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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

August 2, 2006  
Bloomington, Illinois

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### Pratt Music Foundation Announces Pratt - Bailey Gala Benefit Concert

**Bloomington, IL, August 2006** – The Pratt Music Foundation announces the upcoming Pratt - Bailey Gala Benefit Concert featuring internationally acclaimed pianist Awadagin Pratt and cellist Zuill Bailey. On the evening of August 19, 2006, Awadagin and Zuill, each a star in his own right, as well as friends since their teens, will return to Bloomington-Normal for an intimate performance in Illinois Wesleyan University's Westbrook Auditorium. The theme will be "Friendship Makes Beautiful Music," reflecting their long history of working and performing together. Their performance will include selections from Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, Brahms, and Arvo Part's tintinnabular Spiegel im Spiegel.

In addition, internationally acclaimed New Image artist Nicolas Africano has stepped forward with special support for the Pratt-Bailey Gala Benefit Concert. When he was asked to design a special fine art pin for this concert, he suggested not one, but a series of pins, each the face of a young adult playing or listening to music. His series consists of four faces: Violin, Cello, Piano, and Listening. Each is cast in fine silver, with a pin back making it a piece of wearable fine art. Each Platinum ticket receives one of these limited edition, numbered and hallmarked pins and will be a lasting memory of this delightful evening. In addition, the conceptual drawings, themselves an insight into his creative process, will be sold at silent auction during the reception after the concert; Mr. Africano has donated these drawings to support and defray the cost of molding and casting the pins.

Tickets for the Pratt-Bailey Benefit Concert are available at three levels: Silver (\$75) provides an alluringly intimate evening in Westbrook Auditorium as friends Awadagin and Zuill entertain music lovers. Gold (\$250) adds attendance at the Gala Reception in beautiful Ames Library and the opportunity to meet the artists. Platinum (\$500) includes the Concert, the Gala Reception, and adds photos with the musicians, and a unique Africano pin.

The Pratt Music Foundation supports music education with classical music scholarships for talented and motivated students with financial need in grades K through 12.

Seating is limited so please contact the Pratt Music Foundation early to ensure availability.

Tickets will be available by mail. Pratt Music Foundation, c/o Illinois Wesleyan University, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, Illinois 61702-2900. More information is available online at [www.prattmusicfoundation.com](http://www.prattmusicfoundation.com) or by calling the concert hotline at (309) 556-3796.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Awadagin Pratt**

Born in Pittsburgh, Awadagin moved to Normal Illinois at the age of 3 and began studying piano at the age of 6 and violin at the age of 9. At 16, he entered the University of Illinois, where he studied piano, violin, and conducting. He subsequently enrolled at Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he became the first student in the school's history to receive diplomas in three performance areas.

In 1992, Mr. Pratt won the Naumburg International Piano Competition and two years later an Avery Fisher Career Grant. He has performed throughout the US, including performances at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and Orchestra Hall. He has repeatedly appeared nationally and internationally.

Awadagin Pratt has been the subject of numerous articles in the national press, including Newsweek, People Magazine, USA Weekend, New York Newsday, Emerge and Mirabella. He was named one of the 50 Leaders of Tomorrow in Ebony Magazine's special 50th anniversary issue and has been featured on National Public Radio's Performance Today and Weekend Edition. Mr. Pratt has performed on the Today Show, Good Morning America, and Sesame Street, appeared in a segment of CBS Sunday Morning and was one of the featured soloists on PBS's "Live from the Kennedy Center - A Salute to Slava."

His debut album, *A Long Way From Normal*, was released in 1994. His second album, an all-Beethoven Sonata disc, and a third album, *Live from South Africa*, were released in 1996 and 1997. His most recent CD features Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition", the Brahms "Variations on a Theme by Handel, Op.24" and his own transcription of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue, BWV 582.

In September 2004, Pratt was appointed Assistant Professor of Piano and Artist-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

In his spare time is an active tennis player, devoted chess enthusiast and wine connoisseur.

### **Zuill Bailey**

A multi-faceted musician of consummate virtuosity, Zuill Bailey has established himself as one of the most sought-after and active cellists today.

A graduate of the Peabody Conservatory and The Juilliard School, Mr. Bailey's principal teachers were Loran Stephenson, Stephen Kates and Joel Krosnick. He performs on a 1693 Matteo Goffriller cello, formerly owned by Mischa Schneider of the Budapest Quartet.

He has repeatedly appeared nationally and internationally.

Mr. Bailey's television appearances include a nationally broadcast recital for NHK-TV in Japan; a performance of the Beethoven Triple Concerto broadcast live nationally from Mexico City; a televised appearance in Havana with the National Orchestra of Cuba, in which he gave the Cuban premiere of Victor Herbert's Cello Concerto No. 2; three appearances on HBO; and an extended interview/recital on A&E's Breakfast with the Arts. Among Mr. Bailey's appearances on radio are his performances on Saint Paul Sunday Morning; XM Satellite Radio's Live from Studio II; SIRIUS Satellite Radio; a recital for RTHK Radio Hong Kong; and the BBC's In Tune program.

Zuill Bailey's recordings include 2003's eponymous debut recital disk for Delos (DE 3326); the Korngold Cello Concerto with Caspar Richter and the Bruckner Orchester Linz for ASV (DCA 1146), which was featured on the cover of Fanfare magazine; and this year's Janos Starker Celebration, a musical tribute to the legendary cellist, featuring Bailey and Starker in the Cello Quintets of Boccherini and Schubert. As the Classical Recording Foundation's 2006 winner, Mr. Bailey will add a recording of the complete Beethoven cello sonatas to his discography later this year.

In addition to his extensive touring engagements, Mr. Bailey serves as Professor of Cello at the University of Texas-El Paso, and as the Artistic Director of El Paso Pro Musica.

He resides in El Paso with his wife, artist Margarita Cabrera, and their young son.

**Nicolas Africano**

Nicolas Africano discovered art relatively late in his life. In his youth, he was a baseball player; a star with a strong arm and a good reputation. In college he was a writer; he studied creative writing at Illinois State University. It was there that his focus changed... while experimenting with fragmented prose incorporating small illustrations replacing portions of text, he discovered the illustrations were more compelling than the text. He earned his Master of Fine Arts in Painting in 1975.

He was selected to exhibit in the Whitney's New Image Painting exhibition in 1979, which placed him in an elite company of recognized artists. His art has been featured in group exhibitions around the country and in Europe. His one-person exhibitions have had similarly wide distribution. His works are held by corporations and museums around the world including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. His recent work has expanded to include sculpture in stone, and in glass using the lost wax technique.

Mr. Africano has elected to work and create in small town Normal. His works were recently featured in an Alumni exhibition at Illinois State University, helping acquaint local art lovers with the work so much of the world has already seen and appreciated.