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Updated

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**OPERA STAR *DENYCE GRAVES* (9/10), ILLINOIS SENATOR
BARACK OBAMA (9/11) AND RADIO LEGEND *GARRISON KEILLOR* (9/12)
AMONG THE MANY GUEST PERFORMERS IN**

MILLENNIUM PARK'S "BLOCKBUSTER WEEKEND"

"Blockbuster Weekend" features free performances by Lyric Opera of Chicago,
Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Steppenwolf Theatre Company

The Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park will be home to **free** public programs by three of the world's most renowned performing arts institutions - Lyric Opera of Chicago, members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Steppenwolf Theatre Company - during the first "Blockbuster Weekend," September 10-12, 2005.

"Millennium Park is truly a world-class venue. There could be no better place to showcase our city's world-class performing arts organizations," said Mayor Richard M. Daley. "We are very pleased to present these programs free of charge for the people of Chicago and our visitors."

"Millennium Park is an incredible center of creativity for the people of Chicago, the city's many artists, and its visitors from all over the world. We are exceptionally proud of our 'Blockbuster Weekend' in September where visitors to the Park will be able to experience our city's artistic gems, along with their many talented guests, during free public performances," said Millennium Park Executive Director Helen Doria.

Lyric Opera of Chicago

The weekend will begin with the **Lyric Opera of Chicago** concert at 7:30pm on Saturday, September 10 featuring the Lyric Opera Orchestra led by **John Mauceri**, music director of the Pittsburgh Opera and principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Internationally acclaimed opera stars, including **Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Denyce Graves, Nathan Gunn, Matthew Polenzani, Sondra Radvanovsky** and **Andrea Rost**, will perform a spectacular selection of beloved arias and ensembles. (Graves, D'Arcangelo, and Rost will star in Lyric's season-opening production of Carmen.) The roster also includes Nicole Cabell, the Lyric Opera Center alumna who recently won the main prize of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in Wales.

The Lyric Opera of Chicago concert is made possible through the support of Sears, Roebuck and Co. and The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, with additional funding from the Recording Industries Music Performance Trust Funds through the Chicago Federation of Musicians.

"We are delighted to present our first free concert in Millennium Park to open the city's 'Blockbuster Weekend,'" said William Mason, general director of Lyric Opera of Chicago. "The four free 'Stars of Lyric Opera at Grant Park' concerts that we presented beginning in 2000 were extraordinarily popular, attracting audiences of up to 30,000, and we look forward to debuting in this exciting new venue."

Millennium Park Blockbuster Weekend/ADD ONE

Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

"Blockbuster Weekend" continues with a *9/11 tribute concert* on Sunday, September 11 at 4pm featuring members of the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** led by conductor **William Eddins**. The concert program includes William Schuman's arrangement of Charles Ives' Variations on *America*, Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. **Illinois Senator Barack Obama** will serve as narrator for *Lincoln Portrait*, Copland's musical tribute to our nation's 16th President.

The concert is presented by the Citadel Group Foundation.

"Millennium Park has been such an important addition to Chicago, a highly visible reminder of the significance of the arts and culture in our city," said CSO Association President Deborah R. Card. "The members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra are very happy to have this opportunity to return to the Pritzker Pavilion for two free performances for residents of Chicago and visitors from around the world. We are delighted to be included in a line-up of great Chicago arts institutions as part of Millennium Park's Blockbuster Weekend."

Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Traffic Series

Steppenwolf Theatre Company's *Traffic* series closes the weekend on Monday, September 12 at 6:30pm with a performance of Studs Terkel's *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* directed by Steppenwolf Artistic Associate Jessica Thebus. The performance will feature Steppenwolf ensemble members **Robert Brueler, K. Todd Freeman, and Sally Murphy**; along with **Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Jeff Dumas, Kurt Elling, Ernest Perry, Mary Ann Thebus, and Dennis Zacek** and special guest **Garrison Keillor**. The concert-style reading will use music to illuminate Studs' poignant book of interviews on life and death.

"Steppenwolf is enormously proud to present the work of Studs Terkel, one of Chicago's most beloved writers in the splendor of Millennium Park," said Martha Lavey, Steppenwolf's Artistic Director. "This rich intersection of the arts and public space is surely one of Chicago's great accomplishments and joys."

Steppenwolf's *Traffic* series provides an intimate and unique intersection of language, lyrics, poetry and music, creating a fresh perspective on expressing the American story.

About Millennium Park

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 Nichols, Piet Oudolf and Robert Israel; and Anish Kapoor's hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture.

Millennium Park will be partially closed for a private event on Thursday, September 8.

For more information about Millennium Park or the "Blockbuster Weekend," please visit www.millenniumpark.org or call 312-742-1168.

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For press information on the Lyric Opera of Chicago concert in Millennium Park, please contact: Magda Krance, mkrance@lyricopera.org, 312-827-5924

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