

**FOR RELEASE Friday, April 6, 2007**

**Press Contact:** Lisa Sims  
Director of Events  
Venture Richmond  
and National Folk Festival  
Tel: 804.788.6471  
Fax: 804.788.6477  
[lsims@venturerichmond.com](mailto:lsims@venturerichmond.com)  
[www.venturerichmond.com](http://www.venturerichmond.com)

## **Venture Richmond Announces Friday Cheers 2007 Line-Up**

---

### ***23<sup>rd</sup> Season for Free Concert Series on Brown's Island***

RICHMOND, VA – Venture Richmond's FREE signature summer concert series, Friday Cheers, is back on Brown's Island for its 23rd season and features some of the nation's hottest touring acts, along with some regional favorites.

The series kicks off Friday, May 11, and continues Fridays through June 29, 6:00-9:30 p.m. All events are on Brown's Island with the exception of the May 25 event, which will be a combined Friday Cheers and Fridays at Sunset, held at the City's Intermediate Terminal location as part of the Richmond Region 2007 "Rock the Boat" Godspeed event. The artist for that event will be announced at a later date.

Again this year Friday Cheers will offer eight concerts and is focused on a variety of performers that may only be in the Region once this summer. The title sponsor is Loveland Distributing.

"We have concentrated on getting acts that just don't come to Richmond, or even Virginia, that often," said Lisa Sims, director of events for Venture Richmond. "Many of these bands are groups that might normally cost \$10-\$20 per ticket, but Friday Cheers, as always, is free. And Brown's Island, on the beautiful James River in Downtown Richmond, is a gorgeous venue. We have great bands, performing in one of the Region's most beautiful settings and the price is right."

### **Friday, May 11 – Carbon Leaf (w/TBA)**

Carbon Leaf blasted into the national spotlight two years ago with their major label debut, *Indian Summer*. But while they kept busy working as support on major national tours (Dave Matthews Band, Counting Crows, John Mayer, etc.) and headlining their own, these Virginia-based self-starters kept moving forward musically as well as professionally. That point rings clear throughout their newest collection, *Love, Loss, Hope, Repeat*.

### **Friday, May 18 – Lee Boys (w/DJ Williams Projekt)**

The Lee Boys are one of America's finest African-American sacred steel ensembles. This family group consists of three brothers, Alvin Lee (guitar), Derrick Lee and Keith Lee (vocals) along with their three nephews, Roosevelt Collier (pedal steel guitar), Alvin Cordy Jr. (7-string bass) and Earl Walker (drums). Each member began making music at the ages of 7 and 8 in the House of God church they attended in Perrine, FL. Here they underwent a rigorous course of training in a variety of musical instruments, including lap and pedal steel guitars. Born and raised in Miami, each of The Lee Boys grew up in the church where their father and grandfather, Rev. Robert E. Lee, was the pastor and a steel player himself.

"Sacred steel" is described as an inspired, unique form of Gospel music with a hard-driving, blues-based beat. The musical genre is rooted in Gospel, but infused with rhythm and blues, jazz, rock, funk, hip-hop, country and ideas from other nations. Influenced by the Hawaiian steel guitar fad of the 1930's, brothers Willie and Troman Eason brought the electric lap steel guitar into the worship services of the House of God church in Jacksonville, FL. The Pentecostal congregation embraced the soulful sound, and over time this unique sound became the hallmark of the church. The pedal steel guitar was added to the mix and soon became the central instrument. The Lee Boys are part of the fourth generation of musicians in this faith.

### **Friday, May 25 – TBA – at the Intermediate Terminal**

A combination Friday Cheers and Fridays at Sunset, this special concert will be held at the City's Intermediate Terminal on the James River as part of the Richmond Region 2007 "Rock the Boat" Godspeed sail event. An announcement regarding the band will be made in mid-April.

### **Friday, June 1 – Soulive (w/Existor)**

---

Soulive is all about danceable, organ-driven instrumental groove-jazz. Their success is a result of fusing the soul jazz of the past with a modern hip-hop feel. The rhythmic concepts employed date back to those learned from artists such as James Brown, Stevie Wonder and Sly Stone. Though originally from Vermont, Soulive is essentially Boston-based. The band toured with and/or opened for a number of notables (including John Scofield, Maceo Parker, Los Lobos, Derek Trucks, and Robben Ford) before headlining their own shows. Their first release was the self-pressed *Get Down!*. The band's full length debut, *Turn It Out* (featuring John Scofield) was released on the Velour label in 2000. That release generated such a buzz that they were promptly picked up by Blue Note, who released *Doin' Something* in early 2001. About a year later, *Next* was released, followed by *Soulive* in 2003.

### **Friday, June 8 – Keller Williams (w/TBA)**

---

Before embarking on *dream*, Keller Williams' newest recording project, he scratched out a wish list of artists he'd like to collaborate with in the studio. Because Williams has been a fan of and tour mate with so many excellent musicians, his list of names ran long and ambitious. Keller's been refining his kind of performance art for almost 15 years, logging over 100 gigs annually, and he's a productive recording artist as well. *dream* is Williams' ninth studio release so far. He began recording in earnest back in 1993, after serving time in cover bands in high school and college. He got his first big break in 1997 when The

String Cheese Incident gave Keller, a Fredericksburg, Virginia native, an opening slot on their tour, after he volunteered to do it for free. From that point, Williams began to grow an audience of his own, gradually winning fans through non-stop grassroots touring, beguiling performances, and talented and entertaining recordings. His calling card? A creative combination of talent and technology. *Dream* serves as a culmination of that approach.

### **Friday, June 15 – AAE (w/Crucial Elements)**

Back by popular demand, Richmond's own African Awareness Ensemble will be bringing the sounds of Jamaica back to Brown's Island. AAE have been playing Friday Cheers for decades, and after a brief hiatus are back. AAE brings authentic reggae and a great laid-back vibe to help you unwind from the end of your work week. Crucial Elements, the new guard of Richmond's reggae scene will open the evening with their own unique spin on the genre.

### **Friday, June 22 – Drive-by Truckers (w/TBA)**

Equal parts back porch historians, runaway drunken firecrackers, and poets of the hard life and how to live it; Drive-by Truckers came on the scene and set the bar higher for what can be done with the music they love. The characters in their songs have left gals at the altar, wrecked their cars, woken up on the cold floor and even killed themselves a number of times over the years, breathing some new intelligent life, not just into rock music but, into rockers everywhere. Their three front men/guitarists/songwriters: Patterson Hood, long time running partner Mike Cooley and guitar wizard Jason Isbell, make for a triumvirate that would crumble a lesser band.

### **Friday, June 29 – The Slip (w/TBA)**

In 1996 The Slip put out their first studio album as a self-release and began establishing a dedicated fan-base through relentless touring in and around the northeast. A late-nineties blend of extended roots pop compositions and

experimental rhythmic approaches, the band developed and found their sound through an extremely supportive local scene of artists, musicians, and actors - coupled with a rigorous, and soon national, tour schedule. An eclectic new brand of exploratory roots psych-rock emerged; Van Morrison meets Coltrane meets Talking Heads. The SLIP grew from young, earthy avant-gardes to strong, dynamic rock composers, creating a new sonic landscape that drew equally from CAN, U2, and new interests like Built to Spill, Flaming Lips, and Wilco. By 2003, the trio's non-stop touring produced *Alivelectric* and *Aliveacoustic*, a companion live set that also represented the inaugural release of their own record label, 216 records. Their latest release is *EISENHOWER*.

### **About Venture Richmond**

Venture Richmond is the organization created from the merger of Richmond Renaissance, citycelebrations, River District Alliance and Riverfront Development Corporation. In addition to Friday Cheers Venture Richmond produces the National Folk Festival, Second Street Festival, Easter on Parade and River City Seafood and Beer Festival. For more information please visit [www.venturerichmond.com](http://www.venturerichmond.com) or call (804) 788-6466.

# # #