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EDITORS AND WRITERS PLEASE NOTE:

Complete program information is available online on the Ford web site.

Chronological listings of season events starts with: <http://www.fordamphitheater.org/en/events/May.asp>
(click on arrows at the top of the month grid to look at other months)

Season events listings by artistic discipline: http://www.fordtheatres.org/en/events/index_eventtype.asp
A Ford fact sheet can be found at the end of this release.

Photos of the Ford in the press room:

<http://www.fordamphitheater.org/en/about/news.asp>

High resolution images of season artists can be emailed to you upon request to Rochelle Fabb.

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FORD AMPHITHEATRE 2008 SUMMER SEASON OPENS MAY 28

The Ford's first evening devoted to Thai arts, a hip hop take on "Fahrenheit 451," a new musical retelling of Noah's Ark set post-Katrina, the Brazilian Latin Grammy winner Djavan, a 40th anniversary celebration of taiko drumming in the U.S., comedian Cheech Marin, the trip-hop group Pacha Massive and the debut of J.A.M Sessions, a series of hands-on arts events, highlight the season.

LOS ANGELES — Reflecting the vast, vibrant, cross-fertilizing panorama of the Los Angeles region, the Ford Amphitheatre 2008 offerings embrace global and pop culture and expand the boundaries of contemporary performance. The 21-week season opens on May 28 with the West Coast premiere of *Norman's Ark*, a new musical directed by Peter Schneider, the Tony Award-winning producer of *The Lion King*. The closing event on October 4 is a Hip Hop Dance Festival staged by J.U.i.C.E. (Justice by Uniting in Creative Energy) and Antics Performance. Last season's J.U.i.C.E. presentation, the first evening of street dance presented by the Ford, was hailed by the *Los Angeles Times*' Lewis Segal as "expanding [hip hop's] creative horizons."

The Ford Amphitheatre season is a program of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and is produced in collaboration with Los Angeles County-based arts organizations. Complete 2008 season information is available on the Ford web site, www.FordTheatres.org or by calling the Ford box office, **323 461-3673 (GO 1-FORD)**. Tickets go on sale April 2.

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, whose Third District is home to the historic, outdoor amphitheatre, declared that, "Our County is a feast for arts and culture seekers. The Ford Amphitheatre serves up a connoisseur's delight of rich and unforgettable performances, all in a unique and intimate setting in the beautiful Hollywood Hills."

DANCE

Mantra Theatre, in cooperation with Thai Health and Information Services, Inc., will present the Ford's first evening devoted to Thai arts: the "**Legend of Chao Phraya, Siamese River of Life**," an original production featuring artists from Thailand and Los Angeles encompassing Thai dance, boxing, spear and sword fighting and live music including a Thai drum ensemble (August 30).

Four Los Angeles-based contemporary dance companies will be making their first appearances at the Ford. **Backhausdance**, led by Jennifer Backhaus, premieres "Grass" (September 19). **Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project** and **Catch Me Bird**, companies led by married couples, share a bill called "Sans Detour" (September 5). Baker & Tarpaga premiere "Disorder Inside Order," based on the assassination of African journalist Norbert Zongo, and Catch Me Bird unveils "Silk," which details the blurring of their on and offstage lives through daring aerial choreography. **Culture Shock Los Angeles Dance Troupe** introduces, "A Beautiful Struggle," an original hip hop work inspired by Ray Bradbury's novel "Fahrenheit 451" and true life experiences about four people who dare to create in a time when artistic expression has been outlawed (July 25).

Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, which has appeared on shared dance bills at the Ford in the past, presents a whole evening for the first time. "Magkaugnay: Cultural Connections in Philippine Music and Dance" brings together the many streams of Filipino culture: hill tribe rituals, Spanish-influenced festivities and drum-gong dance and music (September 13).

Returning dance series artists include **blue13 dance company** in "KHEL! A Bollywood Bedtime Story," (August 23); **Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet** introducing "Tercera Raiz," an exploration of the African influence on Latin American arts created by Ghanaian and Mexican choreographers (July 26); **J.U.i.C.E.**'s evening of street dance featuring Antics Performance, The Get Down Dolls, Lux Aeterna, Outer Circle and guest artists (October 4); and **Viver Brasil Dance Company**'s journey through the Afro-Brazilian myths of water spirits and deities (July 5).

For the second year in a row, Target is sponsoring the dance series. **Student and child tickets to Target Dance Series at the Ford** events for full-time students and children 12 and under will be available for **\$5** rather than the regular Ford student/child price of \$12 thanks to the grant from Target. Target strives to make the arts affordable and accessible to youth and families because the arts help foster an appreciation and understanding of various cultures and points of view.

FAMILY

The Big!World!Fun! Family Series encompasses 8 Saturday morning, hour-long performances

in July and August designed for children ages 4 to 10 and their parents and grandparents. "Nature Tales" is the series theme and highlights include author and performer **José Luis Orozco** in a program featuring Latin American songs, games and rhymes (July 12), **Angahara Dance Ensemble** in the rich tapestry of "PANCHATANTRA: Animal Fables of India" (August 2), the ultra-athletic performers of **Diavolo Dance Theater** transforming from caterpillars to butterflies (August 9) and **DAFRA West African Drum and Dance Ensemble** with an array of indigenous instruments and costumes (August 30). Big!World!Fun! events are free for children; adults pay \$5.

FILM

The Ford is the biggest venue in which the **Los Angeles Film Festival** presents screenings and in the past has hosted L.A. premieres of such films as "March of the Penguins" and "Joe Strummer: The Future is Unwritten." The festival's 2008 programming, including the June 20-22 and 26-27 Ford dates, will be announced by June 1.

OUTFEST 2008 Under the Stars, part of the 26th Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, presents five nights of screenings plus the festival's awards presentation July 16-20. Film information will be available after June 1.

J.A.M. (Jazzed And Motivated) SESSIONS

New this year, J.A.M. Sessions are FREE and offer participants the opportunity to sing, play and dance under the guidance of Ford 2008 artists. There are seven evening sessions between June 2 and September 15 covering: arranging pop tunes for classical instrumentation; samba reggae dance; hip hop arts including dance, spoken word, deejaying and graffiti art; tango; Bollywood Bhangra dance and bluegrass jamming.

MUSIC UNCHARTED

This series is for those who like to venture across the boundaries of established musical categories. **Citysound** – comprised of a string quartet and vocalist – perform arrangements of pop groups such as Bjork and The Killers (June 15). Grammy-nominated **Imani Winds** bring new textures to the flute-oboe-clarinet-horn-bassoon combo in their "Afro Blue" program featuring music of Mongo Santamaria, Astor Piazzolla, Paquito d'Rivera and others (August 1). **An Evening of Independence: A Celebration of Singers, Songwriters and Music** bridges the gap between the online world and live performance with a roster of emerging indie artists (August 10). The **Los Angeles Jewish Symphony** mingles world and classical sounds in exploring the link between the cultures of the Sephardic Jews of Spain and the Middle East with those of Latin America (August 24). The trip-hop group **Pacha Massive** is known for their hybrid sound mixing Latin American folklore with urban influences (September 26).

THEATRE, CIRCUS, COMEDY & CABARET

"**Norman's Ark**," a new musical with a cast of 200, including a giant gospel choir, retells the Noah's Ark story in a post-Katrina world; the West Coast premiere production, directed by "Lion King" Tony Award-winning producer Peter Schneider, runs for 12 performances (May 28-June 8, May 27 preview performance). **Reprise Theatre Company** presents "The Way I See It," musical vignettes springing from a collaboration of Broadway composers and high school student lyricists performed by favorite New York and L.A. stars (July 11). **FOCUSfish Flying Circus** re-surfaces with "GUSH-E.D." a revamped edition (new acts and story) of its rain

dampened 2007 show (August 8-9). The composer of romantic standards such as “Granada” and “Solamente una Vez” is honored in the annual celebration **Festival de Homenaje a Agustin Lara** (June 14).

WORLD & FOLK

The Ford is the Los Angeles stop on the U.S. tour of Brazilian singer-composer and Latin Grammy winner **Djavan** (June 13). One hundred drummers of **TAIKOPROJECT** team with Grand Master **Seiichi Tanaka**, who brought Japanese taiko drumming to America 40 years ago, and his **San Francisco Taiko Dojo** to mark the anniversary of that landmark event (July 12-13). Jarocho and huasteco music are in the spotlight in “Night in Veracruz” as **Tien Huicani**, named Mexico’s best folk group, joins L.A.-based **Conjunto Tenocelomeh**, **Conjunto Jardin** and others (September 20). Music as well as dance of Mexico will also be celebrated in **Fiesta Mexicana** (September 27).

Four annual events return with fresh rosters of artists. **Cheech Marin** headlines “Tia Chucha’s Celebration of Community & Culture” combining music, spoken word and comedy (August 3). “Fiesta Argentina” presents a tango program with dancers **Sandor & Parissa**, pianist **Mario Parmisano** and his quartet and bassist **Pablo Motta** and his **L.A. Tango Quintet** (August 16). The “Celtic Art Center Concert” features the Scottish Highland sounds of the **Wicked Tinkers** as well as the **Finn MacCool** and **Slugger O’Toole** bands (September 6). “Bluegrass at the Ford” offers seven-time Vocal Group of the Year winner **Russell Moore & Illrd Tyme Out** and **Cliff Wagner & the Old No. 7** (September 7).

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to programming the John Anson Ford Theatres, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, Arts for All; administers a grants program that funds more than 250 nonprofit arts organizations annually; oversees the County’s Civic Art Program for capital projects, funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation, and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 40 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2007-08 President of the Arts Commission is Rosalind Wyman.

FORD FACTS

COMPLETE INFORMATION

www.FordTheatres.org

THEATERS

Ford Amphitheatre – outdoor, 1,241 seats
[Inside] the Ford – indoor, 87 seats

LOCATION

2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, CA 90068

Just off the 101 Hollywood Freeway across from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios

PURCHASING TICKETS

Online: www.FordTheatres.org (starting April 2)

Phone: 323 461-3673

In Person: Ford Box Office, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, CA 90068

Box office hours:

Through April 27: 12 noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday

April 29-October 14: 12 noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday

PARKING

On-site, stacked parking:

\$5 per vehicle for evening shows

\$1 per vehicle for morning family shows

FREE, non-stacked parking & FREE shuttle to the Ford (evenings only):

Universal City Metro Station lot at Lankershim Blvd. and Campo de Cahuenga

The Ford shuttle stops in the "kiss and ride" area and cycles every 15 to 20 minutes.

PICNICKING & FOOD AT THE FORD

Grounds open for picnicking two hours before show time.

Box Dinners may be ordered in advance through Crumble Catering, 310 652-3797.

A wide variety of food and drink is available for purchase on site.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The Ford is disabled accessible. Portable wireless listening devices are available upon request.

SEASON AND SERIES SPONSORS AND FUNDERS

The Ford Amphitheatre 2008 season is a program of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission with core support provided by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs

Dance ChannelTV.com

Flavor Pill

Fusicology

KPFK Radio, 90.7 FM

L.A. Weekly

SoCal.com (J.A.M. Sessions)

SONY Pictures Entertainment (Big!World!Fun! family series)

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (Big!World!Fun! family series)

Target (Target Dance Series at the Ford)

Telefutura KFTR Channel 46

The James Irvine Foundation (J.A.M. Sessions)

The Nissan Foundation (Big!World!Fun! family series)

Tu Ciudad

Univision Channel 34