

MILLENNIUM PARK • AUGUST 10-12, 2007

# GREAT PERFORMERS OF ILLINOIS

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## “GREAT PERFORMERS OF ILLINOIS” FESTIVAL RETURNS TO CHICAGO’S MILLENNIUM PARK

**Soul and Gospel Legend Mavis Staples and Power Pop Innovators *Shoes* Headline Three Days of Free Entertainment Showcasing Illinois Talent  
August 10 – 12**

More than 50 performers hailing from all parts of Illinois will present a wide array of free music performance, including pop, rock, blues, jazz, folk and spoken word, and family-friendly entertainment, such as square dancing, children’s activities and storytelling, during **Great Performers of Illinois**, August 10 –12, in Millennium Park. Throughout the festivities, visitors can also enjoy regional food concessions and wines from featured state vineyards.

As the highlight and finale of the weekend, Chicago native Mavis Staples, one of the most recognizable and treasured voices in contemporary music, will perform on Sunday, August 12, at 6:30 p.m. in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion. This will be her first free performance in Chicago since the release of her top-selling album “Will Never Turn Back.” From her early days sharing lead vocals with her groundbreaking family group, The Staple Singers, to her powerful solo recordings, Staples is an inspirational force in modern popular culture and music. Revered both as a music icon and a social activist, she is a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee and one of VH1’s 100 Greatest Women of Rock and Roll. She was recently honored when Lt. Governor Pat Quinn commemorated June 19, 2007, as “Mavis Staples Day in the Land of Lincoln.” With her recent album, Staples continues to build on her family tradition and inspire a whole new generation with her remarkable talent.

Opening the weekend’s events on Friday, August 10, at 5 p.m., in Wrigley Square, the band *Shoes* will reunite for their first live performance in over four years. Formed in Zion, Illinois, in 1974, *Shoes* was at the forefront of the power pop movement in the late seventies. Their 1977 album “Black Vinyl Shoes” was lauded by the *Village Voice* as one of the top albums of the 1970s, and they were one of the first bands shown on MTV. Recently, members Gary Klebe, Jeff Murphy, and John Murphy released a new two-disc set entitled, “Double Exposure,” compiled from the original demos for their popular albums “Present Tense” and “Tongue Twister.”

Between these two marquee performances, Millennium Park will celebrate the diverse talent and culture of the state of Illinois. In addition to the array of music performances on multiple stages, Illinois food conces-

sions will offer regional specialties throughout the weekend. Square dancing will be professionally taught and called on Friday night. On Saturday and Sunday, a noted Abraham Lincoln impersonator will entertain; regional tourism booths will highlight Illinois' many attractions; and the Family Fun Tent will showcase the best of Illinois performance for children and offer hands-on activities organized by the renowned Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield in collaboration with the state's many eclectic museums.

"Great Performers of Illinois offers Chicagoans and visitors alike the opportunity to experience the very best that Illinois has to offer right here in Millennium Park," said Lois Weisberg, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. "This year, the city is particularly thrilled to host Mavis Staples as a very special part of this celebration."

"Illinois' greatest resource is its people, and we are thrilled to once again showcase the state's tremendous artistic talents," said Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin. "Gov. Blagojevich and I are happy to support this annual festival of music and family fun, which offers something for all ages."

"The State of Illinois has an amazing wealth of performing artists," said Shirley R. Madigan, Illinois Arts Council Chairman. "And Millennium Park – a cultural jewel of Illinois – is such an amazing and fitting location for visitors to experience first-hand some of the state's greatest assets."

**Great Performers of Illinois 2007**, the second annual celebration of the arts unique to Illinois, is presented by the Illinois Arts Council in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism; the Chicago Office of Tourism; and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

### **About Millennium Park**

Located in downtown Chicago on Michigan Avenue between Randolph and Monroe Streets, the 24.5-acre Millennium Park is an unprecedented center for world-class art, music, architecture and landscape design. Among the 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.

For details and to book hotel accommodations, call 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246 toll-free), or visit [www.greatperformersofillinois.com](http://www.greatperformersofillinois.com) or [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com). The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294. Chicago tourism information is also available at [www.cityofchicago.org/tourism](http://www.cityofchicago.org/tourism).

Chicago visitors and Chicagoans entertaining out-of-town guests can receive additional information, brochures and maps on Chicago events and attractions at the Visitor Information Centers located at Chicago Water Works, 163 E. Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph Street.

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