

L.B. Juneteenth Celebration

By Dianne Anderson
Staff Writer

Beyond all the barbeque and old school R&B that will dominate the Juneteenth spirit in city after city on the weekend, the celebration will also buzz with intellectual flair of the symbolism that for many will be a first-time valuable history lesson, and for others, an emotional work of art.

Tony Pope, community service supervisor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, said that on Saturday, June 13, he expects up to 2,000 people citywide to show, making the rounds for fun, games from noon till 5 p.m. at the park.

He's been receiving lots of calls leading up to the big day.

"This offers the folks, who do know the historical significance of it, a time and place to celebrate that," said Pope, adding that the event also gives families and the community time to celebrate together.

"For those who don't know enough about it, there will be information to learn more about the history. I think it holds different things for different people," he said.

On the entertainment side, the funky sounds of the

Lowrider Band, the group that for the most part was known as War, is back by popular demand to perform their time-tested classics, including "The world is a Ghetto," "Cisco Kid," "Me and Baby Brother." There, internationally acclaimed Cambodian artists of Dengue Fever also brings its electrified contagious version of psychedelic jazz rock.

Performing this year, international blues dynamo Mighty Mo Rodgers and Latin jazz legend Bobby Rodriguez will also do their part in putting the finishing touches on the musical day of diversity. And the park will be filled with all manner of food and craft vendors and information booths. Jumpers and the AGB High Steppers will keep the kids entertained.

John Malveaux, president of the Central Area Association, said the centerpiece of the event will be the west coast premier of MusicUNTOLD Orchestra & Chorale, a group he founded two years ago to perform its symphony of classical compositions by African American and minorities that breaks through the predominantly European genre.

Malveaux, coordinator of the Juneteenth local event, said the

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compositions had been boycotted for over 33 years by major symphonies nationwide since it premiered at the Kennedy Center bicentennial celebration with the National Symphony Orchestra.

It has been misunderstood ever since.

Behind the inspiration for the symphony is the text of Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, and the Constitution, yet back then many felt it was an indictment rather than celebration.

Malveaux founded MusicUNTOLD, with its 68 musicians and 30 performers in the choir, because it was the socially responsible thing to do, he said.

"Many are uncomfortable with the subject of slavery. When it's told in an unflinching manner, it becomes a problem," he said, adding that the challenge is to present the truth about Black history, no matter the resistance.

"The so-called lost work is an example of a history that's being denied," he said. "Not to

be complicit with this miseducation, I've made my best effort to give it an airing to the public after 33 years, so people can voice their opinion about it," he said.