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BERKS ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES 22nd ANNIVERSARY
BANDSHELL CONCERT SERIES
Global Music in the Heart of the Our City!

Reading, PA – The Berks Arts Council is proud to announce the headliners for the 22nd anniversary Bandshell Concert Series. This free summer concert series is held from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday evenings in July beginning July 13, at the Volunteer Fireman’s Memorial Bandshell in City Park, 1261 Hill Rd., Reading. The 2012 season line up gives music-lovers an opportunity to enjoy and explore authentic sounds from across the country and around the globe in a unique and beautiful setting.

“For 22 years, Berks Arts Council has brought free music to Reading’s best outdoor concert venue. The Bandshell series is a hallmark of summer in Berks County, shares Berks Arts Council Executive Director, Karen Haver. “This year we bring a globally inspired line-up of world-class musicians to our community. So, bring a blanket or a lawn chair and share in the celebration of Berks Arts Council’s summertime heritage of great musical performances in the great outdoors.”

On July 13, Zydeco-a-Go-Go kicks off Berks Arts Council Summer Bandshell Concert Series! We invite you to rock and boogie to Zydeco-A-Go-Go's swinging bayou rhythms combining Zydeco, Cajun, classic New Orleans rhythm & blues and vintage Louisiana rock & roll into music that will have you dancing the night away! Led by Pete Gumbo, Zydeco-a-Go-Go features the traditional Cajun sounds of accordion and frattoir (rubboard) enriched with saxophone, electric guitar, electric bass and drum. The Cajun 2-steps blend with Creole zydeco and classic New Orleans rhythm & blues in a spicy gumbo of Louisiana dance music. Their performances feature lyrics sung in English, Spanish, Cajun and Creole French set to a beat that keeps people dancing all night long. So as they say “Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler!” (“Let The Good Times Roll!”)

July 20, Toby Foyeh and Orchestra Africa bring traditional and modern sounds from across the globe. Orchestra Africa's music dubbed as “AFRIJAM Music” arises from old traditional Africa juxtaposed with modern influences - high technology, advanced communications and international travel in a global market. Afrijam is a unique new music created from a fusion of Nigerian music styles – Highlife, Afrobeat and traditional Yoruba music with Rock, Pop, and Jazz. Foyeh’s orchestra is an inter-mix of Western and African instruments. The guitar, bass, keyboards, and trap-set drums are used stylistically to create and interpret African melodies and rhythms criss-crossing with African drums like the Yoruba talking drums (gangan), and Bata drums; other African percussive instruments like Sakara, and Cowbell are used to create an interlocking and highly charged polyrhythmic sound meant to “bring joy to the heart; happiness to the soul; and dance to the feet.”

July 27, GRYP Night at the Bandshell with Big James and the Chicago Playboys. Headed by trombonist and singer, Big James Montgomery, when Big James and the Chicago Playboys take the stage, they morph into a virtual wrecking-crew of funk and blues-Chicago style. Big James and Chicago Playboys have won the Living Blues magazine annual Critics' Poll for Most Outstanding Horns in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, and received award nominations in 2002, 2006 and 2008 from the Blues Foundation (formerly the W.C. Handy Awards). In addition they won the 2008 Prix Blues from the

Académie du Jazz for their last Jamot release, "Thank God I Got the Blues." James isn't in it for the awards though, in his words: "I play music 'cause I love it, and it comes from my heart." The Greater Young Professionals Group (GRYP) will be there in support of the Bandshell series.

The Bandshell Concert Series finale, **August 3**, brings us **The Chris Cain Band** for a rare East Coast performance. Chris Cain's jazz-tinged, blues soaked guitar and deep, warm vocals have the maturity and authenticity of bluesmen many years his senior. His expressive style is the result of a lifetime of study and the relentless pursuit of music mastery. His passion and intensity are a blend of his mother's Greek ancestry and his father's soulful black heritage. Through his guitar mastery and remarkable songwriting ability, Chris Cain has established himself as a musical force to be reckoned with. And as San Jose Mercury News music reviewer John Orr writes, "More than anyone else, anywhere, Chris Cain represents the future of the blues." And, we think, a great way to round out the series!

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, Thai Cuisine, Latina Connection 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 2012 Bandshell Concert Series sponsors: County of Berks, City of Reading, Reading Eagle, WEEU 830AM, Land Displays, 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 mission of the Berks Arts Council, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is to encourage and promote all the arts, to develop an appreciation of the arts and to enrich and enhance the quality of life through presentation, education and collaborations with other arts organizations. 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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