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Bret Michaels and The Groove Hawgs to Rock Out at A Taste of Colorado

DENVER – Legendary rocker Bret Michaels and local radio personalities turned musicians, The Groove Hawgs, will fill the Main Stage on Sunday, Sept. 5, at the 27th annual A Taste of Colorado. The Groove Hawgs will perform at 1 p.m.; Bret Michaels will begin at 7:30 p.m. Both concerts are presented by 103.5 The Fox. The four-day, free admission, food, music, and entertainment Festival will take place Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3 through Sept. 6, in Downtown Denver’s Civic Center Park.

As front man for the infamous rock band Poison, Bret Michaels has had quite a career over the past two decades - from fifteen Top 40 singles to reality television to a solo career. Michaels began playing the guitar as a teenager and formed the group Paris with friends Rikki Rockett, Bobby Dall, and Matt Smith. The group moved from Michaels’ home state of Pennsylvania to Los Angeles in the mid-’80s to pursue their rock ‘n’ roll dreams.

Local publicity about the band eventually led to a record deal with Enigma Records and their first album, “Look What the Cat Dragged In.” The music video for the song “Talk Dirty to Me” helped propel the group into the spotlight during a period when music videos were still considered unconventional marketing tools. The band subsequently decided to change their name to Poison for an “edgier” feel.

Throughout the ’80s and early ’90s, Poison became one of the biggest glam metal bands in the world, recording their second album, the multi-platinum selling “Open Up and Say...Ahh!” and their third album, the popular “Flesh & Blood.” One of the most successful songs released during this time was the 1988 single, “Every Rose Has its Thorn,” a heartfelt ballad about the struggle to find balance between success and personal relationships.

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In the mid-'90s, Michaels formed a film production company with actor Charlie Sheen. The partnership ultimately led to Michaels writing, directing, and starring in several films, including "A Letter From Death Row," which he executive co-produced. As an actor, Michaels has made regular appearances on television shows, including "Yes, Dear," "Martial Law," and "The Chris Isaak Show." He has also co-hosted "Access Hollywood" and was a judge on "Nashville Star" in 2005. Michaels has starred in several incarnations of the top-rated VH1 reality dating show "Rock of Love with Bret Michaels."

This year has been eventful for Michaels, winning "Celebrity Apprentice 3" on NBC; filming another reality show for VH1 to air in the fall, "Bret Michaels: Life As I Know It;" and releasing a third solo studio album, "Custom Built." In the midst of all these projects, Michaels was rushed to the hospital in April, where an emergency appendectomy was performed. Less than two weeks later, he suffered a massive subarachnoid hemorrhage, or bleeding at the base of the brain stem, but was expected to make a complete recovery. In May, it was discovered that Michaels had a hole in his heart, an "operable and treatable" condition. After a brief hospitalization, he resumed his "Roses & Thorns World Tour 2010," performing at venues throughout the country.

Michaels is an active supporter of the American Diabetes Association, having been diagnosed at age six, as well as Armed Forces Entertainment, visiting the U.S. bases in Iraq.

The Groove Hawgs were formed in 1997 by Denver radio personalities Rick Lewis and Michael Floorwax of 103.5 The Fox. Throughout the early 1990s, Lewis and Floorwax performed stand-up comedy throughout Colorado. Their comedy show, which was considerably successful at pulling in large, often sold-out crowds, typically opened their show with a band. Lewis and Floorwax would join the band and perform a few songs with them, another successful venture that crowds enjoyed. The duo soon decided to start their own band, handpicking some of the state's best musicians to form The Groove Hawgs.

The Groove Hawgs first performance together was opening for Creedence Clearwater Revival and The Doobie Brothers at Red Rocks Amphitheater in July 1997, gaining the attention of both music fans and promoters. Since then, The Groove Hawgs have shared the stage with legendary bands like The Allman Brothers Band, James Brown, Ted Nugent, B.B. King, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Johnny Winter, George Thorogood, Def Leppard, Buddy Guy, The Who, and many more.

The current Groove Hawgs lineup includes Rick Lewis, Michael Floorwax, Steve Crenshaw, Joe Sellars, Kara Hesse, and Kerwin Brown. The band continues to entertain crowds throughout the region and is proud to give all of the proceeds from CD and merchandise sales to the Lewis and Floorwax Kid's Fund, which supports children in need in the local community.

In addition to the Main Stage, four other entertainment stages located throughout the Festival will serve up a continuous menu of music, featuring rock, country, jazz, classic rock, blues, and ethnic music and dance groups.

More than 50 of Colorado's favorite food establishments will be selling a wide variety of small portions to full meals, ensuring that there will be something for every palate. The Fine Dining area will host some of Denver's finest restaurants. The Culinary Showcase features local and nationally-renowned chef demonstrations creating simple, yet elegant meals.

Festivalgoers can shop in more than 270 Marketplace booths for original arts and crafts, home and gift items, furniture, jewelry, imports, and more. Shoppers also can explore the Home & Lifestyles area, which features a variety of exhibitors displaying products and services such as window installation, kitchen remodeling, cookware, basement refinishing, and salons and spas.

There will be plenty of music, magic, clowns, and puppets on the KidzStage, and the KidZone features play equipment and hands-on craft activities. Kids and adults also can enjoy carnival rides and games Saturday through Monday.

In the Festival of Mountain and Plain area, families can learn about the state's pioneer past, nature, and the environment. Featured artisans will demonstrate Navajo weaving and culture, spinning, rug braiding, lace crocheting, papermaking, and quilting, along with the popular blacksmith demonstration. At the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program exhibit, children can learn about birds and their environment, along with their interactions with humans. Free gold panning and educational materials about dinosaurs, volcanoes, rocks and minerals, and energy production and conservation are available at the Colorado Mining Exhibit.

Sponsors of this year's Festival are: 9NEWS, Aggreko, All Copy Products, American Medical Response, American Satellite – An Authorized DIRECTV Dealer, Aspen Pure, Barefoot Wine & Bubbly, Blue Moon, Boy Scouts of America, CarterEnergy, Cascadian Farm, Colorado Native, Coors Banquet, *The Denver Post*, Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc., Dunkin' Donuts, Fage Greek Yogurt, Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que, Ford Fiesta Lounge, Grand Lodge on Peak 7, KRAFT HOMESTYLE Macaroni & Cheese, LÄRABAR, LBA Realty, Levinson Eye Clinic, Mike's Hard Lemonade, Mission Foods, Muir Glen, Nintendo DSi™ XL Discovery Zone, PEPSI, Purina® Pro Plan® Rally to Rescue®, Residence Inn Denver City Center, Sturgeon Electric, Texas on Tour, and XingTea.

Festival hours are Friday, Sept. 3, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 4, and Sunday, Sept. 5, 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Monday, Sept. 6, 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Festival of Mountain and Plain ... A Taste of Colorado is a community celebration that is produced by and benefits Downtown Denver Events, Inc., the Downtown Denver Partnership family's community events non-profit organization. The Festival is an opportunity for people throughout the region to come together to experience and appreciate our diverse cultural traditions, and to learn more about our state's Western heritage. The Festival highlights visual and performing arts in addition to featuring educational programs and culinary demonstrations.

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