

NEWS RELEASE

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049-6833

TEL: (310) 440-4500
FAX: (310) 440-4595

E-MAIL: communications@skirball.org
WEBSITE: www.skirball.org



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Media Contacts:

David Monnich, LC Media, (210) 422-1764, david.h.monnich@gmail.com

Laura B. Cohen, LC Media, (310) 867-3897, lcmediapr@gmail.com

Mia Cariño, Skirball Cultural Center, (310) 440-4544, communications@skirball.org

Skirball Cultural Center announces lineup for
twenty-first annual FREE outdoor concert series

SUNSET CONCERTS AT THE SKIRBALL

Thursday evenings, July 27–August 31, 8:00 p.m.

Inspired by the exhibition *Paul Simon: Words & Music*, now on view at the Skirball,
the 2017 season showcases emerging talents and established artists from Los Angeles and around the globe

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center proudly presents the twenty-first season of its annual free summertime concert series, Sunset Concerts. Coinciding with the Skirball's latest exhibition, *Paul Simon: Words & Music* (on view through September 3), the new season draws inspiration from Paul Simon's pioneering efforts to bring world music to pop audiences while building bridges across cultures. The lineup of boundary-pushing artists ranges from contemporary American folk musicians and the leading lady of Afro-Cuban jazz to bluesy Caribbean roots pioneers, an Anglo-Nigerian electropop ensemble, and a multigenerational Afro-Venezuelan song, drum, and dance collective.

The 2017 Sunset Concerts schedule is as follows: **American Tune Featuring Sean Watkins & Friends: A Singer-Songwriter Celebration of Paul Simon** (July 27); **Ibibio Sound Machine** (August 3); **Delgres** (August 10); **Daymé Arocena** (August 17); **David Buchbinder's Odessa/Havana** (August 24); and **Betsayda Machado y La Parranda El Clavo** (August 31).

Since its beginnings, Sunset Concerts has brought to the stage musical greats from around the globe. This year, with *Paul Simon: Words & Music* in its galleries, the Skirball took the opportunity to celebrate the indelible influence Paul Simon has had on popular music in America and worldwide.

Andrew Horwitz, Vice President and Director of Programs for the Skirball, remarked, "Paul Simon is indisputably one of America's great composers, so we open the season with a tribute to that legacy. Guitarist and vocalist Sean Watkins, a local favorite, is putting together a band, inviting local singer-songwriter friends

to pay homage to Simon's enduring influence on contemporary Americana by playing covers of his songs and new originals."

"The release of Paul Simon's *Graceland* in 1986 changed the game for world music," Horwitz continued. "When Simon merged his pop sensibility with the rhythms, melodies, and orchestrations of South African music—both pop and traditional—'world music' was transformed overnight from an obscure province of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists to a creatively fertile and wildly popular new genre. Over the past thirty years, that hybrid sound has continued to evolve, and we're proud to present the innovative talents of Ibibio Sound Machine, Delgres, Daymé Arocena, Odessa/Havana, and Betsayda Machado—all incredible artists representing different approaches, experiences, and blends of musical culture from around the globe."

The six Thursday night concerts are presented free of charge in the Skirball's picturesque central courtyard. Music fans of all ages are invited to arrive early to enjoy food and drink under the stars and explore the Museum galleries. *Paul Simon: Words & Music*—originally curated by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, then reimagined and expanded for the Skirball—is currently on view through September 3. It will be free and open to all concertgoers until 10:00 p.m.

About the Artists:

Thursday, July 27, 8:00 p.m.

AMERICAN TUNE FEATURING SEAN WATKINS & FRIENDS

A Singer-Songwriter Celebration of Paul Simon

Grammy-winning musician and songwriter **Sean Watkins** (Nickel Creek, Watkins Family Hour, Works Progress Administration) kicks off the 2017 season of Sunset Concerts. With close friends and special guests representing Los Angeles's finest modern troubadours, Watkins celebrates the legacy of Paul Simon and the past, present, and future of America's vital singer-songwriter community. This concert is co-presented with The Bluegrass Situation, an organization at the nexus of a new generation of roots and Americana musicians reinventing the genre while remaining deeply connected to its history. Special guests to be announced.

Thursday, August 3, 8:00 p.m.

IBIBIO SOUND MACHINE (West Coast debut)

Fronted by London-born Nigerian singer **Eno Williams**, **Ibibio Sound Machine** effortlessly mix African and electronic elements inspired by the golden era of West African funk, disco, modern post-punk, and electro. On March 3, Ibibio Sound Machine released their most recent album, *Uyai* (Merge Records), which the *New York Times* described as "full of positive-thinking songs and deep, inventive grooves that hotwire decades of African, European, and American music." Weird and wonderful folk stories, recounted in the Ibibio language to Williams as a child, form the creative fabric of the band's musical tapestry.

Thursday, August 10, 8:00 p.m.

DELGRES (Los Angeles debut)

When Napoleon Bonaparte reinstated slavery on the Caribbean Island of Guadeloupe in 1802, many people fled or were exiled to New Orleans following a slave rebellion led by the legendary Louis Delgrès. Named after this historic leader, **Delgres**—made up of Paris-born, Caribbean-descended frontman **Pascal Danaë** on dobro

and vocals, sousaphone player **Rafgee**, and drummer **Baptiste Brondy**—revisit the songs, dances, and sorrows of the long-lost, drifting souls of New Orleans through their bluesy Caribbean roots music.

Thursday, August 17, 8:00 p.m.

DAYMÉ AROCENA

A star on the Cuban music scene, called “an artist for all ages” by NPR, **Daymé Arocena** combines Santerian chant, rhythmic complexity, fluid jazz styling, and a nuanced Afro-Cuban soulfulness. With exceptional warmth and a powerful stage presence, Arocena has been described by the *Los Angeles Times* as one of the “most inviting ambassadors” for Cuba’s contemporary music. At the Skirball, Arocena will perform songs from her latest album, *Cubafonía*. *Pitchfork* praised it as “a vibrant, bold record that is, at its heart, a love letter to her home country.” This concert is copresented with the Ford Theatres.

Thursday, August 24, 8:00 p.m.

DAVID BUCHBINDER’S ODESSA/HAVANA

David Buchbinder’s Odessa/Havana explores the exhilarating connections between Jewish and Cuban music. Sharing Andalusian, Arabic, Roma, Sephardic, and North African ancestry, award-winning trumpeter **David Buchbinder** and Grammy-nominated Cuban pianist **Hilario Durán** team up with a global ensemble of jazz greats. According to *LA Weekly*, the result is an “absolute cooker ... a seamless mesh of Cuban and klezmer forms that seems like the most natural thing in the world.”

Thursday, August 31, 8:00 p.m.

BETSAYDA MACHADO Y LA PARRANDA EL CLAVO (Los Angeles debut)

With their “singular, passionate, and purposeful voices” (NPR), Venezuelan singer **Betsayda Machado** and the multigenerational band of musicians and dancers **La Parranda El Clavo** take the stage to conclude the 2017 Sunset Concerts. Hailing from the tiny Venezuelan village El Clavo—where their music brings life to parties in the town square—these masterful performers invite audiences to discover, indulge, and celebrate the contagious beats of Afro-Venezuelan soul. The *New York Times* describes Betsayda Machado y La Parranda El Clavo as “the kind of group that world music fans have always been thrilled to discover: vital, accomplished, local, unplugged, [and] deeply rooted.”

Editors, please note:

2017 SUNSET CONCERTS

Skirball Cultural Center

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90049

(310) 440-4500 • skirball.org

All concerts begin at 8:00 p.m. Check-in and FREE admission to the Museum and Skirball campus open at 5:30 p.m. Doors to the concert venue open at 6:30 p.m.

FREE concert admission

RSVP is requested but does not guarantee admission or seating, which is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Parking: \$10 per car (cash only)

Carpooling is encouraged. Street parking is strictly prohibited.

Or take Metro Rapid 734/234.

All Skirball exhibitions (except Noah's Ark) are free and open until 10:00 p.m. during Sunset Concerts, including *Paul Simon: Words & Music*. Audrey's Museum Store is open until 8:00 p.m.

Grab-and-go light fare, full bar service, and specialty food items will be available for happy hour and throughout the show. Guests may bring their own food. **Note: No outside alcoholic beverages or chairs are permitted.**

THE 2017 SUNSET CONCERTS ARE MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY:

Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles

FLAX (France Los Angeles Exchange)

Los Angeles County Arts Commission

PepsiCo

US Bank

The engagements of Daymé Arocena and Betsayda Machado y La Parranda El Clavo are funded through Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America, a program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

MEDIA SPONSORS:

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About Sunset Concerts at the Skirball

Marking its twenty-first season in 2017, the longstanding summer concert series kicked off just a year after the Skirball Cultural Center opened to the public in 1996. During that inaugural year, the institution drew nearly 300,000 visitors, far surpassing an initial expectation of 60,000. In winter/spring 1997, seeking to build upon this early success, the Skirball began to hold monthly dinnertime concerts inside its restaurant, Zeidler's Cafe. The concerts were so well attended that the staff immediately rethought the event space. The following summer, upon popular demand, the Skirball launched a free four-concert series on Thursday nights. These performances took place in the Skirball's much more spacious central courtyard, offering a view of the hillside at dusk. The series was soon named Sunset Concerts at the Skirball. For several seasons in those early years, along with Grand Performances downtown and Santa Monica Pier's Twilight Concerts, Sunset Concerts represented one of the city's few free outdoor summer music series. Noteworthy Sunset Concerts performers over the years have included Yasmin Levy (US debut), Hugh Masekela, Vieux Farka Touré (LA debut), Natacha Atlas, Red Baraat, Conjunto Chappotín y Sus Estrellas (US debut tour), Thao & The Get Down Stay Down, and Novalima.

About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society.

Visiting the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday 12:00–5:00 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays and holidays. Admission to exhibitions: \$12 General; \$9 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$7 Children 2–12. Exhibitions are always free to Skirball Members and Children under 2. Exhibitions are free to all visitors on Thursdays. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit skirball.org. The Skirball is also home to Zeidler's Café, which serves innovative California cuisine in an elegant setting, and Audrey's Museum Store, which sells books, contemporary art, music, jewelry, and more.

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