



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 2, 2010

**Asbury Park To Host Smithsonian Institute Musical Exhibit**

Asbury Park has had a lot of musical firsts over the years and another one occurred at the famous Stone Pony Friday night when it was announced that the city would be the first urban area to host a groundbreaking Smithsonian Institution musical exhibit.

City officials announced that the Smithsonian's traveling musical heritage exhibit, called "*New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*," will have its first big-city appearance in Asbury Park early next year.

"Asbury Park will be the first urban city in the country to host the exhibit," Mayor Ed Johnson announced from the stage at the Stone Pony, just prior to the Southside Johnny concert.

City officials, club owners, musicians, businesses, and other groups and organizations are planning a year-long schedule of musical or musically-related events for 2011, to be called "*Asbury Park: Where Music Lives*."

The events will include lectures, community choir participation, students recording musical recollections of senior citizens, art exhibits, book signings, concerts, and much more.

The city also hopes to write about and record on film or audio the story of Asbury Park's famous musical tradition. Plans on having a companion exhibit about the city's own unique musical heritage are also in the works as is a documentary on the special year-long events.

"Asbury Park is justly deserving of this honor," said Robert Santelli, former director of the Rock & Roll Museum & Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio and Director of Programs for the Experience Music Project in Seattle, Washington.

"Of all the urban areas in New Jersey, Asbury Park has an extraordinary musical heritage that touches upon many facets of *the New Harmonies* exhibit, from blues to gospel and rock 'n roll, not to mention ethnic music of all kinds," he said.

Santelli, who is a Jersey shore native and is also curator of the exhibit, said that Asbury Park has always been a melting pot for music and music-lovers

"It has an incredibly rich musical heritage for the size of the city," he said.

From bandleaders John Philip Sousa and Arthur Prior in the early days to modern musical icons, like Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi, Southside Johnny and many others, Asbury Park has always been at the forefront of the musical scene at the Jersey shore.

Big-band leaders, like Glen Miller, Benny Goodman, and the Tommy Dorsey orchestra, brought their bands to the city as did jazz and blues greats like Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Lionel Hampton, and many others.

Gospel music still thrives in Asbury Park as it has for more than 100 years. Venues like the Convention Hall, the Paramount Theater, the Stone Pony, The Saint, the Wonder Bar, Asbury Lanes, and the expected preservation of the old Upstage Club downtown allows Asbury Park to continue to attract new talent. The exhibit, which explores the growth of American music, both sacred and secular, will be housed in the Asbury Park Public Library. It will open in March, 2011 and continue for six weeks.

The exhibit has been shown for the last four years throughout the country in rural areas only as part of the Museum on Main Street cultural project- collaboration between the Smithsonian Institute and the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

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