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**Skirball Cultural Center announces the twenty-sixth season of its
FREE outdoor concert series**

SUNSET CONCERTS

Sponsored by the Bilger Family

Thursday evenings, July 20-August 24, 2023, at 8:00 pm

**Featuring international and Los Angeles-based artists who build cultural bridges,
challenge social injustices, and reimagine traditions**



Image of 2022 Sunset Concerts. Credit: Halline Overby.

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center proudly presents the twenty-sixth season of its free summer concert series [Sunset Concerts](#). Featuring artists from Jewish, African, and Cuban diasporas, this year’s eclectic lineup reflects music’s connective threads to the past and its ability to forge cultural bonds and inspire hope for the future. Sunset Concerts—sponsored by the Bilger Family and presented since 1997 in the Skirball’s idyllic hillside courtyard—draws music fans of all ages from across greater LA and beyond.

The 2023 Sunset Concerts schedule is as follows: **Billy Valentine (July 20); Telmary (July 27); AvevA (August 3); Sona Jobarteh (August 10); Ian Sweet (August 17); and Antibalas (August 24).**

“For over a quarter century, Sunset Concerts has served as a dynamic space for Angelenos of all ages and backgrounds to gather, connect, and enjoy world-class music together in the beautiful Santa Monica Mountains,” remarks Jessie Kornberg, Skirball President and CEO. “By highlighting music from multiple diasporas and providing diverse and enriching cultural experiences for all who attend, our free annual concert series fully exemplifies the Skirball’s guiding Jewish principle of welcoming the stranger.”

“2023 promises to bring an exciting lineup of bridge-building artists from across the globe,” comments Marlene Braga, Vice President of Programs. “Although all the performers draw upon strong musical traditions, they also actively challenge these foundations, helping them evolve. Listeners will have the opportunity to experience a multitude of genres this summer—from rhythm & blues, afrobeat and Ethiopian melodies to Cuban rap, indie rock and West African folk music.”

The 2023 Sunset Concerts are presented free of charge, and an RSVP is recommended. RSVPs will open on Thursday, June 8, at 10 am.

Visitors are encouraged to arrive early to eat, drink, shop, and enjoy complimentary admission to the exhibitions beginning at 6:30 pm.

Currently on view are the exhibitions *Blacklist: The Hollywood Red Scare* and *Peter Krasnow: Breathing Joy and Light*. Both exhibitions are on view through September 3 and will remain open on Sunset Concerts evenings until 10:00 pm.

Light fare along with a full bar will be available until 8:00 pm in the Founders Courtyard. Bar service and snacks will also be available in the Taper Courtyard, where the concerts take place, until 10:00 pm. Guests may bring their own food, but no outside alcoholic beverages or chairs are permitted.

Audrey's Museum Store will be open until 9:30 pm, offering merchandise inspired by the Skirball's mission, values, and programming.

Parking will be available on-site at the Skirball for \$20 upon arrival or \$15 if reserved in advance. **Skirball Members can prepay online for only \$5 or pay \$20 upon arrival.** *Street parking is strictly prohibited.*

For more information about Sunset Concerts, please visit:
<https://www.skirball.org/programs/sunset-concerts>.

About the Artists:

BILLY VALENTINE

Thursday, July 20, 8:00 pm (doors and DJ set by Linafornia at 6:30 pm)



“[Valentine’s latest] album doesn’t just serve as a fine showcase for [his] masterly croon, but also as a paean to African American music’s rich tradition of protest and activism, its timeless songs speaking acutely to this tumultuous era.”—*The Guardian*

All power to the people! Sunset Concerts kicks off with a night of 1960s and '70s protest songs performed by master blues and R&B singer-songwriter Billy Valentine. Sing along to hits like Prince's "Sign O' The Times" and Stevie Wonder's "You Haven't Done Nothin'."

Valentine has performed soulful, socially minded tunes since the early 1970s, including the funk hit "Money's Too Tight (to Mention)." He returns to the limelight in 2023 with the remarkable comeback album *Billy Valentine and the Universal Truth*.

While recording, the world erupted in protest after the murder of George Floyd. “Making the album suddenly became very cathartic,” Valentine recalls, “The pandemic was one thing. Then to see what happened to George Floyd—that just broke my heart.”

Accompanied by a singular group of accomplished jazz musicians, Valentine's piercing tenor reflects uncertain times, where music provides shelter from the storm and inspires hope for a better world.

[TELMARY](#)

Thursday, July 27, 8:00 pm (doors at 6:30 pm)



“Telmary Diaz — singer, street poet, rapper — is one of the leaders of the hip-hop revolution in Cuban popular music.”—NPR

Rapper, musician, and spoken-word artist Telmary is a pioneer of Cuban hip-hop in a world traditionally dominated by men. Telmary uses her distinctive voice—at times deep and soulful, other times rapid-fire and aggressive—to deliver positive and forceful messages that take on contemporary issues surrounding the status of women and racism.

Heavy doses of salsa, percussion riffs, and classic Cuban dance moves make for an energized experience that brings down the house each time Telmary ascends to the stage. Her brisk and emotionally charged anthems encourage us to unleash our feminism on the dance floor. *¡A bailar mi gente!*

[AVEVA](#)

Thursday, August 3, 8:00 pm (doors at 6:30 pm)



“Ethiopian-Israeli artist Aveva Dese is a powerful R&B singer and a songwriter whose Afro groove sound incorporates the Ethiopian rhythms of her heritage.” — *The Canadian Jewish News*

Aveva Dese, or simply Aveva to her fans from around the world, combines her family's Jewish Ethiopian roots, a cultural embrace of Israel, and a love for the American soul music of Aretha Franklin, Etta James, and Whitney Houston.

As a first-generation citizen born and raised in the city of Nazareth Illit, Aveva brings a fascinating life story into her music. “I was trying to fit into the Israeli culture. As a kid, I thought that the Ethiopian culture is holding me back...Now as a mature woman, I realize how wrong I was.”

Aveva's energetic anthems weave Amharic and English, and cover themes of society, freedom, and love. A mainstay of Israel's highly popular jazz scene, Aveva tops a long list of jazz singer-songwriters charting a new course within the traditional music genre.

[SONA JOBARTEH](#)

Thursday, August 10, 8:00 pm (doors at 6:30 pm)



“Kora master Sona Jobarteh channels traditional Gambian music through a modern mindset” —*Chicago Reader*

West African powerhouse Sona Jobarteh has disrupted a thirteenth-century musical tradition to make a historically male ritual her own. A native of The Gambia, Jobarteh's instrument of choice is the kora, a twenty-one-stringed African harp that resembles a gourd.

This sublime instrument is native to the exalted Griot families, who are members of the Manding of West Africa. Unlike other Griots from her family and homeland, Jobarteh is the first professional female kora virtuoso, a pioneer within an ancient tradition previously and exclusively passed down from father to son. Jobarteh's uplifting vocals lend even greater depth to her music, which is uniquely poised between the preservation of a rich cultural heritage and an accessible modern style.

[IAN SWEET](#)

Thursday, August 17, 8:00 pm (doors at 6:30 pm)



“Ian Sweet’s Self-Probing Indie Rock Is Totally Crushing” —Vice

LA rising star Ian Sweet and her critically lauded blend of kaleidoscopic indie rock challenge conventional notions of a woman's need to be discreet. Raised in the San Fernando Valley, Ian Sweet frontwoman Jilian Medford’s music offers both an exercise in self-forgiveness and an exploration of unresolved trauma, with lyrics that express vulnerability and confusion with emotional honesty.

The artist released her latest full-length *Show Me How You Disappear* (2021) at an acute juncture in her life, charting from a mental health crisis to an intensive healing process. Shimmering with electrified unease and a hum of tangled melodies, Medford's music incorporates meditative mantras, where new truths surface with explosive, defiant hooks.

[ANTIBALAS](#)

Thursday, August 24, 8:00 pm (doors and DJ set by Linafornia at 6:30 pm)



“There just aren't many bands like Antibalas. These are jazz players making dance music: Their music is big and fun, and their guiding spirit is Fela Kuti, the brilliant big-band leader and Nigerian Afrobeat pioneer.” —NPR

More than twenty years have passed since Antibalas launched as a neighborhood dance and protest band in pre-gentrified Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Since then, the band has evolved into what *The Guardian* calls “one of the world’s finest Afrobeat bands,” collaborating with music’s biggest stars, including Beyoncé, Paul Simon, and David Byrne. The horns in the Bruno Mars earworm, “Uptown Funk?”—that’s part Antibalas.

This group popularized Afrobeat in the US, carrying on the musical tradition pioneered by Fela Kuti in 1960s Nigeria that features chanting vocals, complex intersecting rhythms, and driving percussion. You'll dance into the night as Antibalas throws down beat after infectious beat. Take it from NPR music critic Bob Boilen: "If they come to your town, drop what you're doing and go see them. Wear dancing shoes."

Editors, please note:

2023 SUNSET CONCERTS
Skirball Cultural Center
2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(310) 440-4500 • skirball.org

All concerts begin at 8:00 pm. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

FREE admission

Reservations open June 8 at 10 am and are recommended:

<https://www.skirball.org/programs/sunset-concerts>

Parking (at the door): non-members & members \$20

Parking (online/advance purchase): non-members \$15 / members \$5

Street parking is strictly prohibited.

Or take Metro Rapid 761/233.

Carpooling, ridesharing, and Metro are encouraged.

Light fare and full bar service will be available for purchase. Guests may bring their own food. **Note: No outside alcoholic beverages or chairs are permitted.**

Sunset Concerts at the Skirball are generously sponsored by:

The Bilger Family

The 2023 Sunset Concerts season is made possible in part by additional support from:

Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles
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Media sponsor:

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About Sunset Concerts at the Skirball:

Marking its twenty-sixth season in 2023, 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 Café. The concerts were so well attended that the team quickly 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 Lila Downs, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars (US debut tour), Bassekou Kouyate, 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, Novalima, Daymé Arocena, Goapele, Kishi Bashi, The Marías, The Klezmatics, Gaby Moreno, Quetzal, and Booker T. Jones.

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 is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 12:00–5:00 pm; Saturday–Sunday, 10:00 am–5:00 pm; closed Mondays and holidays. Advance timed-entry reservations are recommended for the permanent exhibition Noah's Ark at the Skirball which is ticketed separately. Exhibitions are always free to Skirball Members and Children under 2. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit skirball.org.

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