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## **The Northwest Folklife Festival unites Pacific Northwest communities in the celebration of the arts**

**Seattle, April 3, 2008**—Join Northwest Folklife this May at Seattle Center for a celebration of the rich fabric of Northwest cultures and communities. At one of the nation's largest community arts festivals, participants enjoy hundreds of performances and interactive events. The 37<sup>th</sup> annual Northwest Folklife Festival will be held Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 23 through Monday, May 26 at Seattle Center. Although admission is free, visitors' donations make the Festival possible. Festival hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. each day and will include concerts, dance parties, children's activities, storytelling, merchants, food vendors and impromptu happenings of all kinds.

Over 250,000 guests are expected to enjoy this quintessentially Seattle event that marks the unofficial beginning of summer.

**Cultural Focus: Urban Indians**, a feature during the Festival, will include programs that explore the cultures and traditions of Native Americans who make their homes in the cities of the Pacific Northwest. Each year the Northwest Folklife Festival highlights a community or region for its cultural focus program. Cultural Focus: Urban Indians examines the rich tradition of the Pacific Northwest Coast's first people and members of more than 250 North American tribes who reside in Seattle.

Native American groups, including the Duwamish Tribe, the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation and Longhouse Media, will present and explore their traditions, dance, art and celebrations. Visitors will hear Native American music and stories, learn about the importance of the potlatch and the powwow, and see traditional dance and drumming.

Attending the Northwest Folklife Festival is the best way to experience and understand the music and dance of Northwest communities. Hundreds of performances, dances and workshops make the Festival a uniquely engaging event. This year there will be approximately 7,000 musicians, dancers and artisans from a wide range of traditions at the Festival. Special showcases programmed by leaders from a variety of communities and traditions are a unique feature of the Northwest Folklife Festival. This year's highlights include:

- **Blackened Cascadian Folk Showcase**—Friday, Vera Stage from 6-9 p.m. NEW for 2008 will feature the ritualized music of bands like Portland's *A Minority of One*, that draw from the richness of pre-Christian folklore and post-industrial heavy metal.
- **Be There or Be Square: A Friday Night Square Dance**—Friday, Roadhouse from 8-10 p.m., visitors can grab a partner and dance the night away to local favorites *The Tallboys* and hot dance callers from Portland, Oregon.
- **Brassed Off: A Brass Band Showcase**—Sunday, Mural Amphitheatre from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., featuring the armor-piercing Balkan brass of *Orkestar Zirkonium* and other local brass bands from a variety of traditions.

- Taste the Rainbow: A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered & Queer (GLBTQ) Showcase—Monday, Vera Stage from 3:45-7 p.m., features a host of performers from the vibrant Northwest GLBTQ communities. Hosted by Miss Amazing Grace of the group Coyote Grace.

### **About Northwest Folklife Festival**

The Northwest Folklife Festival was launched in 1972 and is one of the world's largest free community arts festivals. The Festival honors people and traditions from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Northwest Folklife is dedicated to celebrating, sharing and sustaining the vitality of folk, ethnic and traditional arts for present and future generations. With approximately 250,000 visitors annually, the Northwest Folklife Festival brings communities together to share their arts and learn from each other. For details, please visit [www.nwfolklife.org](http://www.nwfolklife.org).

The 2008 Northwest Folklife Festival is made possible by the generous support of Safeco Festal, Seattle Center, KIRO 710, B97.3, the Mayor's Office for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Boeing Company, Sage Foundation, JiJi Foundation, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and 4Culture King County.

The 2008 Cultural Focus: Urban Indians was made possible by the generous contributions of Duwamish Tribal Services, Ji Ji Foundation, Longhouse Media, Sage Foundation, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation and Wyman Youth Trust.

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### **Northwest Folklife Festival**

Memorial Day Weekend

May 23-26, 2008

**Play • Sing • Taste • Dance • Learn • Participate**