

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND OTHER RENOWNED ARTISTS TO PERFORM AT 2007 LIBERTY MEDAL CEREMONY AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Performers Connect with Voices for Liberty Theme

Philadelphia, PA (September 18, 2007) – A diverse line-up of artists from Africa will perform at the 2007 Liberty Medal ceremony and gala on Thursday, September 27, 2007, honoring Bono, U2 lead singer and activist, and DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa), the advocacy organization he co-founded to combat poverty and disease in Africa. Each performer has a unique background related to the theme of the event, *Voices for Liberty*.

The African Children's Choir will close the ceremony with a joyful African melody, "Ndya Himbisa," and a familiar American song to encourage audience participation. The world renowned Choir has been working with the most vulnerable children in Africa for 23 years, raising awareness of the plight of the orphaned and abandoned, but also showing the beauty, dignity, and potential of the African child. The African Children's Choir, with a focus on education, is currently caring for several thousand underprivileged children throughout Africa. These are children who could have lost all hope, but have overcome their circumstances and now are making a positive impact on society by being a voice for millions of children suffering in Africa.

To open the ceremony, **Mogauwane Mahloele** of South Africa will perform a traditional African song on the kora, a 21-string harp-lute used extensively in Africa. Mahloele is an activist for social justice issues, and was in exile from his homeland for three decades

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ADD ONE/LIBERTY MEDAL PERFORMERS

before eventually being allowed to return a few years ago. In honor of Bono's heritage, **Morris Goldberg** of Cape Town, South Africa will perform on the Irish penny whistle during the ceremony. **Joshua Stewart**, a tenor from New Orleans who is a third year student at the Curtis Institute of Music, will also perform "Make them Hear You" from *Ragtime*.

In addition, **Zakes Mda** will read a special poem written for the occasion, "Let Them Come with Rain." Mda is an acclaimed South African writer of plays, novels, and poems, who has won every major South African literary prize. He divides his time between South Africa and the United States, working as a professor of creative writing at Ohio University, a beekeeper in the Eastern Cape, a dramaturge at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, and a director of the Southern African Multimedia AIDS Trust in Sophiatown, Johannesburg.

Regional performers **Joe Canuso, Justin Jain, Komal Kapoor, and Chanta Layton** will also present an original dramatic presentation, "Voices for Liberty," which illustrates the power and imperative of raising our voices for liberty, as expressed through the ages in prose, poetry, and song.

Following the ceremony, prominent African singers **Thomas Mapfumo and Sara Tavares** will perform during the Liberty Medal gala.

Thomas Mapfumo was born in Marondera, Zimbabwe. A brilliant songwriter and leader of The Blacks Unlimited, Mapfumo's music and lyrics reflect the concerns of his people, the Shona. In 1979, Mapfumo's politically charged songs were banned from the state-controlled radio and he was sent to a prison camp without charges. A true voice for liberty, he still sings and speaks out about the problems of Zimbabwe.

Singer-songwriter Sara Tavares was born in Cape Verde, a republic located off the western coast of Africa. Her second album, *Mi Ma B*, reached gold in Portugal and was a mix of African rhythms and melodic pop songs. Her new album, *Balance*, was released in February 2006, and features a unique blend of contemporary music with African roots.

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ADD TWO/LIBERTY MEDAL PERFORMERS

The 2007 Liberty Medal will be awarded jointly to Bono, U2 lead singer and activist, and DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa), the advocacy organization he co-founded to combat poverty and disease in Africa, on Thursday, September 27, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the National Constitution Center in Historic Philadelphia.

The prestigious Liberty Medal, and its accompanying \$100,000 prize, will recognize Bono and DATA's groundbreaking work in raising awareness about and spurring a global response to the crisis of AIDS and extreme poverty in Africa.

Tickets to the ceremony, which were made available for free to the public, are sold out. The ceremony will be broadcast live on WPVI-TV, 6abc at 7:00 p.m. and webcast on www.6abc.com. The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation is providing marketing support for the 2007 Liberty Medal in Historic Philadelphia.

Established in 1988 by We the People 200 to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the Liberty Medal annually honors an individual or an organization from anywhere in the world that has "demonstrated leadership and vision in the pursuit of liberty of conscience or freedom from oppression, ignorance or deprivation." Since 2006, the National Constitution Center has administered the Liberty Medal, which includes the annual presentation of the award and a host of supplemental programs and activities designed to extend the Medal's reach throughout the year.

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.