



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 10, 2008

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OMAHA SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL PARTNERSHIPS YIELD UNPRECEDENTED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

The 34th annual Omaha Summer Arts Festival presented by First National Bank will fill the streets along downtown Omaha's Gene Leahy Mall with three days of art, music, children's activities, food and more. Previously selected as Omaha's Best Annual Festival and one of the Top 100 Fine Arts Festivals in the country, the Festival was named one of 2007's Top 100 Events in North America by the American Bus Association - the only event in Nebraska to receive this honor in 2007.

Scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 27, 28 and 29, the Festival offers an exciting weekend of fun for the whole family. General Festival hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

This year's Festival will have a distinctive Cajun flavor thanks to the New Orleans-based Hot 8 Brass Band. The band will lead several "Second Line" parades throughout the Festival grounds and will be Saturday's headliner on the Luigi Waites Pavilion Stage.

Second Line parades are the descendants of New Orleans' famous jazz funerals and carry many of the same traditions. Today, the parades are not tied to any particular event, holiday or commemoration; rather, they are generally held for their own sake and to let the good times roll.

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Hot 8 will appear at the Summer Arts Festival as part of an arts collaboration with Omaha Performing Arts, the non-profit organization which manages the Orpheum Theater and the Holland Performing Arts Center, and Film Streams, a non-profit organization devoted to the presentation and discussion of film as an art form.

In addition to workshops and parades, the members of Hot 8 will perform in the Cox Music and Movies series at the Holland Center on Friday night and participate in a Q&A session following a showing of *When the Levees Broke* at Film Streams. This Spike Lee film, which featured the band Hot 8 and originally appeared on HBO, explores the events that preceded and followed Katrina's catastrophic passage through New Orleans.

The Artists' Market

With beautiful artwork from 135 juried artists available to browse and buy, the public will enjoy strolling the Festival's nationally ranked Artists' Market on Farnam from 10th to 15th Streets. Participating artists were selected from more than 300 applications by a jury of local and regional art professionals. They will represent 29 states from across the U.S. as well as Canada.

Artwork for purchase will include a broad range of media including two-dimensional and three-dimensional fine art and fine craft. Jewelry, sculpture, photography, painting, fiber and wood are just a few of the types of artwork buyers will have to choose from.

Omaha's ArtSeen

Omaha's ArtSeen offers live artist demonstrations such as clay throwing, blacksmithing, painting, glass bead making and more. Presented in partnership with downtown art galleries and interspersed throughout the Artists' Market, this program provides an informal opportunity for the public to interact face-to-face with local artists. Omaha's ArtSeen will feature a wide range of artist demonstrations provided by local artists affiliated with the Omaha Clay Works, Passageway Gallery, Hot Shops Art Center and the Old Market Artists Gallery.

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Concert Line-Up

The World Music Pavilion, located on 13th Street between Harney and Farnam Streets, will house the Luigi Waites Pavilion Stage and Nebraska Craft Brew Fest. Sponsored by Guinness and Little Black Dress wines, the all-ages Pavilion will offer festival-goers a convenient and fun place to get out of the sun, sit and enjoy great music. *Hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday.*

A full weekend of concerts showcasing a wide variety of musical genres will be presented on the Luigi Waites World Music Pavilion Stage. Highlights will include performances by Chic Gamine, Brave Combo and the Hot 8 Brass Band.

Chic Gamine, a vocal supergroup from Winnipeg's French Quarter, has been singing together in various formations since 1997. With a solo percussionist as their main musical support, Chic Gamine use their voices as instruments, effortlessly launching into intricate string arrangements, bass-heavy rhythm sections and melodious harmonies.

Brave Combo is a Grammy Award-winning polka band with a wide range of influences including jazz, rock, Tex-Mex conjunto, blues, zydeco, classical and more. The Denton, Texas-based band has marched in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, recorded with the late Tiny Tim and played at David Byrne's wedding and for the 200th episode party of *The Simpsons*. Sound unclassifiable? That's the idea according to bandleader Carl Finch. "Our deal is to shake people's ideas about that they label hip, or right or wrong."

The Hot 8 Brass Band will bring the vibrancy and exuberance of the French Quarter to Omaha. The members of Hot 8 were all born and raised in New Orleans; many of them began playing together in high school. In 1995 they began playing traditional New Orleans brass band music professionally.

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The Hot 8 Brass Band is famous for playing all day in the sun, then hopping to a club gig and playing through the night. But even more than their boundless energy, what makes Hot 8 special are the sounds they coax from their well-loved, well-worn horns.

Food & Libations

In addition to a full weekend of entertainment on the Luigi Waites Pavilion Stage, the World Music Pavilion will offer Smirnoff Ice, Guinness Ale and Little Black Dress wines for purchase. The Pavilion will also host the Nebraska Craft Brew Fest offering 14 different types of beer produced by six Nebraska breweries. *Alcoholic beverages will not be sold until after 4 p.m. on Friday and after 12 p.m. on Sunday.*

Immediately outside the Pavilion, the Taste Fest will feature a variety of cuisines presented by La Mesa Mexican Restaurant, Made 2 Grill, Papa John's Genuine Greek Foods, RoRo's Concessions, Texas Roadhouse and Valentino's. Of course, all of the traditional Festival favorites such as kettle corn, roasted almonds and shaved ice, will also be available for purchase.

Festival Cafés will round out the dining options at the event. Interspersed within the Artists' Market, the HyVee Family Café will offer family-style picnic entrees, the Whole Foods Market Natural Café will feature healthy wraps and sandwiches and the Wine & Cheese Café will offer a delectable array of fresh cheese and cracker plates paired with Little Black Dress wines. New this year, the O Casual Dining café will feature Asian American fusion cuisine.

Children's Fair & Young Artist Exhibition

In keeping with the Festival's New Orleans flavor, "*Arti-Gras!*" is the theme of this year's Omaha Summer Arts Festival Children's Fair. Presented in the heart of the Festival at Farnam and 11th Streets, the Children's Fair will offer dozens of hands-on activities and art projects for kids ages three to 10 years old. *Hours for the Children's Fair are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.*

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Admission to the Children's Fair, all of the stage entertainment and several of the activities are free. Tickets for the remaining hands-on crafts and other activities are 50 cents each, with most activities costing two to four tickets.

The Festival's 13th annual Young Artist Exhibition will take place at two venues. The work of high school students will be displayed at the Artists' Cooperative Gallery, 405 S. 11th Street, and the work of middle school students will be exhibited in the Michael Phipps Gallery of the W. Dale Clark Library, 215 S. 15th Street. Both exhibitions will be presented on Saturday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

More than 300 pieces of artwork created by students in grades six through 12 will be displayed. Senior scholarships, recognition awards, art supplies and prizes will be presented at a special Young Artist Exhibition Recognition Brunch on Saturday, June 28.

Sponsor Recognition and More Information

The 34th Annual Omaha Summer Arts Festival presented by First National Bank is sponsored by Target, Qwest and KETV Channel 7. Additional supporters of the Festival include Douglas County Board of Commissioners, 1110 KFAB, KGOR 99.9 FM, The Brew 96.1 and KAT 103, RDG Planning & Design, Hy-Vee Food Stores, Guinness, Republic Beverage Distribution, Omaha Steaks, Pepsi Bottling Group, Burlington Capital Group, Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Lottery, Omaha Public Power District, Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc., Creighton Medical Associates, CBSHOME Real Estates, Fresh Pet, HearthStone Homes, Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition, PayPal, Whole Foods Market Omaha, Little Black Dress Wines, Planet Earth Distilled Drinking Water, *The Reader*, The Mammel Foundation, It's A Wonderful World Childcare Centers and Oriental Trading Company. The Festival is professionally managed by Vic Gutman & Associates.

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The official Omaha Summer Arts Festival program will appear as a pull-out supplement to the June 19th edition of *The Reader* distributed in restaurants and retail locations throughout Omaha-Council Bluffs and Lincoln. The Festival will also be featured in a four-page special section printed as part of the *Omaha World-Herald's* Go Mag on Thursday, June 26. For additional information on the Festival, including a variety of sidebar stories, downloadable images and complete stage schedules, please visit **www.SummerArts.org**.

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