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## **FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN MILLENNIUM PARK**

### **Picnic, Inspired by the Cartoons of John T. McCutcheon, At 11 AM, Followed by the First-Ever Independence Day Concert by the Grant Park Music Festival at 1:30 PM**

Start your Independence Day holiday with a picnic on Millennium Park's Great Lawn on Saturday, July 4, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The day continues with the Grant Park Music Festival's first-ever Independence Day concert in Millennium Park at 1:30 p.m. at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion.

Inspired by the cartoons of John T. McCutcheon that were created in 1904, the picnic will feature members of the theater company, Collaboraction, who will roam the western side of the Great Lawn depicting McCutcheon's "Bird Center" citizens. A reading of the Declaration of Independence by Cultural Historian Tim Samuelson dressed as "Bird Center" character, Judge Warden, will add to the festivities. Also, on hand will be the Northside Southpaws, a Chicago mandolin/guitar duo performing ragtime, country music and turn-of-the-century waltzes played on left-handed instruments. A "Bird Center" picnic lunch, provided by Marcello's, will be available for \$6.95.

Expected to be an annual fourth of July tradition, the Grant Park Music Festival's free concert, "Independence Day in Millennium Park", will feature a program of traditional and patriotic favorites performed by the Grant Park Orchestra, under the baton of Christopher Bell, along with special guest, Chicago tap dance master Lane Alexander. This concert is part of the Grant Park Music Festival's 2009 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary season.

"This is a perfect addition to the City of Chicago's Fourth of July festivities," said Lois Weisberg, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. "Millennium Park is a wonderful gathering spot, and this new tradition will bring people together on the 4th to celebrate our country's history as well as a look to its future."

This joyous concert for the whole family begins with Francis Scott Key's Star Spangled Banner and works its way through an all-star American canon, including Tchaikovsky's Overture 1812 and John Philip Sousa's Stars and Stripes Forever. Special guest, Chicago tap dance master Lane Alexander will perform with the Grant Park Orchestra to three selections from Morton Gould's Concerto for Tap Dancer and Orchestra, a work on which Alexander is considered one of the foremost experts.

Other events on the Fourth of July in Millennium Park include workouts in Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates and Capoeira on the Great Lawn from 7 a.m through 11 a.m. The Family Fun Festival opens at 10 a.m., full of interactive activities and musical games for kids of all ages.

The Grant Park Music Festival, comprised of the Grammy®-nominated Grant Park Orchestra and award-winning Grant Park Chorus led by Principal Conductor Carlos Kalmar and Chorus Director Christopher Bell, will commemorate its historic 75<sup>th</sup> season with a wide ranging series of classical music concerts and special event programming at the state-of-the-art Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, June 10 – August 15, 2009. Grant Park Music Festival Memberships apply to this program, although more than half of the seating, plus the entire Great Lawn are free to the general public.

Millennium Park is located in the heart of downtown Chicago. It is bordered by Michigan Ave. to the west, Columbus Dr. to the east, Randolph St. to the north and Monroe St. to the south. Convenient parking is located in the Millennium Park Garage (entrance on Columbus at Monroe or Randolph) and at the Grant Park North and East Monroe Garages, all located within a short walking distance of Millennium Park.

Millennium Park, managed and programmed by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, is an award-winning center for art, music, architecture and landscape design. The result of a unique partnership between the City of Chicago and the philanthropic community, the 24.5-acre park features the work of world-renowned architects, planners, artists and designers. Among Millennium Park's prominent features are the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the most sophisticated outdoor concert venue of its kind in the United States; the interactive Crown Fountain by Jaume Plensa; the contemporary Lurie Garden designed by the team of Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, Piet Oudolf and Robert Israel; and Anish Kapoor's hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture. Since its opening in July 2004, Millennium Park has welcomed more than 16 million people, making it one of the most popular destinations in Chicago.

A companion exhibition, "The Cartoons of John T. McCutcheon: Chronicles of a Changing World" will be on view at the Chicago Cultural Center's Chicago Rooms, located at 78 E. Washington Street across the street from Millennium Park through September 27, 2009. On July 9 at 12:15 p.m., Tim Samuelson, the exhibition curator and Cultural Historian for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, will lead a gallery talk about the work. Organized by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, this exhibition is supported by the Chicago Tribune Foundation and Chicago Tribune. Admission to the exhibition is free.

For more information about Millennium Park, please visit [www.millenniumpark.org](http://www.millenniumpark.org) or call 312.742.1168. For more information about the Grant Park Music Festival, visit [www.grantparkmusicfestival.com](http://www.grantparkmusicfestival.com).

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