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For Immediate Release

Tour Dates Announced for 2018 Levitt National Tour

*Acclaimed southern raconteur and multi-GRAMMY-winning gospel legends
come together for an electrifying fusion of gospel, blues and rock*



Mark your calendars for a one-of-a-kind musical collaboration as southern raconteur **Paul Thorn** and his five-piece band team up with five-time GRAMMY-winning gospel legends, **Blind Boys of Alabama** as co-headliners of the 2018 Levitt National Tour! Now in its fourth year and created to celebrate the collective impact of the Levitt network of music venues in communities across the country,

the 2018 Levitt National Tour will stop in seven Levitt cities starting June 1!

Billed as the "Mission Temple Fireworks Revival," the Tour marks a celebration of the deep connection between Thorn and Blind Boys of Alabama. With individual sets by each artist, as well as side-by-side performances, Levitt audiences will be treated to songs from *Don't Let The Devil Ride*, Thorn's upcoming album due out this week featuring guest performances by Blind Boys of Alabama. Witnessing Thorn and these illustrious icons perform together will make for exhilarating evenings blending old-school gospel with rock, blues and country!

2018 Levitt National Tour concert dates **(All shows are free to the public, no tickets required)**

Levitt Pavilion SteelStacks | **Friday, June 1**
Levitt Shell Memphis | **Friday, June 29**
Levitt Pavilion Arlington | **Sunday, July 1**
Levitt Pavilion Los Angeles | **Saturday, July 14**

Levitt Shell Sioux Falls (*future site*) | **Friday, August 3**
Levitt Pavilion Dayton | **Saturday, August 11**
Levitt Pavilion Denver | **Sunday, August 19**

No stranger to Levitt, Thorn has performed at the permanent Levitt venues in Memphis and Arlington, and looks forward to returning to Levitt stages as part of the Tour. “I am so honored to be the 2018 Levitt National Tour artist along with Blind Boys of Alabama,” says Thorn. “It means a lot to me that Levitt provides places where everyone can come and enjoy the music, where nobody is excluded. People deserve an opportunity to go out and be entertained.”

Blind Boys of Alabama vocalist, music arranger and drummer Ricky McKinnie, who has been with the group for 30 years, concurs. “Anytime people can come out and there isn’t a price tag on a show of this magnitude, it’s just a great thing to do. It makes us feel good to know people of all ages and backgrounds will experience these free Levitt concerts.”

About Paul Thorn

Paul Thorn has created an innovative and impressive career, pleasing crowds with his muscular brand of roots music—bluesy, rocking and thoroughly Southern American, while speaking universal truths. Raised in Tupelo, Miss., among the same spirits (and some of the actual people) who nurtured the young Elvis generation before, Thorn has rambled down back roads and jumped out of airplanes, worked for years in a furniture factory, battled four-time world champion boxer Roberto Duran on national television, signed with and been dropped by a major label, performed on stages with Bonnie Raitt, Mark Knopfler, Sting, and John Prine among many others, and made some of the most emotionally restless yet fully accessible music of our time. He’s also appeared on major television shows such as *Late Night with Conan O’Brien* and *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, been the subject of numerous National Public Radio (NPR) features and charted multiple times on the *Billboard* Top 100 and Americana Radio Charts.

About Blind Boys of Alabama

Blind Boys of Alabama are recognized worldwide as living legends of gospel music. Celebrated by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) with Lifetime Achievement Awards, inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and winners of five GRAMMY Awards, they have attained the highest levels of achievement in a career that spans almost 80 years. Blind Boys are known for crossing multiple musical boundaries with their remarkable interpretations of everything from traditional gospel favorites to contemporary spiritual material by songwriters such as Eric Clapton, Prince and Tom Waits. They have appeared on recordings with many artists, including Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, Bonnie Raitt, Willie Nelson, Aaron Neville, Susan Tedeschi, Ben Harper, Patty Griffin and Taj Mahal. Blind Boys of Alabama have appeared on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, *The Grammy Awards*, *60 Minutes*, *The Colbert Report* and many other television shows.

About the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation

The Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation is a private foundation that exists to strengthen the social fabric of America. Through its support of creative placemaking, the Levitt

Foundation empowers communities to transform underused public spaces into welcoming destinations where the power of free, live music brings people together and invigorates community life.

The Foundation's primary funding areas include **permanent Levitt venues** and the **Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards**, an annual grants competition. During the past decade, the Foundation has awarded more than \$20 million in grants to support access to free, high caliber live music experiences while bringing new life to underused public spaces.

In 2018, the Levitt Foundation is supporting free concerts in 26 towns and cities through permanent Levitt venues, Levitt AMP concert sites, the Levitt National Tour and select outreach concerts collectively serving 700,000 people through nearly **500 free, family-friendly concerts**. As an example of the high caliber talent presented across the Levitt network, the 2018 GRAMMY nominees included 15 artists who have performed on Levitt stages in recent years.

Permanent Levitt venues are located in cities as diverse as **Los Angeles; Denver, Westport**, Conn.; **Bethlehem**, Pa.; **Memphis**, Tenn.; and **Arlington**, Texas. Each permanent Levitt venue is programmed, managed and supported by its own 501(c)(3) Friends of Levitt nonprofit organization, with Levitt Los Angeles run by the Foundation. Each presents 50+ free concerts every year featuring acclaimed, emerging talent to seasoned, award-winning performers in all music genres. Due to accelerating interest from cities and engaged citizens, the permanent Levitt venue program is growing. Developing Levitt locations across the country include **Dayton** (opening summer 2018), **Sioux Falls** (opening 2019) and **Houston** (opening 2021), amongst other cities. Learn more:

<http://www.levitt.org>.