



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2008

Media Contact: **Will Caperton y Montoya**
DCA Director of Marketing and Development
213.202.5538
will.caperton@lacity.org

Department of Cultural Affairs Announces Grand Opening of the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center

Los Angeles - A new art facility specifically dedicated to young people and named in honor of Charles Mingus will be inaugurated by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) on September 28, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. Program activities will begin with Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center (CMYAC) grand opening in the Watts Community. Additional performances and exhibitions will follow over the next nine months, and have been conceived as a "Musical Caravan" extending the celebration of the facility's opening at various other DCA venues.

In October 2007, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) applied for a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) American Masterpieces Presenting grant, a highly competitive category designed to present works widely considered "American Masterpieces." DCA was awarded a grant, the second largest award made nationally in this round of NEA American Masterpieces grants, to produce "The Charles Mingus - Son of Watts - Musical Caravan," which celebrates the life and music of jazz artist Charles Mingus (1922-1979), a highly influential bass player, accomplished pianist, bandleader, and composer who resided in the Watts district of Los Angeles.

The Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center grand opening features *A Tribute to Charles Mingus: Past, Present and Future* with world renowned musicians. Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Councilmember Janice Hahn, Olga Garay, Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, and Sue Mingus and other family members will participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Grand Opening will be part of the prestigious Annual 27th Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival and the 32nd Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival (September 27th and 28th, 2008). Please see the detailed schedule of performances and exhibitions below.

In addition to the Watts Towers Drum and Jazz Festivals, there will be three major Jazz concerts focusing on the music of Charles Mingus. Two concerts, one at the Madrid Theater in the San Fernando Valley, and the other at the Warner Grand Theater in San Pedro in the southern tip of the City, will feature the music of the Charles Mingus Big Band. The final concert is envisioned as a gala tribute and will take place at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in the Mid City/Leimert Park community. It will feature LA-based, nationally recognized musicians who played with, or were deeply influenced by, Mr. Mingus.

-more-



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page 2- Charles Mingus Grand Opening

General ticket prices for the concerts are \$25 and \$15 for senior citizens and students with ID. Tickets for the Warner Grand Theater may be purchased online at www.itsmyseat.org or www.warnergrand.org. Tickets for the Madrid Theater concert are available for purchase at 818.347.9419. Tickets for the concerts may also be purchase at the Theater Box Offices, up to one hour prior to each performance.

The Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center is a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and is located at 10624 South Graham Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90002. Admission to the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center grand opening and Watts Towers Festivals is free. For general information, the public may call 213.847.4646.

Mingus Caravan – Schedule of Performances

27th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival:

Saturday, September 27, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

32nd Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival:

Sunday, September 28, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Grand Opening of the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center:

Sunday, September 28, 1:00 p.m.

Mingus Big Band Concerts:

Madrid Theater - October 3, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Warner Grand Theater - October 4, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Gala Night Tribute to Mingus Concert:

Nate Holden Performing Arts Center - May 1, 2009, 8:00 p.m.

Visual Arts Exhibitions:

An exhibition of Charles Mingus photographs and visual materials will be presented at the William Grant Still Arts Center, the Canoga Park Youth Arts Center, and the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center. The Watts Towers Arts Center will also feature the works of three prominent artists, Carlos Spivey, Kevin Tidmore, and Ramsess in the **1+1+1** exhibition at the Watts Towers Arts Center which pays tribute to music and Charles Mingus. The *Summer Arts Camp Showcase* will be exhibited in the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center.

Watts Towers Arts Center: Through October 12, 2008

Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center: Through October 12, 2008

Canoga Park Youth Arts Center: January 1 - 31, 2009

William Grant Still Arts Center: March 7 - April 27, 2009

Nate Holden Performing Arts Center: Opening May 1, 2009



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page 3- Charles Mingus Grand Opening

About the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center

The Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center presents a full range of programs to young Watts residents by expanding the diverse array of cultural programs offered through the Department of Cultural Affairs. The center will provide a safe and creative atmosphere for individual expression under the guidance and direction of professional artists dedicated to continuing the work provided by the Watts Towers Arts Center since 1959.

About the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

About DCA

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) generates and supports 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. The Department provides arts and cultural programming in its numerous Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers, theaters, and historic sites, and manages several arts and education programs for young people. It directs public art projects and manages the City's Arts Development Fee and Percent for Arts Programs, and the Art Collection and Murals Programs. 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.

###