

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE

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**GREAT PERFORMERS OF ILLINOIS FESTIVAL
RETURNS TO CHICAGO'S MILLENNIUM PARK**

July 18-20

Tribute Concert to the Legendary Buddy Guy

**Featuring Blues Guitarist Jimmie Vaughan Caps Off Weekend of Free
Performances Showcasing Illinois Talent**

Guy to Receive First Annual Great Performer of Illinois Award

Blues guitarist Jimmie Vaughan will headline a special tribute to Chicago blues legend Buddy Guy during the Great Performers of Illinois Festival in Millennium Park, July 18-20. Guy, an internationally-acclaimed blues guitarist and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, will be honored with the first Great Performer of Illinois award for his outstanding contributions to popular music and American culture.

The free concert on July 20 at 8 p.m. at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park will feature Grammy-award winning Jimmie Vaughan with his Tilt A Whirl Band and Lou Ann Barton, one of the country's premier blues vocalists. Other special guest artists will be announced.

The tribute will be the highlight and finale of the annual Great Performers of Illinois festival, three days of free entertainment by more than 50 performers from throughout the state presenting pop, rock, blues, Latin, folk, classical, and spoken word performances, and family-friendly entertainment, such as square dancing, children's activities, and storytelling.

"We are presenting the first Great Performer of Illinois award to a blues giant who has had a worldwide 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."

The Aurora/Joliet-based Skandalo Musical will open the festival on Friday, July 18, at 5 p.m. with a concert featuring their Duranguense Latin music that has taken the Midwest by storm. The 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, this popular musical style 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 of Illinois. In addition to an array of music performances on multiple stages, visitors can enjoy regional food specialties and wines from state vineyards throughout the weekend. Square dancing will be professionally taught and called on Friday night. On Saturday and Sunday, visitors will encounter roving Abraham Lincoln and Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable impersonators; 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 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in collaboration with the state's many eclectic museums.

New this year is a spectacular corn maze that will transform Millennium Park into a labyrinth of fun and entertainment for all ages. Way stations throughout the maze will feature educational facts about this Illinois staple that is essential to the state's economy.

"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. 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. 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 more information, visit 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. 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.

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