



## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### ***FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE FRICK PRESENTS***

#### **BABATUNDE LEA**

***Concert Features Jazz/World Music Drummer***

**Date/time:** Friday, July 3 at 7:00 p.m.

**Admission:** A donation of \$5 per adult is suggested

PITTSBURGH, PA, June 19, 2009— The second concert in the 2009 season of *First Fridays at the Frick* provides an opportunity for concert-goers to spend a summer evening under the stars enjoying good friends and delicious food in one of Pittsburgh's most glorious outdoor settings—the great lawn at the Frick Art & Historical Center.

Performing at the Frick on Friday, July 3, percussionist Babatunde Lea has been described as “one of those old souls—wise and serene, deeply in touch with spiritual essences, blessed with a culturally diverse perspective, and bubbling over with ideas and creative energies that strongly suggest he’s been this way before.” Lea will be joined by Pittsburgh musicians, Jay Willis on tenor sax, Howard Alexander on piano, and Dan Wasson on bass, Lea will mesmerize you with a combination of home-grown jazz and world rhythms.

Lea has forged a career steeped in the rhythms of the motherland of Africa and its Caribbean and South American diaspora. At eleven years of age, he attended a concert by African master drummer Babatunde Olatunji that “rocked his world,” placing his heart and soul squarely in

West Africa. His parents listened to Afro-Caribbean music at home, adding another layer to the rich and deep roots of Lea's music. Raised in New York City and Englewood, New Jersey, he migrated westward during the late 1960s to the San Francisco Bay area, where he was further immersed in global rhythms.

Now an established session musician and performer, Lea offers an African-inspired jazz journey with his mastery of trap drums and hand percussion. *San Francisco Weekly* has honored him with its Best Jazz Musician award, and he's been named First Place prizewinner of the prestigious "Adventurous Programming" Award from Chamber Music America/ASCAP. *Jazz Times* calls his music "a wonderful tapestry of richly woven textures held together by the woof and warp of drums and percussion. The band clicks like magic with an impressive level of communication and understanding."

Critical and popular raves were universal for Lea's 2003 Motéma release "Soul Pools," which gained top ten Jazz radio status. "'Soul' is the operative word," wrote *Downbeat* magazine, which rated "Soul Pools" with four stars. "What you get is highly disciplined, tightly arranged, soulful post-bop that's propelled, rather than ruled, by its leader's formidable technique," comments the *LA Weekly*. In his 2005 CD "Suite Unseen," his third release on Motéma and his fifth as a leader, Lea reaches a new level of musicality and spiritual power. "I'm not a religious man, but I do believe in spirit, that it intervenes in our lives in mysterious ways," he states in the album notes. Selections from Lea's critically acclaimed CDs will be featured in the Frick concert.

Asked to detail his overall career philosophy, Babatunde eagerly divulges that he draws from African culture, especially the fact that music is functional. "In African life music accompanies everything. The music can put you in a space to make you learn a lot, to open you up. Once you're open and energized, then you can start building things to make the world a better place. Music is like oil and water: it does the bidding of who controls it; it has the power to open you up but it doesn't direct where you're gonna go once you're open." The music of Babatunde Lea will open you up to its spiritual quest in a way you will find both stimulating to the body and inspiring for the mind.

Lea's quest is not restricted to the bandstand. Since 1993, he and spouse Dr. Virginia Lea have operated the nonprofit Edu-cultural Foundation. "We established our foundation to sow seeds of change, to better ourselves and our communities. We teach critical thinking about social and cultural issues through the arts, to empower students and educators to build communities and reach their educational and socio-economic goals."

**Babatunde Lea performs at 7:00 p.m. on the grounds of the Frick Art & Historical Center.**

A donation of \$5 per adult is suggested. Guests are invited to come early and create a gourmet picnic with selections from the award-winning Café at the Frick, which begins serving at 5:30 p.m.

The Frick Art Museum, the Museum Shop and the Car and Carriage Museum remain open until 10:00 p.m. on the evening of the performances. Free parking is available in the Frick's off-street lot, or along adjacent neighborhood streets.

This concert is presented with the generous support of **BNY Mellon**.

The Media Sponsor for this concert is **WDUQ 90.5 FM**.

## **UPCOMING CONCERTS**

### ***FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE FRICK***

#### **WAILING SOULS**

**Friday, August 7, 2009**

The legendary Wailing Souls are part of the small surviving group of reggae and roots originators still musically active today. They emerged from the same Trenchtown yards in Kingston, Jamaica, as Bob Marley, Joe Higgs and other reggae icons of the late 1960s and early '70s. The longevity of the veteran band is largely due to its ability to adapt without a compromise of vision. The group, which enjoys a huge international following, has garnered three Grammy nominations and has been critically lauded for albums released by Island, Tuff Gong and CBS Records. On their 1992 album *All Over the World*, the group pushed the musical limits of the reggae genre, blending sounds of funk, rhythm & blues and country into their roots tradition and securing their reputations as pioneers in the genre.

***FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE FRICK***  
**MEDIAEVAL BAEBES**  
**Friday, September 4, 2009**

Six talented, attractive women breathe renewed life into the rich texts of medieval songs and poetry, while also offering their distinctive interpretation of Celtic music. The Baebes sing in a variety of medieval languages including French, Spanish, English, Italian, Gaelic, and Swedish.

Although their original music evokes an earlier time, it is accessible to modern audiences. In fact, their hauntingly beautiful sound has so effectively captured their audiences' imagination and devotion that, in the past 10 years, the Baebes have placed three studio albums into the top of the United Kingdom classical charts; performed before enthusiastic audiences in the UK, United States, Canada, and Europe; and received the 2007 Ivor Novello Award for Best Television Soundtrack for their contribution to the BBC production of *The Virgin Queen*.

**GENERAL INFORMATION AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Frick Art & Historical Center is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh's Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick's off-street lot or along adjacent streets. The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday and closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to The Frick Art Museum, Car and Carriage Museum, Greenhouse, and Playhouse is free. Information about the Frick is available online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org). For information and reservations, please call 412-371-0600, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Sunday.

For further information or images, please contact Greg Langel, Media and Marketing Manager in the External Affairs Department at the Frick Art & Historical Center, at 412-371-0600 ext. 524, or [glangel@thefrickpittsburgh.org](mailto:glangel@thefrickpittsburgh.org).

*The Frick Art & Historical Center, a museum, historic site and cultural center serves the public through preservation, presentation, and interpretation of the fine and decorative arts and historically significant artifacts for all residents of and visitors to Western Pennsylvania.*