



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

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MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DCA's Watts Towers Arts Center
announces
Outstanding Performers
for the
26th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival
and the
31st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival

During the last weekend of September, the Department of Cultural Affairs' **Watts Towers Arts Center** will produce the 26th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival and the 31st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival, which are both **free and open to the public**. Both events embrace the concept of multiculturalism and draw crowds from all parts of the city and from around the world.

The incomparable **Linda Hopkins** and renowned drummer, **Francisco Aguabella** head a dazzling line-up of luminous, inspiring artists that include the phenomenal **Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra** for this year's **Day of the Drum and Jazz Festivals**. **Aguabella**, who will receive the prestigious "Living Museum Award" is the only artist ever to perform at both Festivals!

Olga Garay, Executive Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs, says of this year's events, "The indomitable spirit of the Watts community and the transforming power of music come together for two days in a celebration that draws visitors from every part of Los Angeles and around the world."

This two-day event is launched with the Day of the Drum Festival, which is dedicated to percussion and the traditional role of drumming in human societies. It was initiated in 1982 and is unlike any other festival in the United States. The day-long celebration features international percussionists representing Latin, Japanese, African, Jazz, and Native American drummers. Audience participation is encouraged and the Universal Drum Circle has become an annual feature of this event.

Day two is devoted to the Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival. It is the city's oldest such festival and features performances from both established and emerging musicians. The morning hours pay tribute to the roots of jazz found in Gospel music. The afternoon is devoted to Latin and avant garde jazz, and rhythm and blues.



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A schedule of multiple activities is programmed throughout both days. Children's activities are geared towards family participation. The festivals also bring food concessionaires, and arts and craft vendors to the site. There are ongoing tours of Watts Towers throughout the day, and admission and all activities are free.

These festivals bring together a diverse audience, musicians, artisans, community service organizations, and retail and food vendors in celebration of America's unique musical genre.

Saturday, September 29, 2007

26th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival Schedule

Taking percussion and the traditional role of drumming to new heights.

MC: Ndugu Chancler – Master musician, “the Drummer’s Drummer”

MC: James Janisse – Popular on-air jazz radio announcer extraordinaire

11:00 a.m. **Cuauhtemoc Mexica Dance Group** - An exhilarating synthesis of pre-Columbian and current music and dance from the ancient Mexica tradition.

12:00 p.m. **Kodama Taiko** - Percussionists dedicated to the magnificent beat of Taiko in traditional and contemporary pieces.

1:00 p.m. **Challenge of the Drumlines** - With the **Locke High Saints** and the **View Park Prep Accelerated Charter School**.

2:00 p.m. **Sapadilla** - Playing the pulsating music of the Caribbean Islands. Led by **Einstein Brown**.

3:00 p.m. **Francisco Aguabella & his Afro Cuban Group with the Orisha Dancers** - Intoxicating and captivating rhythms bring audiences back to the roots of Cuban music and dance.

4:00 p.m. **The Drum Master Summit** - Master musicians who are one with the drum! Featuring **Clayton Cameron, Marvin “Smitty” Smith, Teddy Campbell, and Tony Royster, Jr.**

5:00 p.m. **Derf Reklaw Drum Ensemble** Drum Rhythms of now and beyond.



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Sunday, September 30, 2007

31st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival Schedule

Celebrating our American traditions of Jazz, Gospel, and Blues - as well as the Avant Garde and Latin Jazz scene at the oldest such festival in Los Angeles!

MC: James Janisse

- 11:00 a.m. **Alaadun** - Yoruba ground blessing uniting all cultures based on common themes and principles.
- 12:00 p.m. **Greg Clayborn** - Sharing God's message through his music.
- 1:00 p.m. **Larry Nash** - Soulful LA jazz pop pianist. Music that moves you.
- 2:15 p.m. **Francisco Aguabella and his Latin Jazz Ensemble** - The ultimate smokin' jazz experience. Kick back and listen or jump up and dance!
- 3:00 p.m. **Linda Hopkins** - This extraordinary singer does it her way!
- 4:15 p.m. **The Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra** - A unique and empowering musically-artistic experience!

Artistic Directors: **Rosie Lee Hooks and Munyungo Jackson**



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Additional Activities

- **Tours of Simon Rodia's Watts Towers**
10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Bring your instruments for the **Universal Drum Circle!**
- **Prof. Peter Abilogu Stilt dancer**
- **Poet Laureate Imani Tolliver**
- Exhibition by Heather A. Bradley in the Noah Purifoy Gallery:
Deeply Decorative: Ceramics with a Feminine Edge
- **Children's Activities:** Noon to 4:30 p.m.
- **Heart of Watts Project:** Unique, handcrafted glass mosaic hearts, inspired by the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia, created by Artist-in-Residence, **R. Judson Powell**

Watts Towers Arts Center

The Watts Towers Arts Center provides diverse cultural and educational enrichment programming through tours, lectures, changing exhibits, and studio workshops for both teachers and students. The center provides a safe and creative atmosphere for individual expression under the guidance and direction of professional artists.

The Watts Towers were created by Italian immigrant Sabato "Simon" Rodia out of steel covered with mortar and embellished by the decorative finishing of mosaic tiles, glass, clay, shells, and rock. This masterpiece, which the artist called *Nuestro Pueblo (Our Town)*, was his 33-year artistic creation.

The Watts Towers Arts Center is a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

Contact: Rosie Lee Hooks, Watts Towers Arts Center Director - 213.485.1795



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The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) serves as a leader to generate and support high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles residents and visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and assures access to arts and cultural 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 (A.I.R.) and City of Los Angeles (C.O.L.A.) Individual Artist Fellowships. It provides arts and cultural programming in numerous Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers, 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 website.