**September 14, 2018**

**Media Contact**: Rhonda Mitchell

 Public Information Director

 City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

 <rhonda.mitchell@lacity.org>

**City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs**

**and**

**Friends of Watts Towers Arts Center**

**presents the**

**37th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival**

**Saturday, September 29, 2018, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**and the**

**42nd Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival**

**Sunday, September 30, 2018, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**at**

**Department of Cultural Affairs’ Watts Towers Arts Center Campus**

LOS ANGELES, CA — Relish the last vestiges of summer enjoying an all-star lineup of world-class musicians, singers, and dancers who will come together once again for the **37th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival on Saturday, September 29, 2018**, and the **42nd Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival on Sunday, September 30, 2018**. The festivals take place both days, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and are free and open to the public. The events are presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and Friends of Watts Towers Arts Center, under the Artistic Directors **Rosie Lee Hooks**, **Patrice Rushen**, and **Munyungo Jackson**. This year's festival is in honor of world-renowned drummer **Ndugu Chancler.**

**Leon “Ndugu” Chancler,** who transitioned earlier this year, was a multi-talented drummer, musician, composer, professor, and father. A luminary in his own right, Chancler collaborated with a multitude of artists and performed on a number of high profile movie soundtracks. He will be honored at the Watts Towers Arts Center festivals for his musicianship, and his dedication to the community.

**QUOTE FROM COUNCILMEMBER JOE BUSCAINO**

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 makes Los Angeles a cultural capital and offers an incredible weekend of music, dance, and art for all Angelenos to enjoy.”

Saturday’s Day of the Drum Festival, hosted by Masters of Ceremonies **Kamau Daáood** and **James Janisse**, will kick off with Aztec traditional dancing featuring Huehuetl and Teponaxtle drums. **Kinnara Taiko**, a Japanese American drumming group, will carry the sound of the drum and hand off the rhythms to **Garifuna Cultural Group** who will bring their vibrant, energetic Belizean dance to the stage. **Expressions from Tambor** will blend African and Caribbean drumming, and **Magatte Fall & Generation Percu** will feature West African percussions from different generations. The stage will close with a **Rayford Griffin & Friends** who will honor **Ndugu Chancler** at the close the day with their musical set.

Daáood and Janisse will return for Sunday’s Jazz Festival which will begin with a Yoruba ground blessing by **Alaadun** to unite all cultures. Guitarist **Darrell Crooks & Heaven** will follow, highlighting the theme of connection with a touch of soul and gospel. **Saxophonist** **Keschia Potter and Friends** will kick the afternoon into gear with an artful blend of jazz and funk. **Maiya Sykes’** vocals will then light up the stage with an authentic mix of jazz, pop and, hip-hop. Next up will be **Kenny Sara & the Sounds of New Orleans** who are known for their fast tapping musical gumbo. Violinist **Karen Briggs** will deliver an eclectic performance you will not want to miss, and **Jazz Mentorship Program All-Stars featuring Patrice Rushen, Dr. Bobby Rodriguez, Reggie Hamilton, Justo Almario and, Nedra Wheeler** will deliver "straight-ahead jazz' to the stage and close out the final day.

The festivals' activities are complemented by exhibitions at the Noah Purifoy & Charles Mingus Galleries featuring, "The Conductor" by Chukes and, an installation of musical instruments from around the world at the Dr. Joseph & Bootsie Howard Gallery.

There will be supervised children’s activities from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and food and beverages along with arts and crafts will be for sale throughout the day.

Both festivals take place at Department of Cultural Affairs' 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 Bust 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**

**37th Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival**

**Saturday, September 29th, 2018 | 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Masters of Ceremonies: **Kamau Daáood** and **James Janisse**

Honoring Ndugu Chancler

11:00 a.m. **Xochipilli**

*Aztec traditional dancing with Huehuetl and Teponaztle drums.*

12:00 p.m. **Kinnara Taiko**

*Japanese American drumming group from Southern California.*

1:00 p.m. **Garifuna Cultural Group**

*Vibrant, energetic entertainment from Belize.*

2:00 p.m. **Tambor**

*The experience of drums from Africa to the Caribbean.*

3:00 p.m. **Magatte Fall & Generation Percu**

*West African percussion of different generations.*

4:00 p.m. **Rayford Griffin & Friends**

*One for the Chancler / A tribute to NDUGU.*

**42nd Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival**

**Sunday, September 30, 2018 | 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Masters of Ceremonies: **Kamau Daáood** and **James Janisse**

Honoring Ndugu Chancler

10:30 a.m. **Alaadun**

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

11:30 a.m. **Darrell Crooks & Heaven**

*Spiritually connected.*

12:30 p.m. **Saxophonist Keschia Potter & Friends**

*Creating a soulful experience through jazz and funk.*

1:30 p.m. **Maiya Sykes**

*Blending jazz, pop and Hip Hop to perfection.*

2:30 p.m. **Kenny Sara & the Sound of New Orleans**

*Fast tapping musical Gumbo*.

3:30 p.m. **Karen Briggs**

*Fierce musicianship*.

4:30 p.m. **Jazz Mentorship Program All-Stars featuring Patrice Rushen, Dr. Bobby Rodriguez, Reggie Hamilton, Justo Almario, and Nedra Wheeler**

*Straight Ahead Jazz.*

**All Day Activities at the Festivals**

**Drum Pavilion: Universal Drum Circle**

Led by Matt Gibson III

**Noah Purifoy & Charles Mingus Galleries**

The Conductor by Chukes

On view through February 17, 2019

**Dr. Joseph & Bootsie Howard Gallery**

International musical instruments

Permanent Exhibition

**Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center**

Supervised children’s activities 12:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Garden Studio**

Tilling and garden activities

**Watts Towers Amphitheatre**

Food Court

Sponsored in part by ***GRoW @ AnnenbergTM*** 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 by world-renowned artist, **Ramsess.**

**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](http://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/?hl=en); and Twitter [@culture\_la](https://twitter.com/culture_la?lang=en).