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BERKS ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES 21ST ANNIVERSARY
ASHLEY FOR THE ARTS BANDSHELL CONCERT SERIES

Made in America is the sound this summer at the Ashley for the Arts Bandshell Concert Series.

Reading, PA – The Berks Arts Council is proud to announce the headliners for the 21st anniversary Ashley for the Arts Bandshell Concert Series. This free summer concert series is held from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday evenings in July beginning July 8, at the Volunteer Fireman's Memorial Bandshell in City Park, 1261 Hill Rd., Reading. The 2011 season line up offers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy and explore some of the authentic American sounds that cross the country and generations.

There are few characteristics common to all American music, but the most have roots that can be traced back to the blues. Because the genre took its shape from the idiosyncrasies of individual performances, the music that came out of it is as unique as the people who play it. This summer, Berks Arts Council is excited to share the different aspects of this diverse American music form. With the rock-blues roots-music sound of Jim Suhler and Monkey Beat, Texas blues guitar great Andrew "Jr. Boy" Jones Band, the classic rhythm and blues of Charlie Thomas' Drifters and finally San Francisco's award winning Tommy Castro Band. Audiences of all ages will have a great time getting to the roots of the music they love.

"Once again I am very pleased that the Berks Arts Council will present its 21st consecutive year of the annual summertime Bandshell series of free concerts at Reading's City Park Bandshell," BAC President Theodore Bassano. "We are excited to share a terrific line-up of nationally recognized artists presented for the enjoyment of residents of the City of Reading and the County of Berks. We are honored that Ashley Furniture's *Ashley for the Arts* will once again provide financial support and sponsorship for our series. We hope everyone will share in this community-based event celebrating our summertime heritage of great musical performances in the great outdoors."

"We are proud to present 'Made in America' musical theme for the 2011 Bandshell," shares Gary Spencer, Production Manager and Event Coordinator, "American music has its roots in the music of the Blues and its branches in the growth of Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll."

On July 8, Jim Suhler and Monkey Beat open the season with their no-holds-barred approach to blues-inspired rock and roll and roots music. Jim Suhler, best known for his work with George Thorogood & the Destroyers, bring his band to Reading for this rocking summer night! The band shows an amazing depth of songwriting and playing, and their constant touring in both the USA and Europe has garnered many admirers. Billboard Magazine says, "Jim Suhler & Monkey Beat conjure up serious blues rock mojo."

On July 15 guitarist, songwriter and singer **Andrew "Jr. Boy." Jones** takes the stage for some "Good Music." Incorporating soul, jazz, ballads and funk, it's still the blues, because, as Andrew says himself, "Is it blues? I say, well, you know, how do you categorize? Well, I don't. It's hard to just put blues in a box. I'm a blues player. No matter what I play, it's going to be blues because I don't play jazz, I'm not a jazz player....Do you like it?... Well, I think that's all that matters, it's just good music." Hailing from

Texas, Jones has started his career with blues legend Freddie King and has gone on to perform with a “who’s who” of blues royalty including Johnny Taylor, Sonny Rhodes and Charlie Musselwhite.

On July 22, American music history takes over the Bandshell with Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, **Charlie Thomas’ Drifters**. The Drifters served to link Fifties rhythm & blues with Sixties soul music. They epitomized the vocal group sound of New York City. Theirs was the sweet but streetwise sound of R&B suffused with gospel influences. Known for classics “Save the Last Dance for Me,” “This Magic Moment,” and the definitive summertime classic, “Under the Boardwalk,” this show is not to be missed, because, as they once sang, “Memories are Made of This.”

July 29, rounding up a great season is the **Tommy Castro Band**. Tommy Castro is on a non-stop mission to bring his blistering blues, soulful vocals and stellar band to as many people as possible. Between his fiery shows—supported by his Blues Music Award-winning band—and his leading role in The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue, Castro is succeeding beyond all expectations. In May 2010, he won four 2010 Blues Music Awards—including his second B.B. King Entertainer Of The Year Award (the highest award a blues performer can receive) plus Contemporary Blues Male Artist Of The Year and Contemporary Blues Album Of The Year (for his latest Alligator studio CD, Hard Believer). Blues Revue says, “Tommy Castro can do no wrong...soulful, heartfelt vocals, and exquisite, stellar guitar work. A seamless blend of blues, gospel-flavored R&B, soul and roadhouse rock.”

Concert-goers are encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs and their dancing shoes to City Park to experience great music in a natural setting. Food will be available for purchase from great local vendors including Mezcal’s Mexican Restaurant, the Pig Pit and Stephan’s Concessions. Listen to WEEU 830AM Stereo each week for weather-related schedule changes. Alcohol and smoking are not permitted in City Park.

The Berks Arts Council offers special thanks to the 2011 Bandshell Concert Series sponsors: Ashley for the Arts, County of Berks, City of Reading, Reading Eagle, WEEU 830AM, Land Displays, Metro Bank, CTCE Credit Union, Discovery Credit Union, Riverfront Credit Union, R/C Reading Movies 11 & IMAX. Berks Arts Council receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

The Berks Arts Council presents the Berks Jazz Fest, the Bandshell Concert Series, Greater Reading Film Festival, the Pagoda Awards, the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts Re-Granting Program, and provides art exhibition and marketing opportunities for member artists. Visit them at www.berksarts.org.

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