



Contact:
Aaron Friedman
646/283-4154

makemusicny@gmail.com

JUNE 21 MARKS FIRST ANNUAL “MAKE MUSIC NEW YORK” FESTIVAL
1,200 free concerts planned, spanning all five boroughs of New York City

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2007 — On Thursday, June 21, the first day of summer, Make Music New York will hold its first celebration — an unprecedented festival of some 1,200 free concerts in parks and streets throughout New York City. It will include music of all genres and styles, performed by anyone who wants to take part, enjoyed by everyone who wants to attend.

Around the world, June 21st has become a day of exuberant, participatory music-making. The first “Fête de la Musique” was held in France in 1982, and ever since, it has been celebrated annually on streets and sidewalks across the country. By the year 2000, it had become a vital part of the nation’s cultural life: 97% of the French population was aware of the event, 800,000 performed in it themselves, and 12 million poured into the streets to enjoy the music. Today, more than 300 cities around the world celebrate their own “Make Music” events on June 21st, including Rome, Berlin, Barcelona, Toronto, Buenos Aires, Beijing, Tokyo, Sydney... and starting this year, all five boroughs of New York City.

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Corigliano joined the festival’s Advisory Board after experiencing it in Europe. Says Corigliano, “Make Music New York is a grand celebration honoring all kinds of music. I witnessed such an event last year in Amsterdam, and it brought the entire city together in a wonderful way. Just think how fantastic it will be when it takes place in the greatest city in the world, New York!”

To date, 87 community groups, twelve business improvement districts, and hundreds of individual artists have signed on to produce free concerts on sidewalks, parks, closed streets, and community gardens throughout the city. Performers will include amateurs and professionals, unknowns and rising stars. Large-scale events are planned throughout the city: six blocks of Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg will be devoted to the festival, with a symphonic indie-rock show at McCarren Pool in the evening; both events are produced by JellyNYC. An R&B stage in front of the State Office Building in Harlem, a lunchtime concert at Lincoln Center, a cluster of musical block parties in Queens called “Make Music: Jamaica Funk Style” — all of these events will be part of Make Music New York, and admission to each concert will be free.

Every type of music will mingle on the city streets, from Turkish religious music to underground hip hop. “New York is famous for the diversity of its musicians, and the diversity of its music fans,” says City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “This event will be a great opportunity for our up-and-coming performers to find new audiences, and for New Yorkers to enjoy unique live performances.”

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“Make Music New York gives us a unique occasion to celebrate, inspire, and applaud the diverse talents and musical ingenuity of New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs,” says Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin.

Musicians seeking a place to play — or venues in search of musicians — have until May 1st to sign up with the Make Music organizers at www.makemusicny.org and become part of the festival.

“We would like to acknowledge the indispensable role of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Department of Small Business Services, the Parks Department, the Community Assistance Unit, and the nonprofit Citizens Committee for NYC in making this celebration a reality,” says Aaron Friedman, Make Music’s founder. “With their continuing support, we look forward to turning Make Music New York into a fixture of New York’s cultural calendar.”

Former French Cultural Minister Jack Lang describes the festival as “a realization of another type of society—more friendly, more peaceful and more inventive.” In a similar vein, American folk icon Pete Seeger says simply, “Congratulations on Make Music New York! Get people singing and dancing, with each other.”

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