

The Ford Theatre Foundation

Contacts:

Linda Chiavaroli, Dir. of Communications, L.A. County Arts Commission / Ford Amphitheatre
Office 323 871-4554 or cell 323 810-9240

lchiavaroli@lacountyarts.org

or

Brittany Gash, Communications Intern, 323 769-2132

bgash@lacountyarts.org

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE: Background on Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and the principals in this concert can be found at the end of this release.

For release June 1, 2006

BIG!WORLD!FUN! FAMILY SERIES OPENS WITH FREE CONCERT JUNE 24 AT THE FORD AMPHITHEATRE

The 1924 premiere of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is re-created

Pick up your Ford "Discovery Pass" when you arrive and have the opportunity to win prizes

For most of the Ford's Big!World!Fun! family events, children are admitted free and adults pay \$5, but this season the opener — the "**Great Gershwin Concert**" — is free for the whole family. The concert, at 10 a.m., Saturday, June 24, re-creates a great moment in American music history: the very first performance in 1924 of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The **Symphonic Jazz Orchestra**, conducted by **Mitch Glickman**, uses Gershwin's original orchestration, highlighting the Jazz Age roots of this classic. The *Rhapsody* performance features pianist **Bill Cunliffe**, bassist **Edwin Livingston** and drummer **Peter Erskine**.

The event also marks the world premiere of *Sentimento Azul* by **Lesya Terry**, the noted jazz violinist who will also be soloist in the work. The piece was commissioned by the Symphonic Jazz Orchestra. The concert opens with *Symphonic Jazz Recipe*, a medley including Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (A Little Night Music), Joe Garland's "In the Mood," Antonio Carlos Jobim's "The Girl from Ipanema," and Henry Mancini's theme from the television series *Peter Gunn*.

To reserve tickets, call the "Great Gershwin Concert" special reservations line: **323 769-2129**. There is a limit of 5 tickets per party.

This concert is made possible in part by the Recording Industries' Music Performance Fund through the assistance of the Professional Musicians Union Local 47; Film Funds Trust Fund, John C. Hall, trustee; California Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts; Los Angeles County Arts Commission; Strauss Foundation; Meet the Composer; Bobbi Elliott; the Ralph & Shirley Shapiro Fund; Robinsons May, part of the Macy's family of stores; and The Nissan Foundation.

The "Great Gershwin Concert" is the first of 12 Big!World!Fun! family events at the Ford Amphitheatre, an outdoor venue located in a Los Angeles County Regional Park in the

Hollywood Hills. Attendees are encouraged to pick up a "Discovery Pass" at the Ford Amphitheatre's "Visitor Center" when they arrive. The pass allows families to track their attendance at Big!World!Fun! events and win prizes. Subsequent events include performances of Japanese taiko drumming, flamenco, traditional dances from Mexico, Cambodia, Africa, Ireland, China and Korea and songs from around the world. A complete listing is available on line at

<http://www.fordamphitheatre.org/en/performance/Family.asp>

Big!World!Fun! is presented by the Ford Theatre Foundation and sponsored by Robinsons May, part of the Macy's family of stores; The Nissan Foundation and the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California.

THE FACTS

WHERE

Ford Amphitheatre

2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East

Hollywood, CA 90068

Just off the 101 (Hollywood) freeway across from Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal

NOTE: A sunshade covers the audience at the outdoor, morning performances of Big!World!Fun!

HOW MUCH

FREE

Reservations are strongly recommended

RESERVE TICKETS

323 769-2129

Limit: 5 per party

MORE INFORMATION

www.FordAmphitheatre.org (in English and Spanish)

PARKING

On-site, stacked parking costs \$1 per vehicle.

Big!World!Fun! family events are part of the Ford Amphitheatre 2006 Season, a multi-disciplinary arts series produced by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in cooperation with Los Angeles County-based arts organizations. For complete season information log on to **www.FordAmphitheatre.org**.

In addition to sponsorship by Robinsons May, The Nissan Foundation and the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, Big!World!Fun! is supported by K-Mozart 105.1 FM, KPFK 90.7 FM, the National Endowment for theArts, TeleFutura 46, Los Angeles and The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

George Gershwin, (1898-1937), is one of America's leading composers, whose musicals and popular songs are among the finest in those genres and whose compositions in art-music forms are infused with the idioms of jazz and popular music.

Gershwin's songs are marked by uncommon harmonic inventiveness, and he was one of the first to introduce into popular songs the rhythms and melodic twists of jazz. Among his best-known songs are "The Man I Love," "I Got Rhythm," and "Someone to Watch Over Me."

At the invitation of the bandleader Paul Whiteman, Gershwin wrote his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) for piano and jazz band. The work profoundly influenced European and American composers to use jazz-derived melodic and rhythmic patterns. Gershwin's other concert works include the *Piano Concerto in F* (1925), the tone poem *An American in Paris* (1928), the *Second Rhapsody* (1931) for piano and orchestra, and the opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935).

Bill Cunliffe is a pianist, composer and arranger with an individual voice, who moves from jazz to classical music with substantial style and versatility.

His first major gig was pianist and arranger with Buddy Rich, touring Europe with Frank Sinatra. Bill was the 1989 winner of the \$10,000 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Award, and has received stipends from the National Endowment for the Arts. Cunliffe's recent releases include a sextet project, "How My Heart Sings – The Music of Earl Zindars" on Torii Records, and "Imaginacion" an album featuring his Latin Jazz Nonet.

As a composer/arranger, Bill has been nominated both for an Emmy and a Grammy, and has composed extensively for big band, chamber groups, choir and orchestra. According to the Wellington (NZ) Times, Bill's recent concert at the Wellington Jazz Festival was "Best jazz piano since Oscar Peterson." The BBC Review recently said that "Bill Cunliffe is one of the great players of the day."

Lesa Terry is a violinist, composer, artistic director, educator and scholar. She is at the vanguard of contemporary musical interpretation, an artist whose creative genius consistently brings distinctive innovation to musical performance. Lesa Terry and the Women's Jazz Orchestra of Los Angeles™ could not have a more fitting artistic director at the helm for a presentation of "Jazz On A String,"™ part of the Playboy Jazz Festival 2006.

After completing a master's degree in Afro-Latin music at California State University Los Angeles in 2004, this scholar has just completed her second year at UCLA in pursuit of a doctorate in Ethnomusicology. Her career as a professional musician includes experiences that provide her with a unique base of knowledge and a framework for originality. Her accomplishments include:

- Twelve years performing, touring, and recording with The Uptown String Quartet and the Max Roach Double Quartet founded by the legendary drummer, Max Roach.
- Recording Credits: Stevie Wonder, Queen Latifah, Gladys Knight, Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, Ray Charles, Chris Botti, Dionne Warwick, Burt Bacharach, esteemed jazz musicians Clark Terry, Max Roach, Kenny Burrell, Uptown String Quartet, Yusef Lateef, Tony Bennett, and others.

- Compositions: Commissioned works have been showcased with Meet the Composer Foundation and New York Fund for New Work at Aaron Davis Hall, original composition for jazz violin and symphony orchestra entitled “Rivers of Destiny” and “Sentimeinto Azul”, performed by the Symphonic Jazz Orchestra.

Symphonic Jazz Orchestra

The 72-member professional ensemble, led by Music Directors George Duke and Mitch Glickman, was created in 2002 and is uniquely dedicated to:

-Commissioning symphonic jazz compositions, a musical genre that blends the American language of jazz with European orchestral traditions;

-Performing commissioned works in concert;

-Inspiring the next generation of listeners through specially designed Family Concerts and Community Outreach Programs.

The ensemble has commissioned and premiered eight new works by both established and emerging composers, and has performed in concert throughout Southern California, including UCLA’s Royce Hall and CalArts’ Walt Disney Theatre. The Symphonic Jazz Orchestra has worked with community outreach partners The World Stage, Harmony Project, California State Summer School for the Arts, and local elementary schools.

Visit www.SymphonicJazzOrchestra.org to learn more about the orchestra’s activities and how you can become a supporter.