



## PRESS RELEASE

The Grand 1894 Opera House  
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1 February 2010  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **GALVESTON'S GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL WITH RAY BENSON, APRIL 16th**

Can a wheel reinvent itself while it's still rolling? No doubt that question will be answered when *Asleep at the Wheel with Ray Benson* takes the stage at The Grand 1894 Opera House for one incredible performance at 8 pm on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Sponsored in part by Eibands and Texas Commission on the Arts, this nine Grammy© Award-winning group has – over the past three decades – continued to thrive by “sticking to their noble cause of keeping that distinctly American of art forms – i.e. Western Swing – alive and kicking. And along the way, this world-class group of entertainers has won the praise and admiration from everyone from Willie Nelson to Bob Dylan, George Strait to Van Morrison.

Founded in 1970 in Paw Paw, West Virginia, the band gained recognition first in the San Francisco Bay Area before finally settling in Austin. From the very beginning, AATW's front man was Ray Benson – known for his big voice and big stature (6'7"). Benson's performances always showcased the vitality of a type of music that was first popularized by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys.

When asked “How did you get into playing western swing?” Benson replied: “When we started, we played roots country music – Hank Williams – rootsy kind of stuff, and we found the need to improvise on our instruments. As a musician, you want to be able to improvise. Jazz, blues, bluegrass is all improvised. You play the chorus and then you improvise. And was what we all felt the band was missing from country music. Country music was wonderful lyrically, melodically, stylistically, but it didn’t give us enough room to improvise on our instruments and in our vocals. That’s when Western Swing really opened up!” Over the decades, Benson has remained the anchor of the group, while some 90 musicians have moved in –and out of – its lineup.

You won’t want to miss this memorable evening as you listen to such great hits as “Choo Choo ChBoogie”, “The Letter that Johnny Walker Read”, “Get Your Kicks on Route 66”, and “Cotton Eyed Joe.”

Ticket prices range from \$31 to \$51. Discounts for groups and senior citizens may be available for select performances. The Grand 1894 Opera House is located at 2020 Postoffice in historic downtown Galveston. All major credit cards accepted. Call 800.821.1894, 409.765.1894, or visit online at [www.thegrand.com](http://www.thegrand.com) The Grand 1894 Opera House is recognized as “The Official Opera House of the State of Texas.”