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For Immediate Release

**Bringing People Together with Music, Celebrating the Language of Our Times**

***The Blues Hip Hop Experience at GSU's Center for Performing Arts***

University Park, IL, January 10, 2018 – Join us for a dynamic evening exploring the rich blues legacy of our region and its parallels to hip-hop. **The Blues Hip Hop Experience on Saturday April 21, 2018 at 8 p.m.** combines poetry, performance and perspective for a multi-generational audience in one unforgettable evening at Center for the Performing Arts at Governors State University.

Music has long served as a vehicle to give voice to the plight of the people, and to their triumphs. Two all-American genres have played a critical role in sharing the stories of African Americans and everyday people: Blues and Hip Hop. *“These African-American oral traditions bridge generational and cultural divides, uniting people from all backgrounds for a shared experience that brings the rich musical legacy of Chicago and our production from Millennium Park to life in the southland”* comments co-host and producer Sylvia Ewing. *“Theater is an opportunity to entertain and educate and find new ways to look at the world. This is our chance to show that the Blues is a relevant vibrant art form and hip-hop is more than controversial music videos and questionable rap lyrics,”* Ewing adds.

The evening is co-hosted by three-time Grammy-nominee and hometown harmonica hero, Billy Branch, and award-winning journalist and PBS TV personality, Sylvia Ewing. Billy's band, The Sons of Blues (Billy Branch-harmonica; Sumito Ariyoshi-keyboards; Andrew "Blaze" Thomas-drums; Dan Coscarelly-lead guitar; Marvin Little-bass; horns and singers), will be joined by an all-Chicago collection of vocalists, hip-hop artists and performance poets. Guest vocalists include jazz and blues artist Lucy Smith, and hip-hop collective artists avery r. young, international music star Ugochi, FM Supreme, M.C. Sense, and DJ HSHBRN. "The People's History of Chicago" author, Kevin Coval makes a special appearance as well Urbanized Music featuring Amina Norman Hawkins and Coolout Chris!

This performance is part of the Center's "Made in Chicago" Series, and is made possible through the generosity of The Chicago Community Trust, with additional support provided by The National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The series brings Chicago-based

artists and companies to the Southland, to support Chicago artists, and increase theater participation by first-time attendees. This is the final performance in the series for the 2017-18 season.

### **For Tickets and Information**

**Tickets: \$28** (Discounts are available at the box office for seniors (\$25), groups of 10+ (15% off) and students with valid I.D. (\$10)).

Online: CenterTickets.net

By Phone: 708.235.2222

In Person at the Box Office: 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL

Box Office Hours: Monday- Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (open to 6p.m. on Thursdays) & 2 hours prior to all performances. Parking is free. For best GPS directions always use the location search term "Governors State University" only.

**Billy Branch** has received three Grammy nominations, founded the Grammy Blues Committee, and won multiple W.C. Handy Awards from the Blues Foundation, an Emmy Award, and two Chicago Music Awards. Bill Branch has become the ambassador of the Chicago Blues. His internationally recognized "Blues in Schools Program," is committed to teaching both young and old about the Blues as the roots of America's music.

**Sylvia Ewing** has produced, directed, or reported for WTTW Channel 11, WBEZ FM, WVON AM, *Chicago Parent*, *Chicago Sun Times*, Steppenwolf Theatre and others. She creates successful public and private events at venues around the city. Sylvia can be seen locally and around the country as an on-air television host for PBS (Public Broadcasting System) specials. Her work in the media earned an induction into the HistoryMakers African American Archives in 2012 and she has received two Awards of Excellence from the Chicago Association of Black Journalists, the Peter Lisagor Award, the Edward R. Murrow Award, has been nominated for three local Emmys, and more.

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*Serving as a vibrant cultural destination in the southland community since 1995, Center for Performing Arts offers national touring acts, Chicago-based artists, community and academic theatre. The state-of-the art 1,171-seat facility is located at a vibrant and dynamic university setting with free parking and a convenient location accessible to major highways and the Metra. Governors State University serves 5,200 undergraduate and graduate students with degree programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts, and education. As a state university, GSU is committed to providing high-quality, accessible, and responsible higher education opportunities. GSU is located 35 miles south of Chicago in University Park, IL and committed to embracing diversity and academic excellence while transforming student passion into lifelong purpose.*