

NEWS RELEASE

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ANDREW BIRD PERFORMS FREE CONCERT IN MILLENNIUM PARK

UNPRECEDENTED FREE, DOUBLE BILL FEATURING CHICAGO MUSIC;
ARTIST'S ONLY PUBLIC CHICAGO APPEARANCE IN 2008

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 6:30 PM

The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Millennium Park presents the incomparable Chicago-based performer Andrew Bird on Wednesday, September 3, at 6:30 pm at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. A violin virtuoso, Bird is also a multi-instrumentalist who adds singing and whistling to his sonic textures and imaginative lyrics. The concert opens with the Afro-beat sounds of Chicago's own **Occidental Brothers Dance Band International**. The concert is free and open to the public. For more information, call 312.742.1168 or visit www.MillenniumPark.org

"I've wanted to play on the Pritzker stage since before it opened," said Bird. "To play outside in my home town is pretty much an ideal situation and should be a nice break from summer festival mayhem. Though I will be playing much of the show with my band I'm especially excited about playing some solo pieces and trying to fill such a limitless space."



Chicago-based multi-instrumentalist and lyricist **Andrew Bird** (pictured) picked up his first violin at the age of 4. Actually, it was a Cracker Jack box with a ruler taped to it, and the first of his many Suzuki music lessons involved simply bowing to the teacher and going home. He spent his formative years soaking up classical repertoire completely by ear so when it came time for a restless teen-ager to make the jump to Hungarian Gypsy music, early jazz, country blues, south Indian etc., it wasn't such a giant leap. It's fitting that now, though classically trained, he has instead opted to play his violin in a most unconventional manner, accompanying himself on glockenspiel and guitar, adding singing and whistling to the equation, and becoming a pop songwriter in the process.

Since beginning his recording career, he has released ten albums, most recently 2007's *Armchair Apocrypha*. It is an atmospheric album completely grounded in his artistic present, which touches on themes of the mystery of life, long forgotten empires, plane crashes, and the comfort

to be found in impending apocalypse. The New York Times summed it up well: "Mr. Bird spins existential doubts into elegant confections." Enthusiastic critical notices followed, among them Entertainment Weekly, Rolling Stone, Paste, Mojo, Artforum, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Onion, and Pitchfork. He received a first place pick from MTVu's Freshman for his "Imitosis" video and the Plug Independent Music Award for Best Male Vocalist of 2008.

The live setting is where Bird becomes one with his songs. At first, it's a curious attraction – **one man generating the wealth of sound normally produced by an orchestra**. Song parts are constructed on violin, guitar, and glockenspiel, layered, and then looped over themselves in tangled and textured layers of sonics. Each night, the songs shape and shift within their loops – Andrew rarely replicates a song's perfect structure as it lives on the album, but rather lends an improvisatory aspect to his performance. The scope and range of his performances have been expanded with the contributions of his multi-instrumentalist collaborators, Martin Dosh and Jeremy Yivisaker. In 2007, Bird toured the

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world and performed to audiences on *The David Letterman Show*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and at Coachella, The Austin City Limits Festival, The Hollywood Bowl, and Bumbershoot as well as 140 of his own concert dates in between. Andrew Bird is currently recording his next album, to be released in 2009. For more information about the artist, visit www.andrewbird.net.



Opening the concert is Chicago's **Occidental Brothers Dance Band International** (pictured), which plays classic Central and West African dance music—specializing in soukous, highlife, rumba, dry guitar, and other delights from the great continent. The multi-racial band mixes their backgrounds in traditional African music, jazz, and underground rock to bring these classic sounds to life. The group has been winning over a diverse audience of listeners, dancers and rockers, and causing a buzz among established African music critics. Word of the group's electrifying live shows is spreading as they play sold-out shows with Afropop legend **Oliver Mtukudzi** and art-pop superstar **Andrew Bird**. For more information about the artists, visit occidentalbrothers.com.

About Millennium Park

Millennium Park is located in the heart of downtown Chicago. It is bordered by Michigan Avenue to the east, Columbus Drive to the west, Randolph Street to the north and Monroe Street 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 to Millennium Park.

Millennium Park 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 Nichols, Piet Oudolf and Robert Israel; and Anish Kapoor's hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture. Since its opening in July 2004, **Millennium Park has hosted more than 12 million people**, making it one of the most popular destinations in Chicago.

Photo (detail) of Andrew Bird by Cameron Wittig.

Photo of Occidental Brothers Dance Band International by Jim Newberry.

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