



For Immediate Release

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LAWRENCE BUSKER FESTIVAL TAKES OVER DOWNTOWN LAWRENCE

Amid the historic and funky shops and restaurants of downtown Lawrence, witness the crazy and creative acts, oddities, and performances of the Lawrence Busker Festival. The Lawrence Busker Festival is produced by Vodvill Entertainment Company with part of the proceeds benefitting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Douglas County. Bold and Brazen, Buskers are incredible street performers who provide jaw-dropping entertainment, and when the clock strikes five in the evening August 19, these Buskers will come out to play. From 5 p.m. on Friday, August 19, through 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 21, 2011, it's all happening on the sidewalks and breezeways of downtown Lawrence. New Hampshire and Massachusetts Street attract the most attention, but expect street performers to pop up everywhere. New talent will appear at the fest this year, with Thom Sellectomy, a comedy sword swallower, Shibaten Spirit, Human Organic Music, and Cate Flaherty, a female acrobat and juggler from Boulder claiming the spotlight. As always, popular act Mama Lou Strongwoman returns for her third year. A new stage will open up on 10th street between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, meaning more acts, more space, more shade, and more fun. Check out a screening of "Busking the System," a documentary exploring the world of subway musicians living and performing in New York City. This year's offering of Freaks, Geeks and the Unique include Strong Women, Sword Swallowers, Fire Eaters and Flaming jugglers, Acrobatic Dancers, Hula Hoop Artists, Ariel Acts and oddball music too wild to define.

As a hidden gem in a summer filled with forgettable fests and fairs, the festival offers three full days of unique music, performances, and oddities. Take a sneak peek at some of the main attractions that give the Lawrence Busker Festival its renowned reputation.

MamaLou Stronghold: Lifting Weights and Lifting Spirits

MamaLou is quite the woman. Despite her seemingly harmless and even ladylike name, Mamalou bends stereotypes and breaks molds, literally. She rips phone books, smashes boards, pounds nails with her fists, and lifts weights with her tongue. As a worldwide sensation, MamaLou is an inspiration to women and girls everywhere, proving girls can do anything boys can do, and maybe even better. Men are equally impressed and her biggest fans too. Her unforgettable cabaret act has astonished audiences globally at street performer and busker festivals. Her act includes many shocking acts of strength and skill. The amazing phonebook

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ripping challenge is a guaranteed thrill for any crowd and leaves the audience screaming in earnest enthusiasm and awe. Other feats of wild strength MamaLou includes in her repertoire are breaking flaming boards with her bare hands, pounding nails into wood with her fist, bending metal bars, and participating in games of human tug-of-war.

Thom Sellectomy: Sword Swallower Extraordinaire

Sword Swallowing seemed an obvious choice for an unemployed clown college graduate in Detroit, and with a name like Thom Sellectomy, clearly there was no other option: this regular Joe from next door was going to have to jam metal sticks down his throat, no ifs ands or buts about it. With a dry sense of humor and a quick wit, he will share with you an inside look at traveling the world and doing shows for almost 20 years. Relating the misadventures of his travels, shows gone horribly wrong and memorable hecklers, Thom presents sword swallowing in a way that even the most squeamish will enjoy. Part stand-up comedy and part side show, Thom swallows swords, runs a drill up his nose and finishes the show with something you won't want to see, but won't be able to stop watching.

Michael Morales: Mind Bending Mentalism

As Paranormalist Michael Morales performs traditional feats of mentalism and telekinesis, minds will be read, metal will bend, and ghosts will walk in an act of bizarre theater. Come see him perform his amazing skills and mess with your mind at the festival late at night (to take advantage of the eeriness of course.) Ten years ago, West Bottoms resident Michael Morales, an Indonesian martial artist and dreadlocked trendsetter, organized freak shows, and with a network of killer clowns, fire-eaters and burlesque dancers a phone call away, Morales took what he calls the "little bit of carny" he had in him and entertained the masses. A motorcycle accident at the end of 2004 switched his focus, altered his brain and gave him, he says, "the ability to bend metal." Witness a shorn, clean-cut Morales execute acts of subliminal influence, mentalism and telekinesis in a street show that, according to him, is "not recommended for religious fundamentalists or kids under 16." No volunteers will be asked to come onstage, but a high level of audience participation is required for this intellectually challenging performance.

Busking the System: a Documentary

We pass by them everyday on the subway, sometimes dropping a dollar, other times to stop and listen, never quite understanding who these anonymous musicians and performers really are. "Busking the System" is a documentary that explores the world of subway musicians living and performing in New York City. Taking an in-depth look into a never-before explored topic, the documentary focuses in on the uniquely different lives of several subway musicians in New York City. We follow three fresh-faced musicians from Kansas City, MO, Seattle, WA and Cleveland, OH on their journey to see if they can make it in the New York subway and launch their career. "Busking the System" delves deep into the themes we all face in life: success, failure, and dreams. There is also the familiar darker story of a man who plays strictly as a means for survival. From inspiring idealism to heartbreaking reality, "Busking the System" finally puts a spotlight on the musicians that make up the sounds of the underground. Coolhand Productions will screen their film at the Lawrence Arts Festival on Friday, August 19th and then at the Granada on August 20th and 21st.

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About Vodvill Entertainment Company

Vodvill Entertainment Company is one of the Midwest's best entertainment agencies for Variety Acts. For over 25 years they have been providing the best entertainers working today. Vodvill Entertainment Company was started in 1985 by Richard Renner who found the demand for his physical comedy and circus arts show to be more than he could do. Starting with a small group of similar talented friends he has grown the business to a list of over 50 acts that perform all over the country. The roster of artists focuses on variety entertainers and specialty acts. On the roster you will find living statues, hypnotists, comic waiters, balloon artists, magicians, physical comedians, fire eaters, stilt walkers and more. They are booked as strolling performers or stage performers for corporate events, college and university events, state and local fairs and festivals, elementary, middle, and high school events, concerts and theatre shows and other venues. For more information on Vodvill Entertainment Company, go to <http://vodvill.com/>.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a non-profit organization that helps match caring mentors with children who need the friendship of a special adult in their lives. Children are referred to the agency by their parents, schools, or other social service agencies. Their professional staff interviews each child and parent, visits the home, and assesses individual needs, carefully screening volunteers to provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention in their communities and schools. By providing each child with a mentor and friend, Big Brothers Big Sisters aims to provide children with the skills they need to manage every day challenges. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Douglas County is an affiliate of Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, the largest affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Big Brothers Big Sisters is the nation's oldest and largest youth mentoring organization and celebrated 100 years of service in 2004. Since 1991, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Douglas County has paired over 1600 adults and children, helping them to develop fulfilling friendships. For more information, visit <http://douglas.kansasbig.org/>.