

PRESS RELEASE:

August 23, 2010

For immediate release:

Through September 25, 2010

For more information:

Laura C. Lieberman, 770/949-2787

FREE CONCERTS ON DOUGLASVILLE'S O'NEAL PLAZA IN SEPTEMBER
Geoff Achison & The Souldiggers,
The Donna Hopkins Band & The 4th Ward Afro-Klezmer Orchestra

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is pleased to present its 2010 Fall Concerts on the Plaza at the O'Neal Plaza in historic downtown Douglasville, showcasing legendary Australian blues rocker Geoff Achison on Saturday, September 11th, Saturday, The Donna Hopkins Band on September 18th, and the Fourth Ward Afro-Klezmer Orchestra on Saturday, September 25th. All evening performances begin at 7 p.m. These special outdoor events are free and open to the general public. Ample free parking is available near O'Neal Plaza. Listeners are reminded to bring their own chairs.

On the first Saturday of the fall series, September 11th, **Geoff Achison** returns to O'Neal Plaza to dazzle the crowd. Named one of the top ten guitarists in the world by *Guitar Player* magazine, Achison has a reputation as a guitarist's guitarist. He taught himself to play in the isolation of rural Australia, developing a blues/funk style all his own that can be delicate one moment and explosive the next. With his unusual fingering techniques and soulful voice, this award-winning songwriter performs infectious live performances with catchy original tunes, improvised jamming and inspired versions of blues and soul classics. Winner of the Albert King Award, he has toured three continents, working with Jorma Kaukonen (of Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna fame), John Mayall, Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown, Hubert Sumlin, Levon Helm and John Mayer as well as top Aussies 'Dutch' Tilders, Phil Manning, Jeff Lang and Tommy Emmanuel. He formed his first incarnation of The Souldiggers in Melbourne and a U.S. version in 1998. His tenth album, *Acho Solo*, was released in 2007. Since he last played in Douglasville two years ago, Achison has jammed with Les Paul in New York, performed with Delbert McClinton on a cruise ship, released a new cd of original compositions, "One Ticket, One Ride," last year, and performed this summer at Kaukonen's legendary Fur Peace Ranch.

The second Saturday, September 18th, the Donna Hopkins Band brings great music to Douglasville from much closer to home. When vocalist and guitarist Donna Hopkins was only 14, growing up in Arab (pronounced AIR-rab), Alabama, she began sneaking out of the house to play guitar in bars in nearby Huntsville and Muscle Shoals. It wasn't long before she left home, relocating to Birmingham and later to Nashville. She then spent eight years on the road before settling in Atlanta. Hopkins comes from three generations of musicians: "My great grandfather, my grandfather and my mother were all musicians," she recalls. "My grandfather, Tip Barbee, played bluegrass and blues kind of stuff. I remember going to hear him play on Saturday nights." She recently released a solo cd, "Free To Go," with her grandfather playing on one cut, and her daughter, India, appears on the album, sharing vocals with her mother on "Everything Money Can't Buy," a cut selected by Atlanta Magazine for the first annual Atlanta Artist compilation cd. In addition to singing and playing lead, slide and acoustic guitar for the Donna Hopkins Band, Donna Hopkins appears frequently around the Southeast with "Women of Rock," which also includes Caroline Aiken and Diane Durette.

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The Donna Hopkins Band also features Brian Ashley Jones, a Nashville-based singer and songwriter who draws from a variety of influences ranging from pop, rock, blues, country, and bluegrass. His first cd, "Come Out and Play," was released in 1997, and his second, "Courier," came out in 2002; Jones has played mandolin and bass in the Donna Hopkins Band since 2004. Rock and roll drummer Richie Jones is the final member of the band. Inspired by bands like Rush, The Eagles, and Stevie Ray Vaughn, he has been playing drums since he was 12 years old. He began performing with schoolmates Stephen Spivey and Jess Franklin in what was known as "The Best Little Blues Band," and they went on to open for such acts as Government Mule, The Derek Trucks Band, and Drivin' 'n' Cryin'. They played the college circuit for five and a half years until Richie completed his B.S. Degree in studio art at Florida State University. After graduating, Richie moved to Atlanta and began playing with Deep Blue Sun, which played heavy funk-driven jam music on the festival circuit, before joining the roots-driven Donna Hopkins Band in 2003.

The third Saturday, September 25th, the 4th Ward Afro-Klezmer Orchestra, a ten-piece jazz ensemble performing original compositions and arrangements combining West African influenced rhythms with Eastern European klezmer melodies. Awarded *Creative Loafing's* 2009 Critic's Choice for Best Jazz Ensemble, the A.K.O., led by trumpet player and composer Roger Ruzow, boasts a roster of extraordinary, veteran Atlanta, talent featuring: Colin Bragg (guitar), Jeff Compton (clarinet, alto & baritone sax), Chip Epsten (violin), Eric Fontaine (tenor sax), Keith Leslie (drums), Nam Bui (bass), Bill Nittler (clarinet, baritone sax), and Blake Williams (trombone). Violinist Chip Epsten has performed in Douglasville as a member of a the Deluxe Vaudeville Orchestra and in the traditional Klezmer group, Oy Klezmer. He currently also performs in the folk jazz group, Sundog. His wry, quirky music has appeared in numerous films and works for theater and dance, at venues in the U.S.A. and Europe. This concert will be a first visit to O'Neal Plaza for performer, composer and teacher, Roger Ruzow who has been performing trumpet for almost 20 years. A founding member of Gold Sparkle Band, and his own Ensemble Elastique, Ruzow has toured and performed throughout the U.S. His compositions have been featured on several Gold Sparkle CD-releases and used on documentary soundtracks. With a style he calls "Comprovisation," basically a mixture of composition and improvisation, Ruzow has collaborated and performed with Nuzion Big Band, William Parker and Other Dimensions in Music, Daniel Carter, Ken Vandermark and members of DKV, Toshi Makihara, Julian Sparacino, members of Sun Ra Arkestra, Paul Jorgensen, and many others. All of the musicians in the Afro-Klezmer Orchestra have diverse experience, Colin Bragg who studied classical guitar with John Sutherland, a disciple of Andres Segovia, has been "composer in residence" for a Decatur-based dance group, performed with the Tibetan musician Techung for the Dalai Lama at Centennial Park in Atlanta, performs with the Hidden Noise Ensemble, and occasionally plays for services at the Intown Community Church and Church of the Redeemer in Atlanta.

The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is supported by its membership, sponsors, the City of Douglasville, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, and the Georgia Council for the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art. Contact the Cultural Arts Council at 770/949-2787 or visit our website, www.artsdouglas.org, for more information and directions to the plaza.

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CALENDAR LISTINGS: MUSIC PERFORMANCES

TITLE: FREE FALL CONCERTS ON THE PLAZA

PLACE: O'Neal Plaza in Historic Downtown Douglasville
Exit #36 from I-20

DATE: Saturday, September 11th Geoff Achison and the Souldiggers
Saturday, September 18th The Donna Hopkins Band
Saturday, September 25th The 4th Ward Afro-Klezmer Band

TIME: 7 p.m.

COST: Free to the public (please bring your own chairs)

CONTACT: Cultural Arts Center, 770/949-2787