

Watts Towers Festival ~ This Weekend!

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[Events](#)

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and Friends of Watts Towers Arts Center present the 36th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival Saturday, September 30, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the 41st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival on Sunday, October 1, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at DCA's Watts Towers Arts Center Campus.

Keep reading for the complete schedule, press release, and information for this weekend's free family fun at the Watts Towers.

Los Angeles – An all-star line-up of world-class musicians, singers, and dancers will come together once again at the 36th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival on Saturday, September 30, 2017, and the 41st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival on Sunday, October 1, 2017.

The festivals take place both days from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and are free for the entire family. The events are presented by City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and Friends of Watts Towers Arts Center under Artistic Directors Rosie Lee Hooks, Patrice Rushen, and Munyungo Jackson.

“For decades, the festivals at Watts Towers have brought together the community to celebrate and experience the arts and entertainment,” said Councilmember Joe Buscaino. “Watts Towers is the geographic and cultural heart of the Watts community and the festivals reflect the strength, diversity, and vitality of South LA.”



“This year’s line-up will take residents and visitors alike on a musical journey around the world,” said DCA General Manager Danielle Brazell. “The drum is a cross-cultural instrument that opens the heart, and music and dance are expressive instruments of the soul. These festivals are part of our city’s exquisite fabric that make Los Angeles a cultural capital and offer an incredible weekend of music, dance, and art for all Angelenos to enjoy.”

Saturday’s Day of the Drum Festival is led by Masters of Ceremonies Ndugu Chancler and James Janisse, beginning with a Yoruba ground blessing ceremony by Alaadun, which unites all cultures based on common themes and principles. Nonosina Polynesia music will follow, highlighting more than a half century of culture, art, song, storytelling, and Tahitian Dance before experiencing Bate Batuque-Bloco Obini “All Queen Ensemble.” Afternoon highlights include The Drum Apostles, Kouman Kele West African Dance & Drum Company, and Rhythm Roulette, a soulful infusion of musical elements to conclude the opening day’s program.

Sunday’s Jazz Festival is hosted by Masters of Ceremonies Kamau Daáood and James Janisse, and kicks off with the Yoruba ground blessing by Alaadun. Greg Clayborn & Message Groove follows with “groovy” music and a message to move the soul. Next up is former Lady of the Watts Prophets, Dee Dee McNeil Jazz Band, an artful blend of jazz and poetry. Afterwards, Roy Gaines & his Orchestra Tuxedo Blues delivers authentic blues that will bring down the house. Sunday’s festival also features Danny Cortez & Tony Harris Big Band, a tribute to great artists and music of musicians from the past. Another highlight is The School of Healing Martial Arts’ Tai Chi Chuan demonstration before the legendary Bennie Maupin Ensemble takes the stage. Finally, to conclude this year’s festivals, the Jazz Mentorship Program All Stars featuring Patrice Rushen, Ndugu Chancler, Dr. Bobby Rodriguez, Munyungo Jackson, Reggie Hamilton, and Justo Almario will light up the stage with “straight ahead jazz” classics and originals you won’t want to miss!



The festivals' activities are complimented by Sanfoka, a retrospective of artist La Monte Westmoreland at the Noah Purifoy Gallery, which celebrates its centennial this year; guided tours of "Nuestro Pueblo," the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia; supervised children's activities; and food and beverages along with arts and crafts for sale.

Both festivals take place at DCA's Watts Towers Arts Center Campus at: 1727 East 107th Street, Los Angeles, CA, 90002. For more information, please call 213.847.4646, or visit wattstowers.org.

The Campus is easily accessible from: 1) the 105-East Freeway at Wilmington Avenue by taking Exit #10; or 2) via the 108th Street Bus Stop, the 305 and 612 Routes; or 3) the 103rd Street / Kenneth Hahn Station via Metro's Blue Line.

Self-parking and valet parking are free.

ADA: Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request.

FESTIVAL SCHEDULES

36th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival
Saturday, September 30, 2017 (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
Masters of Ceremonies: Ndugu Chancler and James Janisse

11:00 a.m. Alaadun

Yoruba ground blessing uniting all cultures based on common themes and principles

12:00 p.m. Nonosina Polynesia

Celebrating 52 years of culture, art, song, storytelling to the beat of the drum and Tahitian dance

1:00 p.m. Bate Batuque-Bloco Obini

All Queen Ensemble

2:00 p.m. The Drum Apostles with Joey De Leon, Christian Moraga, Daniel Rodriguez, Jimmy Branly, Yosmel Montejo, Alfred Ortiz

Ferocious

3:00 p.m. Kouman Kele West African Dance & Drum Company

An exciting traditional West African musical experience

4:00 p.m. Rhythm Roulette with Gene Coye, Donald Barrette, Munyungo Jackson & Dominic Theroux

A rhythmic soulful infusion of musical elements, past, present and future

41st Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival

Sunday, October 1, 2017 (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Masters of Ceremonies: Kamau Daáood and James Janisse

10:30 a.m. Alaadun

Yoruba ground blessing uniting all cultures based on common themes and principles

11:30 a.m. Greg Clayborn & Message Groove

The groove will make you move and the message will move your soul

12:30 p.m. Dee Dee McNeil Jazz Band

Former Lady of the Watts Prophets, A blend of jazz and poetry

1:30 p.m. Roy Gaines & His Orchestra Tuxedo Blues

#TheRealBlues

2:30 p.m. Danny Cortez & Tony Harris Big Band

A tribute to great artists and music of musicians from the past

3:20 p.m. Tai Chi Chuan – School of Healing Martial Arts

School of Healing Martial Arts, Dr. Daniel Hoover, Instructor

3:30 p.m. Bennie Maupin Ensemble

Plays from their hearts and directly into the hearts of people

4:30 p.m. JMP All Stars Featuring Patrice Rushen, Ndugu Chandler,

Dr. Bobby Rodriguez, Munyungo Jackson, Reggie Hamilton, and Justo Almario

Straight ahead jazz

All Day Activities at the Festivals

Guided Tours of “Nuestro Pueblo,” the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia:

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Drum Pavilion: Universal Drum Circle

Led by Matt Gibson III

Noah Purifoy Gallery & Charles Mingus Gallery
Sankofa by La Monte Westmoreland
On view through March 4, 2018

Garden Studio: Garden Activities, Turtle Pond, and Tiling Projects

Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center – Supervised Children’s Activities:
12:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Joseph and Bootsie Howard Gallery:
Permanent Exhibition: International Music Instruments

Sponsored in part by GRoW @ Annenberg TM a philanthropic initiative dedicated to supporting humanitarian efforts across the globe as well as innovative projects in health, education, the arts and civic & cultural life.

Sponsored in part by the Herb Alpert Foundation, a nonprofit entity, which envisions a world where all young people are blessed with opportunities, allowing them to reach their potential and lead productive, fulfilling lives.

The art representing the festivals is Synthia SAINT JAMES, world renowned artist, author, and educator.

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles’ vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA’s residents and visitors, and ensure LA’s varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA’s mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making, public art, community arts, and strategic marketing and development. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit culturela.org or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/culturela](https://www.facebook.com/culturela); Instagram [@culture_la](https://www.instagram.com/culture_la); and Twitter [@culture_la](https://twitter.com/culture_la).