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**THE 13th ANNUAL CREEKSIDE BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL
CELEBRATES AMERICA'S MUSIC IN OLDE GAHANNA, JUNE 17 to 19**

Electrifying music event to draw performers from Ohio and throughout the country to the banks of central Ohio's beautiful Big Walnut Creek

GAHANNA, Ohio—With scores of internationally acclaimed blues and jazz musicians from central Ohio and across the nation slated to play more than 90 hours of music on five stages, the 13th annual **Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival** is getting back to the roots—the roots of American music—**June 17-19** in Olde Gahanna.

Presented by the Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau (GCVB), Creekside always delivers high-caliber musicians, but this year's lineup boasts a roster with exceptionally storied résumés.

Blues headliners include **Bill "Watermelon Slim" Homans** and **James "Super Chikan" Johnson**. Homans, an Oklahoma guitarist, singer and harmonica player, arrives with a long and varied list of sanctioned blues awards to his credit and songs that deliver his signature style with revelatory and memorable phrases. Johnson, a treasure from Mississippi, plays hand-painted/hand-made folk art guitars that are as eye-popping as they are ear-pleasing.

Topping the jazz bill is Chicago-based, Indianapolis native **Pharez Whitted**, the famed trumpeter and former Columbus resident and Ohio State instructor, who will pair with the innovative **Liquid Crystal Project** for a dynamic set of jazz and hip-hop fusion. Also performing is the award-winning **Urban Jazz Coalition**, and the celebrated fundamental jazz powerhouse, the **Columbus Jazz Orchestra**.

The varied lineup—the heart of the three-day, family-friendly affair—is the fruit of an event that's been meticulously cultivated during the past 13 years. Founded in 1999 as a modest, half-day party to celebrate the renovated Olde Gahanna Creekside area, the Festival, boasting more than 50 acts on five stages and situated near beautiful Big Walnut Creek and Creekside shops and restaurants, has evolved into one of the Midwest's premiere destination festivals.

That Gahanna has played host to such a marquee event for more than a decade is fitting, given the community's time-honored connections to American roots music.

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Greater Columbus' prominent role in the history of blues and jazz often is told through lore connected to the clubs of the Bronzeville neighborhood along Mt. Vernon Avenue on Columbus' near east side. But, Gahanna has its story to tell as well. Its role in blues and jazz history reaches to the 1920s, when African American Columbus lawyers, doctors and other prominent men bought 20 acres of land (in the then countryside) and opened Big Walnut Country Club.

The club, which hosted popular bands, dances and festivals, closed more than 50 years ago, but the spirit of such a place and the people who frequented it can be sensed every year when musicians and music fans converge at the Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival.

"We're proud of Gahanna's blues and jazz music history and our ever-growing Festival," said Festival Planning Committee chair Laurie Jadwin. "We attract big names in blues and jazz, but we also showcase the tremendous talent we have here in the Columbus area community."

THE 2011 CREEKSIDE BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL LINEUP:

BLUES:

Watermelon Slim and Super Chikan (9:15 p.m. Saturday, Blues Stage)

Watermelon Slim and Super Chikan's take on the blues is as colorful as the knick-name of each well-traveled, critically acclaimed musician. The pair is touring together for the first time on the heels of their new album *Okiesippi Blues*.

Watermelon Slim

Unbelievable characters comprise the world and history of the blues. And then there's Dobro (lap-steel) guitarist-singer-harmonica player, ex-forklift operator and long haul trucker Watermelon Slim. In a raw-boned, timeless Oklahoma twang, the Vietnam vet and Mensa member delivers real-deal workingman blues. A thin version of Slim's story goes this way:

- Attended college on a fencing scholarship
- Left college to serve in Vietnam
- Taught himself to play upside-down, left-handed guitar while lying in a Vietnam hospital bed
- Drove a semi, operated a forklift and, at a saw mill, lost part of a finger
- Farmed, yes, watermelons
- Completed one master's and two undergrad degrees
- Joined the high-IQ society Mensa
- For good measure, survived a massive heart attack in 2002
- Played music and wrote songs all along

A winner of 2008 Blues Music Awards (Album of the Year; Blues Band of the Year), Slim will release *Okiesippi Blues* June 7, an album that also features his Creekside Blues & Jazz Fest co-headlining partner Super Chikan.

When he isn't on the road, Slim bowls a steady 240 in his local league, fishes, works on songs, and—after that heart attack—makes the most of his new lease on life.

"Everything I do now has a sharper pleasure to it," he says. "I've lived a fuller life than most people could in two. If I go now, I've got a good education, I've lived on three continents, and I've played music with a bunch of immortal blues players. I've fought in a war and against a war. I've seen an awful lot and I've done an awful lot. If my plane went down tomorrow, I'd go out on top."

When you watch him perform, you know every word is true.

Super Chikan

A Clarksdale, Mississippi-based guitarist who melds country blues, funk, rock and straight blues, the 2010 Blues Music Awards winner (Traditional Blues Album) this year was nominated for B.B. King Entertainer and Traditional Blues Male Artist of the Year.

Drawing on the driving, rhythmic sounds of Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry and John Lee Hooker, Super Chikan writes lyrics culled from his former life as a trucker and his current life as a resident of the Mississippi Delta.

Following the commercial and critical success of his 1997 debut album, *Blues Comes Home to Roost*, Super Chikan has toured and performed throughout North America and Europe (when he isn't playing frequently in Morgan Freeman's popular Clarksdale, Mississippi, Ground Zero club). Super Chikan, whose latest CD is *Welcome to Sunny Bluesville*, follows a string of discs with unforgettable titles (and songs): *Shoot That Thang* (2001), *Chikan Soup* (2005), *Sum Mo Chikan* (2008) and *Chikadelic* (2009).

Super Chikan makes his own "chiktar" guitars—guitars assembled from discarded guitar pieces and, in a nod to blues-playing forebears, cigar boxes. The man born James Johnson also hand paints each of his instruments with scenes of the Delta, creating artistic work that is highly prized by folk art collectors. In 2005 he received an Artist Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission.

OTHER BLUES PERFORMERS

- **Bryan "Braille Blues Daddy" Lee (9:30 p.m. Friday, Blues Stage)**
 - A French Quarter mainstay for decades, Wisconsin-reared Lee cut his teeth in '70s Chicago with encouragement from Muddy Waters. The New Orleans-based blind singer and show-stopping electric blues guitarist, called by Eric Clapton "one of the best bluesmen I have ever seen," recently played his 25th consecutive New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Lee is a contemporary blues powerhouse, whose chops and vision are sought out by household names. In 2010, Lee was nominated for a Grammy for his work on the CD *Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Band Live!* Lee will draw from his trove of music, including his latest album "My Lady Don't Love My Lady".
- **Mikey Junior & the Stone Cold Blues (7:15 p.m. Saturday, Blues Stage)**
 - Growing up on the tough streets of Trenton, N.J., commanding harmonica player Mikey Junior spent the better part of his youth immersing himself in the world of blues music,. By age 21, the prodigy was already road-tested. Praised by fellow musicians and championed by fans for his old-school style, Junior will share tunes from his most recent disc, the acoustic "Pocket Full of Money".

- **Sean Carney**
 - “Best Band in Columbus” (*Columbus Monthly*) and winner of the 2007 International Blues Challenge and Albert King Award, the Carney Band has played the Creekside Festival every year, including the Festival’s debut as a one-day, one-stage event.

Carney, for years in central Ohio, has played with the cream of the crop when it comes to regional historic figures of the blues and jazz worlds. And, when he isn’t playing in Columbus, he’s traveling with his band to various corners of the globe. In 2010, Carney played in no fewer than 12 countries, wowing audiences at festivals in France (Seven Nights Blues Festival), Switzerland (Piazza Blues Festival), Mexico (San Felipe Blues & Arts Fiesta), and Canada (Calgary International Blues Festival).

Carney will head up two special events during the week of the Festival:

Camp Blues—June 13 to 17

In its third year, but first in affiliation with the Creekside Festival, the weeklong day-camp at the Lincoln Theatre, (769 E. Long St.) allows children ages 11 and older to experience playing the blues. Young students learn the basics through the week and play a “final exam” at 5 p.m. Friday on the Creekside Community Stage presented by Mount Carmel.

Blues Guitar Workshop (10 a.m. to noon Saturday)

A big hit when it made its debut last year, Carney’s Blues Guitar Workshop, which draws students of all ages, is geared to individual levels of experience.

- **The Lionel Young Band (2:45 p.m. Sunday, Blues Stage)**
 - Winner of 2008 and 2010 International Blues Challenge, Young started playing the violin when he was six years old and later won a music scholarship to Indiana University. Classically trained, Louisville-based Young has gone on to perform an array of name brand acts, including the Count Basie Band, Stevie Wonder and James Taylor. Other awards bestowed upon Young include Young Artist Award (Pittsburgh Symphony), the Passamenic Award (Branchwood String Quartet) and Best Blues Band (Westwood’s Best of Denver).
- **No Saints No Saviors--Allman Brothers Tribute Band (4 p.m. Sunday, Blues Stage)**
 - The Queen City tribute band, featuring crack players from the Cincinnati area, recreate classic Allman Brothers shows filled with “Melissa”, “Blue Sky”, “Ramblin’ Man”--all the bluesy, soulful southern rock staples.

JAZZ:

Pharez Whitted & Liquid Crystal Project (9 p.m. Friday, Jazz Stage presented by Heartland Bank)

A renowned jazz trumpeter, composer, producer and educator, **Whitted** will join forces with the hip-hop-infused jazz group **Liquid Crystal Project** to headline the Jazz Stage.

Whitted, the son of singer-bassist Virtue Hampton and nephew of trombonist Slide Hampton, once taught jazz trumpet at Ohio State University ('93 to '00) and was a fixture in Columbus' Dell, Barrister Hall, the 501 Jazz Bar and Lindey's. Whitted, who has played or recorded with Branford and Wynton Marsalis, George Duke, Ramsey Lewis and John Mellencamp, is Director of Jazz Studies at Chicago State University. His latest solo album is *Transient Journey*.

Columbus hip-hop and R&B musicians and singers J. Rawls, BJazz, Charles Cooper, and Rob Riley comprise the Liquid Crystal Project, which infuses fundamental jazz with elements of hip-hop.

- **Urban Jazz Coalition (9:30 p.m. Saturday, Jazz Stage presented by Heartland Bank)**
 - Praised by the Las Vegas City of Light Jazz Festival as the "best-kept secret in smooth jazz," the Columbus septet has been wowing U.S. audiences for 15 years. Having toured with Spyro Gyra, the Rippingtons and Al Jarreau, the group's most recent CDs climbed high on jazz music charts, with "*Down To Get Up*" in the #3 spot for 2007 on the *JazzWeek* Independent Smooth Jazz Chart.

- **Columbus Jazz Orchestra (3 p.m. Sunday, Jazz Stage presented by Heartland Bank)**
 - For more than three decades, jazz foundations have regarded the CJO model musical organization, as well as one of the finest jazz orchestras in the world. Hosting nearly 50 subscription concerts for thousands of fans each season in Columbus, the CJO teams with internationally acclaimed guest artists in its mission to champion big band jazz. Former Count Basie Orchestra lead trumpet Byron Stripling, who has performed and recorded with the bands of Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton, heads up the dedicated outfit. Stripling's career highlights also include featured solo appearances with the Boston Pops, Pittsburgh Symphony and the National Symphony.

OTHER JAZZ PERFORMERS INCLUDE:

- **The Tim Cummiskey Duo (1:30 p.m. Saturday, Acoustic Alley)**
 - Central Ohio guitarist Cummiskey travels throughout the Midwest, performing jazz and classical guitar. A frequent collaborator with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and the Columbus Jazz Orchestra, and an educator at nearly every university in central Ohio, he has played and/or conducted clinics with this esteemed list of luminaries: Michael Feinstein, Patti Page, Neil Sedaka, Gene Bertoncini, and Clay Aiken.

- **Anna and the Consequences (3:30 p.m. Sunday, Acoustic Alley)**
 - With an eclectic repertoire that spans more than 100 years of American music, the acoustic Columbus cabaret quartet wields an acoustic bass and guitar and the harmonizing talents of four great voices.

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FESTIVAL ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

The Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival is renowned for its annual lineup of musicians, but during the past 13 years, the premiere Midwest gathering has also developed a reputation for providing a wide variety of unique attractions and fun, music-oriented activities for all ages, including: the **Mini-Midway's** fun house, giant slide, merry-go-round, climbing wall, and rides for small children; **Paddle Boat Rides**, which allow boaters to take in the music as they leisurely explore Big Walnut Creek; and a diverse selection of **Festival food** and **artisanal crafts**.

OTHER NOTABLE MUSIC-CENTRIC OFFERINGS INCLUDE:

RISING STARS CONTEST presented by Benchmark Bank (11 a.m. Saturday on the Creekside Community Stage presented by Mt. Carmel)

- Got what it takes to become a Rising Star of the Festival? The Rising Stars Contest presented by Benchmark Bank—Olde Gahanna's version of *American Idol*—puts budding blues and jazz musicians stage and before judges and an audience. The winning musician or group will win a \$200 scholarship award and a slot on the Musical Discovery Stage at 7 p.m. Saturday. (The runner-up will receive a \$100 award.)
- A selection committee will determine finalists to compete. To be considered, you must be between the ages of middle school and 20-years-old and submit a video or audio sample of no more than five minutes long by May 29 to risingstarscreekside@gmail.com

SUNDAY JAZZ BRUNCH (11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.)

- It's Father's Day! Treat Dad and the entire family to some top-flight music and cuisine at the Big Walnut Creek-side Mezzo Italian Kitchen & Wine, which will host the 4th-annual Sunday Jazz Brunch. The ever-popular event features live jazz, sumptuous food and drink from one of central Ohio's finest restaurants and a complimentary ticket to the Festival. Visit www.mezzoitalian.com for more information.

JOG YOUR JAZZ OFF (Saturday behind Mezzo Kitchen & Wine in Olde Gahanna)

- For the fourth year, the festival will offer a 5-K Run/Walk. This year "Jog Your JAZZ Off" will begin at 10 a.m., following the new half-mile "Jog Your JAZZ Off Fun Run For Kids" (ages 4 to 11), which will begin at 9:30 a.m. and send the little ones off on a fun path through Creekside Park. Registration for the Jog Your JAZZ Off 5-K Run/Walk is \$25 through June 11 (\$30 afterwards) and registration for the Jog Your JAZZ Off Kids Fun Run is \$10 through June 11 (\$15 afterwards). Both race registration fees include a commemorative T-shirt, refreshments and two "good any day" tickets to the Festival. Run your run, walk your walk, then return to the heart of the Festival just as it gets under way. Register here: <http://www.active.com/running/gahanna-oh/jog-your-jazz-off-5k-2011>.

MUSICAL DISCOVERY ZONE, presented by Giant Eagle

- The Zone's expanded offerings include the Musical Discovery Stage, the centerpiece of a fun-filled area filled with free interactive, hands-on offerings for the whole family. Throughout the festival weekend, in the Zone, musicians from the Jazz Arts Group and the Columbus Blues Alliance will teach kids a bit about the blues and jazz and how to coax tunes and rhythm from various instruments kids will learn how to make.

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GAHANNA CREEKSIDE BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL INFO

Festival hours: Friday, June 17 – 5 p.m.-11 p.m.; Saturday, June 18 – 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Sunday, June 19 -12-6 p.m. General Admission is \$3. Children under 12 are free. A weekend pass (available only Friday at the gate) is \$8.

Members of the military will receive free admission, ID required. Free admission on Sunday from 12 -2 p.m. for each person bringing a non-perishable food donation for Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

The Festival is presented by the Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau and is made possible with help from a corps of dedicated local volunteers. Photos are available upon request.

For high resolution photos and more information, visit www.creeksidebluesandjazz.com or call the Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau at 614-418-9114 or 1-866-GAHANNA

GAHANNA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau (GCVB) is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization funded by a local hotel tax and partner support whose mission is to promote Gahanna as a vibrant destination by connecting the people and places of our community which contributes to economic prosperity. The GCVB annually presents the Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival and Holiday Lights Season. We are grateful for the support given to the Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival by the event sponsors listed on our Web site: www.creeksidebluesandjazz.com

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