



**MEDIA ALERT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 20, 2006

**Media Contact:**

Fonda Portales

213.202.5539

[fonda.portales@lacity.org](mailto:fonda.portales@lacity.org)

**Watts Towers Arts Center Presents Drum and Jazz Festivals  
September 23 and 24, 2006**

Los Angeles—The Watts Towers stand as the pinnacle monument within a community as diverse and eclectic as the mosaics that ornament Simon Rodia's artistic achievement. Every September, this testament to creativity and innovation blesses the Watts Towers Arts Center as the Department of Cultural Affairs produces the Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival and the Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival.

"As the City marks its own 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Watts Day of the Drum and the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festivals mark their own monumental anniversaries. These festivals have been host to some of the finest jazz and percussive talent in the world," said Karen Constine, Interim General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Both the Drum Festival, on September 23, 2006, and the Jazz Festival, on September 24, 2006, bring together talented musicians and music lovers, as well as civic leaders, community service organizations, retail and food vendors, and local artisans. This year's festival exhibition will be the *Ancestral Legacy from the Collection of the Watts Towers Arts Center* in the Noah Purifoy Gallery. Curated by Brian Breyé, the exhibition is a gift from Congressman Augustus Hawkins. The Watts Towers Arts Center will present S. Pearl Sharp, actress, essayist, poet, documentarian, playwright, and activist, as the Center's Poet Laureate, and the Annual Charles Mingus Awards will be announced by the Watts Towers Community Action Council.

As part of the Heart of Watts Project, a fundraising project to benefit the Watts Towers Arts Center, handcrafted glass mosaic hearts, inspired by the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia and made by R. Judson Powell, one of the Department of Cultural Affairs' Artist-in-Residence, will be sold.

Both festivals take place at Watts Towers Arts Center, 1727 East 107th Street, Los Angeles 90002, on September 23 and 24. Activities include a children's area from 12:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. and the Citywide Universal Drum Circle. Tours of Simon Rodia's Watts Towers will also be available from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day.

Schedules for the two day event are as follows:

(more)



**MEDIA ALERT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Watts Towers Festivals—2

**25<sup>th</sup> Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival  
Saturday, September 23, 2006**

The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival is dedicated to percussion and the traditional role of drumming in human societies. The event embraces the concept of multiculturalism and draws crowds from all parts of the city and around the world. Saturday's events will be emceed by Ndugu Chanler, renowned as the "Drummer's Drummer," and James Janisse, the popular on-air jazz radio announcer.

SCHEDULE

- 11:00 a.m. Cuahtemoc Azteca Dance  
A synthesis of pre-Columbian and contemporary times music and dance from the ancient Mexica tradition
- 12:00 p.m. Nonosina Polynesia  
The heart of Polynesia in the heart of LA
- 1:00 p.m. Capoeira Batuque  
Ritual music, dance and Martial Arts of Bahia
- 2:00 p.m. Contrapunto  
An ensemble sharing and preserving Afro-Peruvian roots, producing rhythms including Festejo and Lindo using instruments like the cajón, cajita, cowbell and the quijada.
- 3:00 p.m. Samba Pimps  
Sharply styled percussionist playing exhilarating Brazilian rhythms that rock the house
- 4:00 p.m. Balandugu Kan  
Authentic African Drum and Dance Ensemble from the Village of Balandugu, home of Mamdy Keita of Guinea, West Africa
- 5:00 p.m. Challenge of the Drumlines  
Washington High School and Garfield High School

(more)



**MEDIA ALERT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Watts Towers Festivals—3

**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival**  
**Sunday, September 24, 2006**

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival, the oldest such festival in Los Angeles, pays tribute to the American music forms of Jazz, Gospel, and Blues and honors their development to the Avant Garde and Latin Jazz scenes. Sunday's events will be emceed by James Janisse and Torre' Brannon, singer and activist.

SCHEDULE

- 11:00 a.m. Alaadun  
Yoruba ground blessing of audience and festival uniting all cultures based on common themes and principles
- 12:00 p.m. Martin's Favor  
Introducing one of the best new Gospel groups in Los Angeles
- 12:45 p.m. Nate Morgan  
An ocean of sounds
- 2:00 p.m. Freda Payne  
Renowned Jazz singer gives a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald
- 3:00 p.m. Dr. Bobby Rodriguez LatinJazz  
Dynamic, entertaining and hot!
- 4:00 p.m. Mickey Champion  
Blues master with her all star band featuring Ray Bailey, Nate Morgan Jr., Kevin Brandon and Dale Alexander
- 5:00 p.m. Dwight Tribble Ensemble  
Distinctive baritone vocalist brings emotional intensity to cosmic jazz

For more information, please contact the Watts Towers Arts Center at 213.847.4646.

(more)



**MEDIA ALERT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### Watts Towers Festivals—4

The Watts Towers Arts Center is a facility of the Department of Cultural Affairs and provides quality arts programming to the Watts community.

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) enhances the quality of life for Los Angeles' 3.8 million residents and 24.3 million annual visitors. DCA serves as a leader to generate and support high quality arts and cultural experiences and advances the social and economic impact of the arts. The Department assures access to these experiences through grant making, marketing, public and community arts programming, arts education, and creating partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in every community in the City of Los Angeles.

DCA grants \$3.4 million annually to over 300 artists and nonprofit arts organizations and awards the Artist-in-Residence and City of Los Angeles (C.O.L.A.) Individual Artist Fellowships. It manages 20 Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers, 6 theaters, and several arts and education programs for young people. The Department directs public art projects and manages the City's Arts Development Fee, Art Collection, and Murals Program. DCA markets the City's cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative promotional materials, and management of the [culturela.org](http://culturela.org) website.

# # #