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Rose Tree Summer Festival Highlights

The 36th annual Delaware County Summer Festival came to a close on Sunday evening with a spectacular performance by the popular party band Chico's Vibe. Hundreds of fans braved the misty weather to listen to Dennis "Chico" Chicchino and the nine-piece band rock the outdoor amphitheater.

The ten-week concert series offered area residents forty-eight shows to enjoy throughout the summer, all admission-free, and the schedule featured an impressive array of diverse talent.

Perennial favorites such as Blackthorn, The U.S. Army Field Band & Soldier's Chorus, Charlie Gracie, The Upper Darby Sousa Band, and Zydeco-A-Go-Go, drew lots of loyal enthusiasts once again, and several new additions to the festival enjoyed a successful Rose Tree debut.

Philly's own local music scene contributed two highly anticipated new shows - the first featuring the winners of the 2010 [Philadelphia Songwriters Project](#), and the second being the hot [Matt Santry Band](#), which celebrated the release of its second CD on August 6 at Rose Tree.

Many Delco musicians also enjoyed their first chance to play in the amphitheater, including James Day & the Fish Fry, Special Brewd, Mooch's Basement, Experiment, and Craig Bickhart & Fontaine Cooley.

Highly regarded children's entertainers were a big hit for families once again, and the polished performers from Makin' Music, The Cat's Pajamas, and Steve Pullara & His Cool Beans Band got young fans dancing and singing along with them. In June there were two well-attended special morning performances by musician Peter Moses and

children's comedian Adam Holtz, which gave audiences a perfect opportunity to have a picnic in the park after the shows.

As expected, tribute bands attracted some of the largest crowds of the season. Festival veterans Separate Ways, Jimmy & the Parrots, The Robert Eric Band, The Fantastic Party Dolls, and Kayfield & Company packed the amphitheater with fans eager to hear the music of Journey, Jimmy Buffett, Billy Joel, chart-topping women of rock 'n' roll and legendary guitarists of the past four decades.

Three festival newcomers turned out to be among some of the most popular on the schedule. Beautiful Day, The Glimmer Twins, and Real Diamond drew scores of fans eager to experience live tributes to the superstar acts of U2, The Rolling Stones, and Neil Diamond, respectively.

Jazz aficionados particularly appreciated the Eric Mintel Quartet, The U.S. Naval Academy's Jazz Ensemble, the Blackbird Society Orchestra, and Minas Brazilian Jazz, while fans of Motown and R&B sang the praises of Leroy Hawkes (known as "the soul ambassador to the blues"), sultry-voiced Melissa Martin, and the four-part harmony of Special Blendz.

The orchestra/big band crowd came out in force for Big G & the Cool Cats, State Street Orchestra, Rose Tree Pops, John Hoey Orchestra, and Chester County Concert Band.

Other noteworthy performances from 2010 were the Scottish Highland Concert, complete with bagpipes, dancers, and traditional kilts, and "That's Amore!" in which members of the Main Line Opera Guild sang Italian favorites, both old and new.

Unlike the soggy 2009 season, notorious for late-afternoon showers, the hot and dry 2010 series cruised along sans much interference from Mother Nature, with one "striking" (*pun intended*) exception: June 24. That was the day turbulent storms ripped through the area, causing widespread power outages and the cancellation of The Fabulous Greaseband concert, historically one of the most requested on the Rose Tree roster.

A testament to the band's popularity, hundreds of hopeful fans sat in the quiet amphitheater for hours, patiently waiting to see if electricity would be restored in time for the band to take the stage. It wasn't. But even as people packed up their lawn chairs, the mood of the crowd remained positive.

“The audience was wonderful,” recalled Nancy Peters, long-time Mistress of Ceremonies for the Summer Festival. “It was a pleasant evening to be out, and people were very friendly and understanding.”

“We held out until 8:00, but at that point, the sunset became a concern,” explained Marc Manfre, Director of Parks & Recreation. “No power would mean no exit lights for the audience and trying to load band equipment in the dark.”

Fortunately, the amphitheater was up and running again the very next day, and the rest of the festival schedule ran smoothly.

“It was an excellent season,” said Manfre. “More than 75,000 people came to watch the shows and we received a lot of feedback.”

The Summer Festival is an annual free concert series sponsored by Delaware County Council and produced by the Parks & Recreation Department. Corporate sponsors of the 2010 season included Horizon Services, PECO, Power Windows & Siding, and Nolan Painting. The concerts were held in the Rose Tree Park amphitheater, 1671 N. Providence Rd, Media, Pa, 19063. For more information please call 610-565-7410 or visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/summer.