

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

525 Arch Street | Independence Mall
Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650
www.constitutioncenter.org

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CONTACT: Ashley Berke
Senior Public Relations Manager
215.409.6693
aberke@constitutioncenter.org

VISITORS CELEBRATE MUSIC AND DANCE AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER DURING SPRING BREAK *Special Discount Package Available for Month of April*

Philadelphia, PA (March 13, 2009) – This spring, visitors to the National Constitution Center can celebrate music and dance during the ***America I AM: Voices of Freedom Festival***. Visitors can join in the fun during Motown karaoke, learn the history of famous Blues pieces in the “Blues 101” show, read famous works of poetry, and enjoy musical performances throughout the week. Beginning on Saturday, April 4 and continuing through Saturday, April 18, 2009, performances will take place between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on the Center’s Grand Hall Overlook. For one price, guests can visit the Center multiple times during the month in order to see all of the exciting performances. Visitors will receive unlimited admission to the Center, including admission to the *America I AM: The African America Imprint* exhibition, as well as a 10% discount at the Museum Store and Delegates’ Café. The unlimited admission rates are \$25 for adults, \$10 for children, and \$20 for seniors.

Triumph Baptist Church Mass Choir and Praise & Dance Ministry and **Georgie “The Blacksmith” Bonds** will kick off the Spring Break series on Saturday, April 4. The Triumph Baptist Choir will present selections of traditional gospel music along with a praise dance performance. In addition, Philadelphia-born Georgie Bonds will give a special blues performance. After spending fifteen years as a blacksmith, Georgie Bonds began singing the blues in 1990. He has shared the stage with legendary blues artists, including Sonny Rhodes, Hubert Sumlin, and Slam Allen.

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ADD ONE/VOICES OF FREEDOM FESTIVAL

On Thursday, April 9, hip hop dance group **Chosen** and the **Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble** will perform. Founded in 2001, Chosen Dance Company has performed in festivals across the country and around the world. Most recently, several members of Chosen appeared on MTV's "America's Best Dance Crew" as members of Phresh Select, the crew representing Philadelphia. Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble will also perform, presenting traditional West African drumming and choreography. In addition to being accomplished dancers and drummers, members of the UAD ensemble showcase stilt-walking and martial-arts skills.

United Community Center's **Royal Brass Band** will perform traditional New Orleans-style selections on Friday, April 10. The band participated in the New Orleans rebuilding project, post-Hurricane Katrina, through both community efforts and the gift of song.

Arpeggio Jazz Ensemble will perform on Saturday, April 11. Known worldwide for their traditional and original Afro-centric jazz compositions, the Ensemble is famous for rousing audiences with their catchy beats and unique poetry-with-jazz collaborations.

On Friday, April 17, visitors won't want to miss the **Young Lions Jazz Trio**. Performing traditional jazz numbers, these young men have appeared at the African American Museum in Philadelphia, on NBC's "10! Show," and at the Mann Center for Performing Arts.

Wrapping up the *Voices of Freedom Festival* on Sunday, April 18, are **Andy Aaron's Mean Machine** and **Freedom Theatre Company**. Founded by trumpeter Andy Aaron in 1969, the Mean Machine has been a proving ground for some of Philadelphia's most influential R&B musicians. The Freedom Theatre Company, the oldest African-American theatre group in Philadelphia, will perform gospel selections.

From January 15 through May 3, 2009, the National Constitution Center is hosting the world debut of *America I AM: The African American Imprint*, celebrating nearly 500 years of African American contributions to this country. The exhibition presents a historical

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ADD TWO/VOICES OF FREEDOM FESTIVAL

continuum of pivotal moments in courage, conviction, and creativity that solidifies the undeniable imprint of African Americans across the nation and around the world.

Featuring more than 200 artifacts culled from every period of U.S. history, the exhibit includes objects, texts, religion, music, narration, and media. An interactive component of the exhibition allows visitors to leave their own video “imprints,” and this collection will grow throughout the life of the exhibition with the potential to become the largest recorded oral history project in U.S. history.

The exhibition is developed in partnership with Tavis Smiley, and organized by Cincinnati Museum Center and Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI). *America I AM* is made possible by Walmart Stores, Inc., which serves as its presenting sponsor. The exhibition is sponsored by Northern Trust and is presented locally by Coca-Cola. CBS 3 is the official media partner for the Center’s showing of *America I AM*.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia’s Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, “Freedom Rising”. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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