



BLACK FRET ANNOUNCES VIP LAUNCH PARTY AND FOUNDING MEMBER DRIVE JAN. 18 AT GIBSON BRANDS SHOWROOM FEATURING BEN KWELLER

*New Austin non-profit plans to build endowment to help local artists
create and sustain their music; In 2014 'Founding Members' will
select multiple Austin musicians to receive \$10,000 grants*

(AUSTIN, TEXAS – November 2013; source: Juice Consulting) – New Austin non-profit **Black Fret** is proud to announce its **VIP Launch Party and Founding Member Drive** on **Saturday, Jan. 18** featuring **Ben Kweller** with an opening performance by **Emily Bell**. The event will take place from **6 to 10 p.m.** at the **Gibson Brands Showroom** located at **3601 S. Congress Ave. Ste. G400**. Doors are at **6 p.m.** The event is free to Black Fret members and VIP guests, and limited tickets for the public are available for 200 USD per couple. Ticket purchase may also be applied to Black Fret Founding Membership. For tickets please email sustain@blackfret.org and for more information see www.blackfret.org.

The event is sponsored by **Gibson Brands, The Austin Chronicle, KUTX, Tito's Handmade Vodka, Shiner Beer** and **Topo Chico**. Promotional partners include **ATX Music, Austin Music Foundation, Austin Music People, The Recording Academy® Texas Chapter** and the **Texas Music Office**.

Black Fret is a public charity headquartered in Austin whose mission is to empower musicians to create and perform great new music. The organization is an innovative evolution of the age-old symphony patronage model that is focused on supporting popular local music. Together Black Fret's members will build an endowed institution capable of sustaining more than a million dollars a year in grants to Austin's artists. "For centuries both classical music and opera have had the benefit of community financial support. Nothing like that has ever existed for the music that defines the moments of our generation," said founder **Colin Kendrick**. "Black Fret is a young and vital new model for arts patronage that addresses that need."

Once Black Fret reaches its limited membership cap of 1,333 members, Black Fret's core program will allow its members to select more than 40 artists each year to receive \$25,000 grants. Built around this core, the organization will be able to offer a host of other grant programs to serve the needs of the broader community. "For those musicians Black Fret serves, we provide a critical service at a

critical time,” said founding board member **Matt Ott**. “It has never been harder to make a living as a musician. Black Fret hopes to bring in a new revenue stream for Austin musicians and support the creative community in ways like never before.”

The organization is being launched by a veteran team of non-profit and music entrepreneurs. Two of Black Fret’s founding board members, **Colin Kendrick** and **Matt Ott**, also launched the **Austin Music Foundation**, which has provided over a million dollars in services to Austin’s music community in the last decade. Colin and Matt are joined by **Kerry Edwards** as the founding board of Black Fret.

Black Fret’s limited group of members will constitute a social network of dynamic friends dedicated to good music, good times and to seeing Austin’s artists prosper. In return for annual dues, members will be rewarded with unprecedented personal access to the city’s top artists through a broad range of private events including monthly shows in intimate venues and an incredible annual gala event named **The Black Ball**. To date, Black Fret has hosted house parties or artist socials with local musicians such as **Quiet Company, Shakey Graves, Erin Ivey, The Rocketboys, Chanel, Little Radar, Lincoln Durham, Graham Wilkinson** and **Kalu James**. “It’s becoming more and more expensive for a band to launch a career. Black Fret’s grants will help keep Austin the *Live Music Capital of the World*,” said **Tommy Blank**, guitarist and keyboardist for **Quiet Company**. “Black Fret represents an incredible opportunity for live music fans to come together and truly support Austin’s musicians.”

“Together our members find great bands, gather to see them in intimate shows and award them grants to help them create and perform new music.” said **Kendrick**. “The organization’s goal is to nurture artistic excellence by building an endowed institution capable of sustaining over a million dollars a year in grants to Austin’s finest musicians.”

Annual Black Fret member dues are **1,500 USD**, breaking down to less than **100 USD a month** after tax. Many members have access to a corporate charitable giving match program (such as offered by Dell and other major employers) that can reduce the monthly cost to less than **50 USD a month**. The organization is only allowing a total of 1,333 members annually, but this year, members who sign up by March have a chance to become **Founding Members**. To date Black Fret has signed up over 60 Founding Members and hopes to reach its 100-member goal soon so members can select **ten local musicians to receive a 10,000 USD grant in 2014**. And that is only the beginning. To secure a place as a Founding Member of Black Fret, please contact sustain@blackfret.org. For more information, please see www.blackfret.org.

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ABOUT BEN KWELLER:

Ben Kweller is one of the nation’s most treasured songwriters and performers. His genre-jumping blend of Alt Rock, Piano Ballads and Folk Music has captured the hearts of fans and critics alike and has built a catalog of records that achieved over half a million in sales. Kweller’s teenage grunge group, Radish, landed a top 40 UK hit in 1996 that went on to give the band a cult following in the UK and Europe. When Radish broke up in 1999, Kweller packed his bags and headed to New York City for a change of pace. He was taken under the wing of Evan Dando, Jeff Tweedy, Juliana Hatfield, and The Violent Femmes’ Gordan Gano, who all took the young star on tour with them. In 2001 Ben

Kweller became ATO Records' first worldwide signing. He quickly became a staple in the New York music scene of the early 2000's, touring and playing with his peers, such as The Strokes, Adam Green, Moldy Peaches, Har Mar Superstar, Nada Surf, Fountains of Wayne, Guster and Jeffrey Lewis. In addition to this rag-tag New York-based bunch, Kweller has also shared the stage with Kings Of Leon, Flaming Lips, My Morning Jacket, Bright Eyes, Death Cab for Cutie and Ryan Adams. After 10 years with ATO, and four highly successful albums (Sha Sha, On My Way, Ben Kweller, Changing Horses), Kweller headed back home to Texas to start yet a new chapter. In 2012, Kweller re-emerged with the album, Go Fly A Kite, a triumphant debut for his Austin-based label, The Noise Company, who recently signed Wild Child to their roster and hired Kevin Wommack as label President. Immersed in rich harmonies, lush arrangements, and bittersweet lyrics, Go Fly A Kite is a celebratory offering of the essential Ben Kweller and serves as a career-defining album with the ability to resonate beyond its time. For more information, see: www.thenoisecompany.com

ABOUT EMILY BELL:

With a powerful, sultry voice that evokes comparisons to artists as diverse as K.T. Tunstall, Girl in a Coma's Nina Diaz and Ronnie Spector, Emily Bell has made it to the top of the "must see live" list in Austin, Texas. Her debut album In Technicolor was self-released on May 28, and her single "Back to the Way I Was" was picked up by close to 200 national radio stations and video outlets respectively. Since then, Bell has done two national tours, performed live on the Ron & Fez Show on Sirius XM, the Artie Lang Show, BreakThru Radio, and even got her own day in Austin when the Mayor proclaimed August 22, 2013 "Emily Bell Day." Interrobang.com ranked Bell No. 1 on its list of the top five artists to watch at SXSW 2013 - after listening to 1,210 tracks from showcasing acts. Her next single, "Hey Baby," is getting nationwide distribution on the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau compilation, Austin Music, Volume 12. Her debut album features nine cuts that cross tracks laid through Delta blues, '60s rock, girl-group glam and Motown power. With John Evans, her producer, co-writer, guitarist and partner, Bell has crafted a "here I am" statement and likes to call it "Technicolor rock 'n' soul." After writing and recording in Raphael Saadiq's Burbank studio in LA with former members of Tony! Toni! Toné!, Bell returned to her Texas roots. With recent live shows including F1's Fan Fest, KGSR's Discovery Series, CMJ, Freedom Over Texas 2013, Michelle Clark's Sunset Sessions and the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar coming up this December 17, Bell is making waves as one of Austin's hottest new talents. Texas singer-songwriter Hayes Carll says "She'll knock you down, then lick your wounds, burn up the stage and leave you begging for more." For more information, see www.emilybell.com.

***MEDIA NOTE:**

For press inquiries or for media credentials to the January 18 event, please contact the team at Juice Consulting:

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BLACK FRET™

PATRONS OF LOCAL MUSIC™

2014 KICKOFF PARTY AND MEMBER DRIVE

BEN KWELLER + EMILY BELL

GIBSON BRANDS SHOWROOM | AUSTIN, TEXAS
DOORS AT 6 PM | JANUARY 18, 2014

PRIVATE EVENT | VISIT BLACKFRET.ORG TO ATTEND

