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**WEEKEND OF FREE ENTERTAINMENT IN CHICAGO'S  
MILLENNIUM PARK SHOWCASES BEST OF ILLINOIS TALENT  
JULY 18-20**

***Great Performers Of Illinois* Features Free Concert  
Honoring Buddy Guy with Headliner Jimmie Vaughan**

**Duranguense-Style Mexican Pop Band Skándalo Musical Opens Festival**

Millennium Park will host a weekend of free entertainment by more than 50 performers from throughout the state during Great Performers of Illinois, Friday, July 18 through Sunday, July 20. The celebration of the arts unique to Illinois includes pop, rock, blues, Latin, folk, classical, and spoken word performances, plus family-friendly entertainment such as square dancing, children's activities, and storytelling.

A special concert on July 20 honoring Chicago blues legend **Buddy Guy** will close the three-day festival. Guy, an internationally acclaimed blues guitarist, five-time Grammy Award-winner, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee will receive the first Great Performer of Illinois award for his outstanding contributions to popular music and American culture. The concert, which coincides with the July 22 release of Guy's new album "Skin Deep," will feature performances by **Jimmie Vaughan** and the **Tilt A Whirl Band** and **Lou Ann Barton**, one of the country's premier blues vocalists. Other special guest artists will pay tribute to Guy at this free event beginning at 8 pm at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion.

"We are presenting the first Great Performer of Illinois award to a blues giant who has had a world-wide impact on music and culture and brought international attention to Chicago as the home of the blues," said Lois Weisberg, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. "It is fitting that he is being honored at a festival that brings together the best talent in the state because he is one of the all-time greats."

Aurora-based **Skándalo Musical** will open the festival on July 18 at 5 pm with a concert featuring their Duranguense Latin music that has taken the nation by storm. This upbeat Mexican dance genre with a country twist has dominated the Latin Billboard charts for the last several years. Inspired by the state of Durango, Mexico, it first gained prominence in and around Chicago, which has the largest U.S. population of Duranguenses.

Between these two marquee performances, Millennium Park will be home to a celebration of the diverse talent and culture of the state. Music performances on multiple stages will feature continuous entertainment including:

- The Headlights, classic pop

**-MORE-**

- The Western Elstons, rockabilly
- John Yost's Rhythm Revolution World Music Ensemble
- Mhondoro Rhythm Success, Zimbabwean dance music
- Anomie, progressive classical
- Chris Vallillo, American roots
- Curb Service – Larry Gates, spoken word

Other highlights include:

- Regional food specialties created by the Park Grill's Head Chef Bernie Laskowski and wines from state vineyards available at the Park Grill and at park concession stands (throughout the weekend).
- Square dancing professionally taught and called (Friday).
- A free wine tasting featuring some of the best Illinois wineries, courtesy of the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association (Saturday).
- Roving Abraham Lincoln and Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable performers (Saturday & Sunday).
- Regional tourism booths highlighting Illinois' many attractions (Saturday & Sunday).
- Hands-on activities at the Family Fun Tent, organized by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in collaboration with many of the state's eclectic museums (Saturday & Sunday).

A spectacular corn maze will transform Millennium Park's Rooftop Terrace into a labyrinth of fun and entertainment for all ages. Information stations throughout the maze will feature educational facts about one of Illinois' most important crops.

"The arts are all around us in Illinois," said Shirley R. Madigan, Illinois Arts Council Chairman. "Showcasing these many gifted performers in a world-class venue such as Millennium Park truly shines the spotlight on our state's rich and diverse cultural resources. The Illinois Arts Council is proud to support Illinois' creative talent and the Great Performers of Illinois festival."

For more information about Great Performers of Illinois, call 312.742.1168 or visit [www.greatperformersofillinois.com](http://www.greatperformersofillinois.com). Great Performers of Illinois 2008, the third annual celebration of the arts unique to Illinois, is presented by the Illinois Arts Council, the Chicago Office of Tourism, and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

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. For more information, visit [www.millenniumpark.org](http://www.millenniumpark.org).

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246) or visiting [www.cityofchicago.org/tourism](http://www.cityofchicago.org/tourism). Brochures and information on Chicago events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue, and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. For those calling from outside the United States, Mexico and Canada, please call 1-312-201-8847. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

A complete schedule of events follows:

**GREAT PERFORMERS OF ILLINOIS 2008 LINE-UP  
JULY 18-20  
MILLENNIUM PARK**

**FRIDAY JULY 18**

**5:00-6:30pm Skándalo Musical (Aurora)**

**Wrigley Square Stage**

Everyone dances when Skándalo Musical takes the stage with its hot and sassy Duranguense sound — an upbeat Mexican dance genre with a country twist. Forged right here in Chicago, this Durango-influenced sound dominates the Latin Billboard charts. NPR describes “a kind of Durango fever” that has taken the Midwest by storm as “kids pass over their once-favorite rap artists for Duranguense CDs.” Among the newest on Sony BMG’s Latin roster, Skándalo Musical is one of Duranguense’s most popular groups.

**6:30-8:00pm Grant Park Music Festival Gershwin’s Greatest Hits**

**Jay Pritzker Pavilion**

Conductor Kevin Stites and the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra present George Gershwin’s iconic *Rhapsody in Blue* with pianist Krill Gerstein and a program of the composer’s greatest tunes sung by veteran Broadway stars. [www.grantparkmusicfestival.com](http://www.grantparkmusicfestival.com)

**8:00-10:00pm Square Dancing: Golden Horse Ranch Square Dance Band (Chicago)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Since 2000, this ensemble of stellar musicians from various Chicago bands, and callers and founders Annie Coleman and Anthony Burton, has featured five-part harmonies and good-time stomping, cowboy style. The group owes its name to Coleman, who grew up calling square dances at her family’s Golden Horse Ranch resort.

[www.myspace.com/goldenhorseranchsquareband](http://www.myspace.com/goldenhorseranchsquareband)

**6:00-7:40pm Illinois Wines for sale**

**Pritzker East Concessions Area**

**SATURDAY JULY 19**

**8:00-11:00am Millennium Park Morning Workouts**

**Great Lawn**

Begin your weekend with a workout led by a Chicago-area dance company, or take classes in Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi with instructors from the Lakeshore Athletic Club – Illinois Center. Workouts are presented by Millennium Park, McDonald’s® Corporation and the Mayor’s Fitness Council.

**GREAT LAWN (World Music Stage)**

**11:00am-5:00pm Community Drum Circles with John Yost, Stephanie Fukui, and Rick Neuhaus (Chicago)**

**Great Lawn**

Join drum circles led on the hour by John Yost of Rhythm Revolution, Stephanie Fukui and Rick Neuhaus. Bring your favorite instrument, homemade found sound and all your friends! There’ll be plenty of instruments available too.

**11:30am-12:00pm Mhondoro Rhythm Success (Champaign-Urbana)**

**Great Lawn**

Having shared the stage with the likes of Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, two-year-old Mhondoro Rhythm Success is well regarded for its popular Zimbabwean dance music. This hypnotic and infectious sound springs from the mbira (thumb piano), electric guitars, drums and percussion, and features the band's arrangements for traditional songs and covers for Oliver Mutukudzi, John Chibadura and others. [www.mhondoro.net](http://www.mhondoro.net)

**12:30-1:00pm Eastern Bluffs Taiko (Fairview Heights)**

**Great Lawn**

This dynamic performing ensemble emphasizes the dance-like movement and athletic aspects of modern Japanese drumming and plays mostly modern pieces alongside traditional taiko compositions.

**1:30-2:00pm Rhythm Revolution World Music Ensemble (Chicago)**

**Great Lawn**

Using instruments, melodies and rhythms from around the world, John Yost's Rhythm Revolution World Music Ensemble creates a truly global music experience. You'll hear a spectrum of sound, from Australian, Native American, African and Brazilian to Central and South American, European, Indian and Japanese. [www.drummingcircle.com](http://www.drummingcircle.com)

**2:30-3:00pm Desafinado (Champaign-Urbana)**

**Great Lawn**

Join this six-piece ensemble on a musical journey inspired by the magic of Brazil. A fusion of samba, bossa nova and Música Popular Brasileira is brought to life through the vibraphone, guitar, flute, melodica, vocals and percussion. [www.desafinado-music.com](http://www.desafinado-music.com)

**3:30-4:00pm Kaben Kafo (Chicago)**

**Great Lawn**

Led by professor of the djembe, Michael Taylor, this group honors the instrument's tradition and culture. Kaben Kafo—which means “let's play together” in West Africa's Malinke language—stars Alysco Diabate, master of the dundun drums, and special guest master drummers from West Africa. [www.holygoat.com/kabenskafo.html](http://www.holygoat.com/kabenskafo.html)

**WRIGLEY SQUARE (POPULAR MUSIC STAGE)**

**12:00-1:00pm Curbside (Peoria)**

**Wrigley Square**

Curbside's bona fide acoustic-driven style, combining natural tones and rhythmic melodies, has caught on in a big way around Chicago's music scene. This acoustic rock trio began playing at Bradley University four years ago.

**1:45-2:45pm Tall Tale (Champaign)**

**Wrigley Square**

Vocal harmonies and smart lyrics drive this girl-fronted group's melodic, piano-based, power pop that includes atmospheric guitars, driving drums and moving bass. Coined “local-up-and-comers” by *The Buzz*, Tall Tale, a regular fixture at Champaign's famed Canopy Club, tours around the state and recently released a first full-length album, *Pirate Ship*. [www.myspace.com/talltaleband](http://www.myspace.com/talltaleband)

**3:30-4:40pm The Headlights (Champaign)**

**Wrigley Square**

After non-stop touring and a recent retreat of musical self-discovery, guitarist Tristan Wraight, keyboardist Erin Fein and drummer Brett Sanderson's new sound is steeped in a classic pop sensibility. Their newly penned songs are natural, immediate and spontaneous. [www.headlightsmusic.com](http://www.headlightsmusic.com)

**5:15-6:15pm The Western Elstons (Chicago)**

**Wrigley Square**

You say you don't like country music? Mixing classic honky-tonk, western swing and rockabilly, The Western Elstons just might convert you. This leading Chicago, American roots music group features Scott Ligon, guitar and lead vocals; Casey McDonough, guitar, keyboard and vocals; Joel Paterson, pedal steel guitar; Jimmy Sutton, upright bass and vocals; and Alex Hall, drums.

[www.myspace.com/westernelstons](http://www.myspace.com/westernelstons).

**CHASE PROMENADE CENTRAL (SPOKEN WORD STAGE)**

**12:00-12:45pm Curb Service – Larry Gates (Champaign)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

One-man (Larry Gates) band Curb Service generates a pulsating sound using loops, beats, turntables, a pop sensibility and rapid-fire tongue twisters. Founder of the former cult band Lorenzo Goetz, Gates performs songs from his first solo album *Little Red Recovery Room*. [www.curb servicemusic.com](http://www.curb servicemusic.com).

**1:15-2:00pm Evo Soul – DeShaun Matthews (Robbins)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Evo Soul's (Evolutionary Souljahs) name personifies the group's sound: the struggle for spoken-word's evolution with its members as the "souljahs" waging the war. They all agree, "it's the music" propelling them onward.

**2:30-3:15pm JedSed – Jed Spiegelman (Chicago)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Emcee JedSed has a different angle on spoken-word. Always working on new projects with various local artists, he's played with the live band spoken-word ensemble BadNewsJones, and released his solo-debut album, 2005's *Lipschitz*, on the Nantucketastrophe label. [www.myspace.com/jedsed](http://www.myspace.com/jedsed)

**3:45-4:30pm Shorthand – Marcel Wilks (Chicago)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Chicago's illustrious spoken-word artists Mr. Greenweedz and Dug Infinite are the duo behind Shorthand. Mr. Greenweedz has recorded and performed with the Grammy-nominated band Liquid Soul and the John Popper Project featuring DJ Logic. Dug Infinite has kept busy producing for artists such as Common and No I.D. [www.mrgreenweedz.com](http://www.mrgreenweedz.com) or [www.myspace.com/greenweedz](http://www.myspace.com/greenweedz)

**5:00-5:45pm Krukid and the Sugar Gliders– Edwin Ruyonga (Champaign)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Ugandan Edwin "Krukid" Ruyonga's sophomore album *AFRiCAN*, released by Cash Hill Records and the world-famous Rawkus records, has critics and fans abuzz about the freshness of his rhythms, rhymes and social consciousness. [www.myspace.com/krukid](http://www.myspace.com/krukid)

**6:15-7:00pm Akasha and Cosmos Ray (Chicago)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Akasha's deep-groove reggae, red-hot blues-rock, and spoken-word flavors fused with pure melodies and rich vocal harmonies, flow seamlessly through all their work. The heavy, raw grooves are reminiscent of Bob Marley and the Wailers, Jimi Hendrix, Muddy Waters and the Roots. [www.akashaband.com](http://www.akashaband.com)

**Between Sets**

**Algoriddim – Benja Murphy (Chicago)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Radio veteran and International Music Format Chief – WHPK 88.5 FM Chicago DJ Benja - brings the jammin' reggae sounds he spins on his show, *Iman Selection*. Catch a radio preview every other Friday from 1 to 3 pm or listen to [www.whpk.org/stream](http://www.whpk.org/stream) or [www.algoriddim.podomatic.com](http://www.algoriddim.podomatic.com).

## **PRITZKER PAVILION (GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL)**

### **7:30-9:00pm Grant Park Music Festival Gershwin's Greatest Hits Pritzker Pavilion**

Conductor Kevin Stites and the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra present George Gershwin's iconic *Rhapsody in Blue* with pianist Krill Gerstein and a program of the composer's greatest tunes sung by veteran Broadway stars. [www.grantparkmusicfestival.com](http://www.grantparkmusicfestival.com)

## **THROUGHOUT THE PARK**

### **Roving Performers**

#### **1:00-7:00pm President and Mrs. Lincoln (Fritz & Linda Klein, Springfield)**

Fritz and Linda Klein bring to life Illinois' very own Abe and Mary Todd Lincoln. Be sure to catch the 16th President and his First Lady as you travel the park. [www.lincolninstitute.com](http://www.lincolninstitute.com)

#### **1:00-7:00pm The Cornettes (Cathi Bouzide and friends, Chicago)**

Hear about the wonders of this Illinois staple from giant ears of corn wandering through Millennium Park. When they aren't sharing little-known facts about this ever-essential crop, the friendly corn folks will delight you with corny jokes.

#### **1:00-4:00pm Perceptual Motion Dance Company's Corn Dancers (Chicago)**

Lin Shook and the Perceptual Motion Dance Company present "Corn Fed," a work inspired by corn and its important impact in everyday life.

#### **1:00-6:00pm Jean Baptiste Point DuSable (Bernard Mixon, Chicago)**

An explorer of French and African descent, DuSable has been called "the founder of Chicago." He established the first non-Native American settlement on the Chicago River's north bank (immediately east of today's Michigan Avenue Bridge), which he later sold before moving to what is now Peoria, IL. Keep your eyes peeled for DuSable, portrayed by Chicago actor Bernard Mixon, as he explores Millennium Park, just a few blocks from where he first settled.

## **OTHER EVENTS**

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|-----------------------|---|
| <b>12:00-7:00pm</b>   | <b>Corn 'Maize'<br/>Millennium Park's Rooftop</b><br>Chicago's first off-farm, freestanding corn maze! Lose yourself in corn as you discover one of Illinois' most important crops at information stations throughout this meandering puzzle. |
| <b>11:00am-7:00pm</b> | <b>Explore Illinois with Regional Convention &amp; Visitor Bureaus<br/>Great Lawn</b>   |
| <b>12:00-8:00pm</b>   | <b>Wine Tasting<br/>Park Grill on the Plaza.</b>  |
| <b>7:00-8:40pm</b>    | <b>Wine Sales<br/>Pritzker East Concessions Area.</b>   |
| <b>All weekend</b>    | <b>Illinois-inspired menu specials<br/>Park Grill</b>   |

## **SUNDAY JULY 20**

### **WRIGLEY SQUARE (FOLKSONGS OF ILLINOIS)**

#### **12:45-1:45pm Angie Heaton (Urbana)**

##### **Wrigley Square**

Fragile, beautiful and real, Angie Heaton's songs are tightly wound musical romps that draw on life's many moments. They're love letters that never got mailed, lists of promising New Year's resolutions, exposed diary entries, dog-eared photos of backyard parties, and washing-worn concert tickets.

[www.myspace.com/angieheaton](http://www.myspace.com/angieheaton)

#### **2:30-3:30pm Etherton Switch (Etherton)**

##### **Wrigley Square**

Brand-new quartet Etherton Switch plays audience-pleasing bluegrass and old-time music. Southern Illinois-natives Mila Maring (vocals, accordion) and Kelley Sims (vocals, guitar), German-native Mark Stoffel (vocals, mandolin, fiddle), and Californian-exile Tom Cummings (bass) mix original and traditional songs with not-so-folksy humor for a knee-slapping good time. [www.markstoffel.com](http://www.markstoffel.com)

#### **4:15-5:15pm Chris Vallillo (Macomb)**

##### **Wrigley Square**

Chris Vallillo's singing, songwriting, and six-string and bottleneck slide guitar playing depict the Midwestern way of life. *Dirty Linen* magazine has called this nationally acclaimed performer's American roots music, "vivid, original story songs" with an "eye for detail and a sense of history." In honor of Lincoln's 199th birthday this year, Vallillo released his latest CD, *Abraham Lincoln in Song*, which reached #10 on Billboard's Bluegrass chart.

#### **6:00-7:00pm Bucky Halker Trio (Chicago)**

##### **Wrigley Square**

Music, from country and folk to roots-rock and blues, has influenced Bucky Halker's songs, performances, European tours and dozen-plus recordings, as well as his Ph.D. in working-class history and book on labor protest music (University of Illinois Press). He's recently produced the critically acclaimed *Folksongs of Illinois* CD series for the Illinois Humanities Council, and received the prestigious 2006 Governor's International Exchange Award from the Illinois Arts Council. [www.buckyhalker.com](http://www.buckyhalker.com)

### **CHASE PROMENADE CENTRAL (CLASSICAL STAGE)**

#### **12:15-1:15pm Anomie (Chicago)**

##### **Chase Promenade Central**

The progressive compositions of Anomie founders and classically trained composers Evan Kuchar and Amos Gillespie combine the clarity of classical form and Expressionism's latent undertones for a sound that's appealing to pop and classical listeners. [www.myspace.com/anomiechicago](http://www.myspace.com/anomiechicago)

#### **2:00-3:00pm The Bowdacious String Band (Champaign)**

##### **Chase Promenade Central**

Applaud this youth band performing popular and folk music, as well as baroque and other classical hits. [www.40north.org/who/bowdacious.html](http://www.40north.org/who/bowdacious.html)

#### **3:45-4:45pm The Comic Intermezzo (Skokie)**

##### **Chase Promenade Central**

Soprano Kathleen and bass-baritone Peter Van De Graaff have performed throughout the Americas and in Europe where they found early 18th-century comic chamber operas called *intermezzi*. They've performed and premiered *intermezzi*—now their specialty—nationwide and on Chicago's WFMT radio. Last year, they released two chamber operas with their ensemble The Comic Intermezzo on the Naxos International label. [www.thecomintermezzo.com](http://www.thecomintermezzo.com)

**6:00-7:00pm Lyon Leifer, bansuri flute (Glenview)**

**Chase Promenade Central**

Before joining the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Chicago-born Lyon Leifer studied the flute and attended Juilliard. Over five years, he pursued the *bansuri* (north Indian bamboo flute) and performed classical raga music to great acclaim in India and around the world. [www.personal.northpark.edu/lleifer/](http://www.personal.northpark.edu/lleifer/)

**PRITZKER PAVILION**

**Children's Music**

**3:00-4:00pm Justin Roberts and the Not Ready for Naptime Players**

**Pritzker Pavilion**

The Old Town School of Folk Music brings Justin Roberts—one of the hottest members of Chicago's hip kids' music scene—to the stage of the Pritzker Pavilion. With his high-energy tunes spanning genres from rock and roll to Afro-pop rhythms, Roberts and the Not Ready for Naptime Players will have you singing and dancing along. [www.justinroberts.org](http://www.justinroberts.org)

**Blues Finale –Buddy Guy Tribute Concert**

**8:00-10:00pm Buddy Guy (Chicago) Tribute & 'Great Performer of Illinois' Award Presentation featuring Jimmie Vaughan and The Tilt a Whirl Band and Lou Ann Barton**

**Pritzker Pavilion**

Blues guitarist Jimmie Vaughan headlines a special concert honoring Chicago blues legend Buddy Guy. For his outstanding contributions to popular music and American culture, Guy, a five-time Grammy Award-winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, receives the first Great Performer of Illinois award.

**THROUGHOUT THE PARK**

**Roving Performers**

**12-2pm Theatre Hikes presents Scenes from *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (Lisle)**

Theatre-Hikes presents stories on the move. Follow scenes from Kate Douglas Wiggin's charming children's tale, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, at different sites during this Millennium Park performance hike. [www.theatre-hikes.org](http://www.theatre-hikes.org)

**1:00-8:00pm President and Mrs. Abraham Lincoln (Fritz & Linda Klein, Springfield)**

**1:00-7:00pm The Cornettes (Cathi Bouzide and friends, Chicago)**

**1:00-4:00pm Perceptual Motion Dance Company's Corn Dancers (Chicago)**

**OTHER EVENTS**

**12:00-8:00pm Corn 'Maize'  
Rooftop Terrace**

**12:00-6:00pm Explore Illinois with Regional Convention & Visitor Bureaus  
Great Lawn.**

**7:30-9:40pm Wine Sales  
Pritzker East Concessions Area.**

**All weekend Illinois-inspired menu specials.  
Park Grill**