



Office of General Services

For Immediate Release: 06/1/2016

Contact:

Heather Groll | heather.groll@ogs.ny.gov | (518) 474-5987

OGS CELEBRATES REOPENING OF GRAND STAIRCASE WITH 2016 AT THE PLAZA SUMMER SERIES LINEUP ANNOUNCEMENT

New York State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito today announced major reconstruction of the State Cultural Education Staircase has been completed on schedule and right in time for the start of the Summer At The Plaza series of concerts and events. Concert and event goers will once again be able to sit on the stairs and enjoy shows on the main stage at the south end of the Plaza.

“The staircase project was a major undertaking, and the OGS staff and contractors who worked on it are to be applauded for getting the job done and making the steps safe and secure for years to come,” Commissioner Destito said. “Although the thousands of people who came out to our free Summer At The Plaza events last year enjoyed the great entertainment, delicious food, and the region’s best fireworks show at New York State’s 4th of July Celebration presented by Price Chopper and Market 32, we know people will appreciate having the steps back. They are the perfect place to sit while listening to the great music and viewing the amazing pyrotechnics display on Independence Day.”

“We commend the Office of General Services for the great work their staff has done to complete the Grand Staircase project,” said State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. “Now the public will again be able to enjoy the staircase during their visit to the State Museum, Library, and Archives and the Empire State Plaza.”

“One of New York State’s most significant examples of architecture is whole again.” said State Museum Director Mark Schaming. “With the opening of the Empire State Plaza staircase as summer begins, the many thousands of visitors to the city and Plaza can fully experience the great programs, art, and architecture here. We congratulate OGS for leading this important project that restored this grand flight and provides a spectacular place for visitors during their visit to the State Museum and the Empire State Plaza.”

The main focus of the reconstruction project was to completely re-waterproof the Grand Staircase that forms a bridge over Madison Avenue. This was a 40-year-old structure that leaked at the expansion joints at the top where it connects to the Cultural Education Center and at the bottom where it connects to the Plaza.

The work, which began after the staircase was fenced off on July 11, 2014, involved removing all of the granite steps and exterior marble panels, replacing the waterproofing membrane, flashings, and drainage system, and then resetting all the steps. More than 170 concealed stairway lights were replaced with new energy efficient LED lights, which are expected to reduce energy usage by more than 90 percent. Also, new railings were set into the granite steps.

A real-life jigsaw puzzle, each piece of the staircase was numbered and cataloged so that it could be returned to its original location.

Capital Concert Series presented by New York State Craft Breweries

Wednesday, June 15, 5 – 9 p.m. Jazz Night, Featuring Rachelle Ferrell and Cyrus Chestnut

Having sung backup for Lou Rawls, Patti LaBelle, Vanessa Williams, and George Duke, Rachelle Ferrell is now considered one of the most dynamic talents in contemporary pop music, having a potent combination of range, phrasing, and musicianship. Although Ferrell has captured the jazz public's attention as a vocalist, she continues to compose and write songs on piano and violin. Cyrus Chestnut has earned a reputation as a jazz pianist for his skillful versatility, his ability for blending sounds, and for unabashedly bringing gospel into the club performances he gives. He takes jazz very seriously and believes it has great staying power. With opening act: Out of the Box.

Wednesday, June 29, 5 – 9 p.m. Legendary Sons Night, Featuring Shooter Jennings and Devon Allman

The only son of country legends Waylon Jennings and Jessi Colter, Shooter Jennings spent his childhood on a tour bus. Jennings has worn many hats throughout his career: the self-described “son of a rebel saint,” is known for his forays as a singer-songwriter into country music, country rock, and psychedelic rock. With opening acts: Devon Allman, son of famed musician Gregg Allman, and The Mallett Brothers, which features the sons of David Mallett of the original Mallett Brothers.

Wednesday, July 6, 5 – 9 p.m., Reggae Night, Featuring Beres Hammond

Over the course of a 40-year career, Beres Hammond has poured his smoky-sweet voice — an instrument of subtlety and power reminiscent of an Otis Redding or a Teddy Pendergrass — over every kind of reggae and dancehall track, from the funky-up reggae jams of the '70s fusion band Zap Pow to the lush instrumentation of his 1976 album “Soul Reggae,” to the spare digital beat of his 1985 dancehall breakthrough “What One Dance Can Do.” Performing with Hammond are DJ Inferno and The Harmony House Singers. With opening act: The Big Takeover.

Wednesday, July 13, 5 – 9 p.m., Classic Rock Night, Featuring Blood, Sweat and Tears featuring Bo Bice & Dylan Elise

Like a great baseball team, the members of Blood Sweat and Tears change, but the soul lives on. Though many wonderful musicians have passed through BS&T, the musicianship stands the test of time. With hits such as “You’ve Made Me So Very Happy,” and “Spinning Wheel,” BS&T is considered one of the hottest touring acts in the world. The band now features Bo Bice of “American Idol” fame as the lead singer. With opening act: Super 400.

Wednesday, July 20, 5 – 9 p.m., Rhythm & Blues Night, featuring Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears

Austin-based Black Joe Lewis is a contemporary singer and guitarist with a bent toward vintage blues, soul, and R&B. Backed by his band the Honeybears, Lewis draws inspiration from such legendary “shouters” as Howlin’ Wolf, Wilson Pickett, and James Brown. With opening act: Sonny Knight and the Lakers.

Sponsors of the Capital Concert Series include NYS Craft Breweries, County Waste, SEFCU, Times Union, Hot 99.1, 88.3 The Saint, and PYX 106.

Summer at the Plaza 2016 Festivals

Monday, July 4, 3 – 10 p.m.

Price Chopper and Market 32 Presents the New York State 4th of July Celebration starring the Boogie Wonder Band.

Price Chopper and Market 32 has presented this Albany tradition since our country's bicentennial celebration in 1976. The annual event features live music and fun for the whole family, including the best fireworks show in the region. Each year, more than 30,000 people gather to enjoy the day at the Plaza, which includes a naturalization ceremony, dozens of food and craft vendors, activities for kids, and an evening of live entertainment leading up to the big pyrotechnics show.

The Boogie Wonder Band is on the forefront of neo-funk-and-disco bands that capture the horn-fired sounds and hedonistic fun of the '70s. With spectacular costumes and a very solid set of musicians, the Boogie Wonder Band considers itself the most disco-loving band in all the land.

Sponsors include Price Chopper and Market 32, I Love New York, New York Lottery, New York Power Authority, Watkins Glen International, and Times Union.

Saturday, July 9, Noon – 5 p.m.

Kids Day starring Choo Choo Soul

Kids Day is this area's "kid-centric" outdoor event. Nowhere else can children enjoy an array of favorites such as live music, face painting, bounce rides, puppet shows, arts and crafts, and balloons, in addition to the Two by Two Zoo, the Roaming Railroad, John Keal Musical Instrument Petting Zoo, Touch a Truck, and more all in one place.

This year's fun also includes Choo Choo Soul. Imagine parents honestly being able to enjoy the music that their children enjoy. Imagine soulful and current renditions of the ABCs, 1-2-3s, and learning how to be polite. Imagine a diverse, and incredibly hip duo, teaching children through music on an animated train ... and Choo-Choo Soul is born. Join the Choo Choo Soul gang as they perform songs from classic Disney films, such as "Under the Sea," "Supercalifragalistic," "Let's Go Fly A Kite," "When You Wish Upon a Star," and many more.

Sponsors include New York State of Health, Watkins Glen International, New York 529 College Savings Program, and MVP Health Care.

Saturday, August 6, 2 – 7 p.m.

The Black Arts and Cultural Festival presented by McDonald's starring Sounds of Blackness

Presented by McDonald's, the Black Arts and Cultural Festival, formerly African American Family Day, is an updated take on a classic celebration of the traditions and cultural contributions of the black community through music, art, dance, and more. In addition to an exciting lineup of talent on the main stage, the festival will feature five destination areas highlighting themes such as heritage, health & wellness, arts & ideas, and empowerment; a satellite art display of the Albany Center Gallery; and a kids' zone.

Grammy-winning Sounds of Blackness performs and proclaims the music, culture, and history of African Americans to audiences all over the world. From jazz and blues to rock & roll, R&B,

gospel, spirituals, hip hop, reggae and soul, the group colors each and every “Sound of Blackness” with uplifting messages of hope, unity, love and peace for all humankind. The festival will also feature performances by the Jubilee Gospel Community Choir, Scholastic Talent Showcase winners, Wassa Pan Afrika dance, and a Def Poetry Jam Reunion with Danny Simmons.

Sponsors include McDonald’s, New York 529 College Savings Program, New York State of Health, SONYMA, Price Chopper and Market 32, and Hot 99.1

Wednesday, August 10, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m.

New York State Food Festival starring The Commodores

With nearly 100 food vendors to choose from, 15,000 people annually flock to the Plaza Food Festival for lunch, dinner, or both. They come for the food and stay for a day of live musical entertainment. The Food Festival showcases New York producers and specialty products, New York State beers, and the popular Empire State Plaza Farmers Market.

One of the greatest Motown and R&B/funk artists of all time, The Commodores’ Walter “Clyde” Orange, James Dean “JD” Nicholas, and William “WAK” King have influenced artists young and old and in all genres with their classic songs, including “Brick House,” “Three Times A Lady,” “Easy,” “Sail On,” and “Nightshift.” Grammy winners and Vocal Group Hall of Fame inductees with over 75 million albums sold, seven #1 singles, five #1 albums, and 20 Top 10 singles, The Commodores’ brand is bigger than ever as they continue to blaze trails all over the world.

Sponsors include I Love NY, New York Lottery, Geico, Times Union, and 98.3 WTRY.

Saturday, September 10, 5 – 10 p.m.

Hispanic Heritage Celebration starring Michael Stuart

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with this tribute to Latin culture. Rich in tradition, the Hispanic community comes together in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center for a colorful pageantry of live music, dance, food, and family friendly activities.

From a young age, salsa singer Michael Stuart was influenced by his uncle, bandleader Israel “Timbalero” Stuart, and his father’s love for music. Playing together at home with his mentors, Stuart became familiar with the percussion instruments and melodies that laid the groundwork for modern salsa music. His debut disc “Cuentos de la Vecindad” earned him the Tu Musica Award for Best New Artist in 1997. Career highlights include a 2005 Latin Grammy nomination for Best Tropical-Contemporary Album and nominations for Billboard Music Awards in both 2006 and 2007. The festival will also feature performances by DJ Boy Boy, Luis Damon, and Judy Torres.

Sponsors include New York 529 College Savings Program, and the New York State of Health.

Capitol Park After Dark Movie Series

Outdoor movie nights return to Albany in August, featuring films suitable for the entire family in West Capitol Park.

- **“Big Hero 6,” Wednesday, August 17, 8 p.m.**

“Big Hero 6” is an action-packed comedy adventure that introduces Baymax, a lovable, personal companion robot, who forms a special bond with robotics prodigy Hiro Hamada. When a devastating turn of events catapults them into the midst of a dangerous plot unfolding in the streets of San Fransokyo, Hiro turns to Baymax and his

diverse group of friends— adrenaline junkie Go Go Tomago, neatnik Wasabi, chemistry whiz Honey Lemon and fanboy Fred — who transform into a band of unlikely heroes.

- **“Gaslight,” Wednesday, August 24, 8 p.m.**

In this 1940s mystery-thriller starring Charles Boyer, Ingrid Bergman, and Joseph Cotton, a young woman moves back with her new husband into the house her aunt was murdered in years ago. However, he has a secret that he will do anything to protect, even if it means driving his wife insane.

- **“The Wizard of Oz,” Wednesday, August 31, 8 p.m.**

Although “there’s no place like home,” it will be worth the visit to West Capitol Park to view this magical, colorful, unique fantasy that has melted hearts for more than seven decades with its indelible melodies and timeless themes. The movie stars Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, Bert Lahr, Frank Morgan, Billie Burke, and Margaret Hamilton.

All of the Summer *At The Plaza* events are FREE. During weeknight At the Plaza events, free parking in the East Garage begins at 4 p.m. Paid parking is also available at the visitor or V lot underneath the plaza.

No alcoholic beverages, coolers (defined as rigid insulated containers), or glass containers of any kind; animals or pets (excludes ADA-defined service animals) will be allowed. Alcohol will be served by vendors to adults with proper identification.

For event updates and additional information on opening acts, people can follow @plazaevents on Twitter, visit Empire State Plaza on facebook, or call (518) 474-4759. For additional information, including ground rules, visit our website at www.empirestateplaza.org.

###