa Book, Susan Hollis, Abbigail Nadine & jEsTeR, Lynette Wolfe, Meghan Clarisse Cave, Dennis Anderson, Dalton Lafever, Kenya Reese, and Jason Wulf.

“

This competition represents exactly what America's Mountain Festival is all about — authentic music, storytelling, and community.”

Derek Waggoner

The event was presented as part of the lead-up to the second annual America's Mountain Festival, scheduled for Saturday, July 11, 2026, in Woodland Park. Audience

members packed the River Room, creating an intimate and enthusiastic atmosphere that highlighted the region's growing live music culture.

Competition winner Kenya Reese earned strong praise from both the judges and audience for a performance that blended heartfelt storytelling with emotional honesty. Her songwriting reflected themes of life experiences, reflection, resilience, and finding meaning through music —

the kind of performance that quietly captures a room and stays with listeners long after the final note. "Reese's authentic style and connection with the audience helped secure her selection as the winner of the 2026 America's Mountain Festival Songwriters Competition," said one of the judges.

Reese said she was overwhelmed and grateful following the announcement of her win.

"I am feeling so excited and overwhelmed," Reese said. "I'm so honored that I get this opportunity to play at America's Mountain Festival. I was motivated honestly because my parents and brother were here supporting me, and I knew I had my grandpa, who I played that song for, watching down from heaven — and my mentor Keith Ferguson watching down from heaven too."

As part of her recognition, competition winner Kenya Reese will perform a special 30-minute acoustic set during America's Mountain Festival.

"This competition represents exactly what America's Mountain Festival is all about — authentic music, storytelling, and community," said Derek Waggoner, founder of America's Mountain Festival. "To see the River Room filled with people supporting original artists in Woodland Park shows that this community values live music and wants to be part of something special that continues to grow each year."



Left to right Heather Burrows, festival operations director and songwriter competition organizer; Derek Waggoner, America's Mountain Festival founder; and Kenya Reese, winner. (Photo Perini & Associates)



Kenya Reese, performer and winner of the 2026 America's Mountain Festival Songwriters Competition (Photo courtesy of Perini & Associates)

Heather Burrows, America's Mountain Festival operations director and songwriter competition organizer, said the event exceeded expectations both in participation and audience support.

"The level of talent on stage was incredible, but what stood out just as much was the support in the room," Burrows said. "Family members, friends, visitors, and local residents all came together to encourage these artists and celebrate songwriting in a truly welcoming environment. That's what makes this event meaningful."

The competition also provided an opportunity for emerging and established songwriters to perform before a live audience while building momentum toward the summer festival.

Contestants and judges were also recognized with commemorative America's Mountain Festival challenge coins, continuing a tradition rooted in honoring participation, creativity, and excellence.

Burrows also thanked the Tava House team for helping make the evening a success during what was the venue's largest event to date.

"From the front of house team greeting guests to the back of house staff working tirelessly throughout the evening, the service was outstanding," Burrows said. "We truly appreciate every member of the Tava House team who helped create such a memorable experience for our guests — and yes, many people agreed the bread pudding may very well be the best in the region."

America's Mountain Festival returns July 11, 2026, and will feature Aaron Watson, Walker Montgomery, Jenna Paulette, Tyce Delk, and the Matt Skinner Band, along with vendors, food trucks, family-friendly activities, and additional entertainment at the base of Pikes Peak.

For additional information and tickets, visit America's Mountain Festival online and follow official social media channels for updates. www.americasmountainfestival.com

Michael Perini



America's Mountain Festival

+1 719-651-5943

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/912543818>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.