

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 23, 2015

Media Contacts:

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 line-up for
nineteenth annual FREE community concert series

SUNSET CONCERTS

Thursday evenings, July 23–August 27, at 8:00 p.m.

2015 season features innovative music that transcends geographic and cultural borders—
from Afro-Colombian funk by way of Brussels to pan–Middle Eastern grooves to psychedelic
folk from one of the giants of Malian music

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center announces the nineteenth season of its annual Sunset Concerts, held each summer in the Skirball's one-of-a-kind hillside setting. Dedicated to inspiring the diverse populations of greater Los Angeles, the Sunset Concerts will once again showcase exceptional global talents, both legendary and emerging. The schedule is as follows: the Los Angeles debut of **La Chiva Gantiva** (July 23); **Bassekou Kouyaté and Ngoni Ba** (July 30); **Hurray for the Riff Raff** (August 6); **Aurelio** (August 13); **Yuval Ron Ensemble** (August 20); and **Novalima** (August 27).

"We're thrilled to bring to the Sunset Concerts stage an eclectic line-up of artists whose work honors longstanding musical traditions while pushing boundaries with genre-defying sounds and themes," says Skirball music programmer Daniel Soto. "From the remarkable Middle Eastern repertoire of the Yuval Ron Ensemble to the modern American folk songs of Hurray for the Riff Raff, there is something for everyone to enjoy."

As always, the six Thursday night concerts are presented free of charge in the Skirball's spectacular yet intimate central courtyard, where audiences sing, dance, and gather at the foot of the stage to engage with the performers. This year, music fans will especially enjoy complimentary admission to the Skirball's major summer exhibition, *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution*. The retrospective pays tribute to the legendary concert promoter who launched the careers of countless iconic acts in the 1960s at his famed Fillmore Auditorium and transformed the way audiences experience music as a force for fostering community.

About the Artists:

Thursday, July 23: **La Chiva Gantiva** (Los Angeles debut)

Led by wildly energetic frontman **Rafael Espinel**, Brussels-based, six-piece ensemble **La Chiva Gantiva** blends Afro-Colombian rhythms with rock, Afrobeat, Latin music, and funk. Making their L.A. debut at the Skirball, the group—whose members hail from Colombia, Belgium, France, and Vietnam—play what the *Guardian* has

described as “frantic, good-time music,” punctuated by driving percussion, Spanish rap, and exuberant horn riffs.

La Chiva Gantiva has toured worldwide, including appearances at Jazz à Vienne, Montreal International Jazz Festival, Roskilde, and WOMAD. The group released their latest album, *Vivo*, in 2014.

Thursday, July 30: Bassekou Kouyaté and Ngoni Ba

In under a decade, Malian musician **Bassekou Kouyaté** has established himself as one of Africa’s premier global artists, appearing at Glastonbury, Roskilde, and WOMAD festivals in support of three critically acclaimed albums. His phenomenal musicality, highlighted in collaborations with artists such as Toumani Diabaté and Taj Mahal, has earned him a Grammy nomination and two BBC Radio 3 Awards. Kouyaté’s 2013 album, *Jama ko*, was produced by Howard Bilerman (Arcade Fire) and was named best world music album of the year by *Mojo* and *Uncut*.

A master of the *ngoni*, an ancient traditional “spike lute” and ancestor of the banjo, Kouyaté has brought traditional Malian folk music to a new level with his latest release, *Ba Power*, which incorporates propulsive rock rhythms, distortion, and wah pedal. The *Daily Telegraph* notes, “Kouyaté has updated the dry-gut plucking of the traditional *ngoni* ... creating an extraordinary array of sounds from a spindly metallic plinking to a grinding bluesy roar.”

Kouyaté will be accompanied on stage by his band, **Ngoni Ba**. The performance will also feature guest vocals by Kouyaté’s wife, **Amy Sacko**.

Thursday, August 6: Hurray for the Riff Raff

Americana band **Hurray for the Riff Raff** is led by Bronx-born, Puerto Rican frontwoman **Alynda Lee Segarra**, who grew up in the New York punk scene but currently calls New Orleans home. Segarra drew public attention in 2012 with Hurray for the Riff Raff’s debut album, *Look Out Mama*. Earning raves from National Public Radio, *New York Times*, *Mojo*, and *Paste*, the album was further propelled by a breakout performance at the 2013 Newport Folk Festival.

Through husky, powerhouse vocals and beautifully crafted songs, Segarra celebrates and reimagines American roots music, blending gritty Delta blues, rootsy Appalachian folk, country, rock, and pop. The result is at once timeless and contemporary, a unique stamp on the American folk tradition. Hurray for the Riff Raff’s most recent album, *Small Town Heroes*, was named by *Rolling Stone* as one of the fifty best albums of 2014.

Thursday, August 13: Aurelio

Born in the tiny hamlet of Plaplaya, on the Caribbean coast of Honduras, **Aurelio** belongs to one of the last generations to grow up steeped in Garifuna tradition. This tradition encompasses the African and Caribbean Indian roots of his ancestors, a group of shipwrecked slaves who intermarried with local natives on the island of St. Vincent, only to be deported to the Central American coast in the late eighteenth century. Aurelio’s music is equal parts joyous, seductive, beautiful, and bittersweet, weaving West African and Caribbean polyrhythms with lyrics that reflect his pride for the Garifuna way of life. He has collaborated with the most notable names in modern Garifuna music, including Andy Palacio and Ivan Duran.

After recording his first solo album, *Garifuna Soul*, in 2004, Aurelio served as a representative to the Honduran National Congress, the first person of African descent to do so. Devoted to using his music as a way of supporting and promoting Garifuna culture, he has successfully straddled the worlds of art and politics. Aurelio’s latest release, *Lándini*, was praised by the *Guardian* for its “easy swaying rhythms” and “impassioned vocals.”

Thursday, August 20: Yuval Ron Ensemble

Born in Israel and currently based in Los Angeles, **Yuval Ron** is known for his intensely moving and adventurous pan-Middle Eastern music, incorporating elements of Armenian, Levantine, Arabic, Bedouin, Sephardic, and Roma musical styles to create a fusion that is both deeply traditional and boldly innovative. As a film composer, Yuval scored the music for the Oscar-winning short film *West Bank Story* (2005). He was also the featured artist at the gala concert for the Dalai Lama–led initiative Seeds of Compassion at the Seattle Opera Hall in 2008.

Formed in 1999, the **Yuval Ron Ensemble** includes Jewish, Christian, and Muslim artists who strive to create musical bridges between people of diverse faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Music from the ensemble's three albums has been featured on National Public Radio's *Echoes* and *Hearts of Space* programs. Committed to teaching and mentoring young students, the Yuval Ron Ensemble has served as artists-in-residence at Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, UCLA, Seattle University, and Middlebury College.

At Sunset Concerts 2015, the Yuval Ron Ensemble will perform "My Heart Is in the East: Mystical Music and Dance of the Hebrew Tribes," a concert program that celebrates the rich Jewish cultures of Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, and Israel, from ecstatic Kabbalistic Hebrew dances to fiery Sephardic-Andalusi songs. Performing with the ensemble will be Moroccan-Israeli vocalist **Elinor Sitrish** and sacred dance artist **Mayaya**.

Thursday, August 27: Novalima

Peru's **Novalima** blends folkloric Afro-Peruvian rhythms with reggae, dub, salsa, hip-hop, Afrobeat, electronica, and Cuban *son*. Founded in 2001 by four friends from Lima with a shared passion for both traditional Afro-Peruvian music and modern DJ culture, Novalima has since recorded four albums and performed at festivals and venues around the world. In 2009, the group received a Latin Grammy nomination for best alternative album, and in 2010, their song "Machete" was featured in Robert Rodriguez's hit movie of the same name.

From their humble start—the debut album was produced in separate countries at the dawn of the internet—Novalima has coalesced into a musical force praised worldwide for breaking boundaries and uniting seemingly irreconcilable genres, communities, and generations. At the Skirball, the ensemble will perform material from their newest album, *Planetario*, set for release this year.

Editors, please note:

2015 SUNSET CONCERTS
Skirball Cultural Center

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049 (310) 440-4500 • skirball.org

FREE ADMISSION; no reservations
Limited seating on a first-come, first-served basis

Sunset Concerts parking: \$10 per car (cash only). Carpooling is encouraged. Street parking is strictly prohibited. Or take Metro Rapid 734.

SCHEDULE:

All concerts begin at 8:00 p.m., doors open at 7:00 p.m.

La Chiva Gantiva—Thursday, July 23 (Los Angeles debut)

Bassekou Kouyaté and Ngoni Ba—Thursday, July 30

Hurray for the Riff Raff—Thursday, August 6

Aurelio—Thursday, August 13

Yuval Ron Ensemble—Thursday, August 20

Novalima—Thursday, August 27

All Skirball exhibitions (except Noah's Ark) are free and open until 10:00 p.m. during Sunset Concerts, including *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution*, *The Singing Posters: Poetry Sound Collage Sculpture Book: Allen Ginsberg's Howl by Allen Ruppersberg*, and *Rock & Roll Billboards of the Sunset Strip*.

Zeidler's Café's dinner buffet starts at 6:00 p.m. Reservations are required and can be made starting two weeks prior to the Thursday evening concert by calling (310) 440-4575. Lighter fare can be purchased at Zeidler's Cart.

Guests may bring their own food.

Note: No outside alcoholic beverages or chairs are permitted.

THE 2015 SUNSET CONCERTS ARE MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY:

Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles
Hotel Angeleno
Los Angeles County Arts Commission
PepsiCo
US Bank

MEDIA SPONSORS:

KCRW 89.9 FM
KPFK 90.7 FM

About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is dedicated to exploring the connections between 4,000 years of Jewish heritage and the vitality of American democratic ideals. It welcomes and seeks to inspire people of every ethnic and cultural identity. Guided by our respective memories and experiences, together we aspire to build a society in which all of us can feel at home. The Skirball Cultural Center achieves its mission through educational programs that explore literary, visual, and performing arts from around the world; through the display and interpretation of its permanent collections and changing exhibitions; through an interactive family destination inspired by the Noah's Ark story; and through outreach to the community.

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: \$10 General; \$7 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$5 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.

###