



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles**

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 30, 2009**

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MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA KICKS OFF CITY'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION

*Events include: Music LA jazz music and history classes;
a worship service at Brookins AME in South LA on Feb. 1;
and creative writing and poster contests for children and young adults*

LOS ANGELES – Launching a month of cultural events spread throughout Los Angeles, Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa today officially kicked off the City's African American Heritage Month celebration with a red carpet awards ceremony at City Hall honoring Reverend James Lawson, singer Natalie Cole, and actress Alfre Woodard.

Mayor Villaraigosa also unveiled a sculpture of President Obama, designed by world-renowned artist and last year's African American Heritage Month honoree, Artis Lane.

"The City is blessed to honor this trifecta of service and talent that truly represents the spirit of the month and the strength of our African American community here in Los Angeles," Mayor Villaraigosa said.

The gospel-filled program Friday kicked off a month of events in Los Angeles, including the Official Mayor's Events which are found below.

The full list of activities taking place throughout Los Angeles can be found in the **African American Heritage Month Calendar and Cultural Guide** produced by the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and unveiled today by the Mayor, and can also be found on DCA's website: <http://www.culturela.org>. With support from The Walt Disney Company, Title Sponsor of the City's Heritage Month Celebrations and DCA's Music LA Heritage Month Program, media sponsor

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ABC7, and event sponsors Wells Fargo, Time Warner Cable, and Capri Capital, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Our Author's Study Club (OASC) organized many of the cultural and artistic events listed in the guide.

"The Walt Disney Company joins the City of Los Angeles in celebrating the many accomplishments of African Americans in our great City and throughout history. The 2009 Honorees, Reverend James Lawson, singer Natalie Cole and actress Alfre Woodard exemplify the spirit of service and creativity that make the African American community vital and strong. All of us at Disney honor their achievements and applaud their continuing efforts", said Joan McCarthy, Los Angeles Community Relations Director for Disney Worldwide Outreach.

"This is an exciting month for the City of Los Angeles," Mayor Villaraigosa said.

"It is a time when we can all be proud to celebrate not just our African American heritage, but also pay tribute to the leaders and artists who continue to keep our communities strong."

"We are proud to be the media sponsor of African American Heritage Month," said Arnold J. Kleiner, President and General Manager of ABC7. "It's a great opportunity to celebrate and recognize the leaders, artists and individuals who make such a valuable contribution to our community."

<p style="text-align: center;">UPCOMING AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH ACTIVITIES SPONSORED BY THE MAYOR'S OFFICE:</p>

DCA Music LA African American Heritage Month Classes Sponsored by Disney

In celebration of African American Heritage Month, the Department of Cultural Affairs is proud to present Music LA classes as part of the citywide Charles Mingus - Son of Watts - Musical Caravan Project Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Music LA classes for elementary, middle, and high school students will highlight the life and music of jazz artist Charles Mingus, a highly influential bass player, accomplished pianist, bandleader, and composer who resided in the Watts district of Los Angeles.

The Music LA Program has partnered with music education providers to structure three unique music programs that will expose participating youth to the rich and diverse landscape of African American culture and music. Students will learn basic principles of music through hands-on instrumental and vocal classes based in selected Jazz and Charles Mingus curricula. Student participation will include performance training in an ensemble setting through workshops and rehearsals. After eight to ten weeks of instruction, all students will take part in a culminating

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community performance. All Music LA classes are designed to celebrate African American culture, foster pride and understanding of African and African American music, and are free and open to the public.

WHEN: January through March

COST: Free

SPONSORS: Disney, Office of the Mayor, and the Department of Cultural Affairs

Music LA at Art in the Park

Music LA is proud to partner with Art in the Park's Lalo Guerrero School of Music as part of the Charles Mingus - Son of Watts - Musical Caravan Project to offer beginning to advanced classes in guitar, bass, drums, trumpet, choir and stage performance, with a focus on the exciting music in the genre of American Jazz. Through this 10-week course, students will also learn the history of American Jazz and its influence on the popular music of today. No musical experience necessary! All are welcome!

WHERE: Lalo Guerrero School of Music at Art in the Park
Harmon Park
5568 Via Marisol
Los Angeles, CA 90042

CONTACT: Berta Sosa Torres, 323.259.0861, bertasosa1@yahoo.com
or Sun Valley Youth Arts Center, 818.252.4619, lgsm.org

Music LA at William Grant Still Art Center with H.E.A.L.

H.E.A.L (Heritage Empowered Arts Legacy Inc.) will be in residence at the William Grant Still Arts Center to offer beginning and intermediate classes in clarinet, drums, keyboard, and trumpet with a focus on American Jazz. Participating students will also partake in the Saturday, ensemble course as part of H.E.A.L.'s acclaimed "Jazz for Wee People" program. Through this 8-week, hands-on course, students will also learn the history of Jazz and its influence on the popular music of today. A final culminating event for family and friends will take place at the Nate Holden Theatre. No musical experience necessary! Call today!

WHERE: William Grant Still Arts Center
2520 South West View Street
Los Angeles, CA 90016

CONTACT: Joyce Maddox, 323.734.1164, joyce.maddox@lacity.org or
Young Kim, 213.675.5998, youngkim@healinc.org, or culturela.org

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Music LA at Musicians Union Local 47 with the Los Angeles Jazz Society

Music LA has partnered with the Los Angeles Jazz Society's Bill Green Mentorship program to give promising young jazz students the tools and

education to promote and encourage their development as professional jazz artists. Students are given 10 hours of private lessons with prominent professional jazz players, and participate in five group workshops conducted by a well known jazz mentor. This advanced course concludes with a professional recording session and students are given their own copy of the CD. A final culminating event for family and friends will take place at the Catalina Jazz Restaurant, a renowned space for emerging jazz musicians. New students are welcome! Don't miss this exciting opportunity!

WHERE: Musicians Union Local 47
817 North Vine Street
Hollywood, CA 90028

Special Worship Service

Celebrate African American Heritage Month with Mayor Villaraigosa at a special worship service.

WHEN: February 1, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
WHERE: Brookings AME Church,
4831 South Gramercy Place
Los Angeles
COST: Free
SPONSOR: Office of the Mayor
INFO: 323.296.5610

Conversance: An African American Heritage Month Art Exhibition

In honor of African American History Month, the Pounder-Kone Art Gallery and Avenue 50 Studio are collaborating to curate an exhibition of works featuring established and emerging artists from the African American community. *Conversance* gives us a glimpse into the African American experience through visual interpretations of a culture rich in heritage and expression. The exhibition includes the work of Elizabeth Colomba, Dale Brockman Davis, Samella Lewis, Overton Loyd, Michael Massenburg, R. Jason Powell, and Joseph Sims.

WHEN: Through February 5, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
SITE: City Hall Bridge Gallery, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles
COST: Free
SPONSORS: Office of the Mayor and the Department of Cultural Affairs
INFO: 213.202.5500, culturela.org

African American Heritage Month Poster Competition and Program

In celebration of African American Heritage Month, Mayor Villaraigosa is hosting a poster competition for children and adolescents in Los Angeles. This annual

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contest invites students of all ages and backgrounds, from kindergarten through high school, to showcase their artistic skills and to explore African American heritage and contributions. Entries will be judged by a panel of professional artists, educators, and community leaders. The purpose of the City of Los

Angeles' 2009 African American Heritage Month's educational and cultural programs is to foster a greater appreciation of African American history and to promote greater access to arts and cultural resources within Los Angeles.

WHEN: February 20, 2009

WHERE: City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles

COST: Free

SPONSORS: Wells Fargo, Disney, ABC7, Office of the Mayor, Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Recreation and Parks, and the African American Heritage Month Committee

INFO: 213.202.5545, aahmlacity.org, culturela.org

African American Creative Writing Competition and Program

In celebration of African American Heritage Month, join Mayor Villaraigosa by participating in a creative writing competition for students in grades 6 through 12 in Los Angeles. This annual contest invites middle and high school students of all backgrounds to explore this year's theme of *The Movement: Making Your Dreams a Reality*. Students learn and write about African American history and traditions. Entries will be judged by a panel of professional authors, educators, and community leaders.

WHEN: February 24, 2009

WHERE: TBD

COST: Free

SPONSOR: Time Warner Cable, Disney, ABC7, Office of the Mayor, Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Recreation and Parks, and the African American Heritage Month Committee

INFO: 213.202.5545, aahm.lacity.org, culturela.org

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