

**Testimony in Support of FY 2010 Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts
Submitted to the House Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee**

**Sandra Gibson, President and CEO
Association of Performing Arts Presenters
(Arts Presenters)
March 26, 2009**

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters (Arts Presenters) urges the subcommittee to approve Fiscal Year 2010 funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at a level of \$200 million. With audiences of six million people per week for performances in virtually every community in the nation, the American performing arts presenting industry has combined annual expenditures in excess of \$9.8 billion. The performing arts presenting field supports more than 900,000 jobs, including the employment of artists and those who help manage and present them, and supports many more services related to performing arts events, such as hotel stays, restaurants, transportation, and parking.

We would also like to take this time to thank Chairman Obey and the Appropriations Committee for fighting to keep the \$50 million for NEA funding in the economic stimulus package. Our industry appreciates this level of support for jobs, and with stimulus funding many of our organizations will be able to preserve and in some cases, recover mission critical positions that are directly tied to serving their communities. These positions range from educational outreach and program coordinators for the elderly to artists who reach deeply into their communities to bridge social gaps and improve the quality of life for those who may be less advantaged. We estimate that the stimulus grants, distributed through the NEA, may save as much as 15% of our arts workforce in the next two years.

Founded in 1957, Arts Presenters is the national service organization for the field of performing arts presenting. Nearly 2,000 members represent the nation's leading performing arts centers, civic and university performance facilities, amphitheaters, college and university theatres, local arts agencies, festivals, fairs, park sites, and museums. Arts Presenters also provides services to touring artists and companies, their managements and agents. Our membership includes a range of organizations with multi-million dollar budgets to budgets of three-thousand dollars and individuals who are artists or independent performing arts professionals; two-thirds of the membership and wider presenting field are organizations with small budgets under \$1.5 million (the largest segment of which is under \$500,000).

We continue to track the value and impact of the performing arts to communities, including our economic impact, and recent survey indicators point to an industry concerned with the overall impact the current economic crisis has on the operating environment for our field and the increased difficulty of resolving the many challenges presenting organizations already faced before the deep recession. We must ensure that every performing arts presenter continues to build upon and contribute to the economic engine and cultural infrastructure in communities in which they serve.

While we are far from achieving a cultural democracy, the idea that arts and culture be woven into all aspects of life is essential to both preparing an innovative workforce in the 21st century and bridging the deep socio-economic gaps that continue to plague underserved and underprivileged communities in various pockets of the country. As a nation, we are wise to look back on our rich history of integrating the arts and culture in times of need to help us move forward. Like many of the cultural projects President Franklin Roosevelt launched to get the United States out of the Great Depression, and the decades of United States Information Agency support of arts encounters and exchanges that provided powerful images of a diverse American citizenry and cultural landscape, the NEA should have an opportunity to expand its ability to serve the American public with an increased level of funding to help projects that capture the spirit, optimism, creativity and imagination as well as demonstrate the value the performing arts offer in critical times to a nation in crisis.

In the most completed grant year, Fiscal Year 2008, the NEA's Grants to Organizations included 90 grants to 85 Arts Presenters organizations and the communities they serve, supporting arts education for children, adults,

disabled, underserved and underprivileged, preserving great classical, jazz and choreography works, fostering the creative endeavors of contemporary classical musicians and composers, and expanding public access to performances and exhibitions.

NEA Funding Highlights:

Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth

A grant designed to advance arts education for children and youth in school-based or community-based settings, this category supports in-depth, curriculum-based arts education experiences that occur over an extended period.

(Great Falls, VA) Traveling Players Ensemble, Inc.: To support Traveling Players Ensemble Summer Theatre Camp. Working in ensembles of 13 to 15, students will produce and perform a classical theater piece by either Moliere or Shakespeare. \$18,000

(Idaho Falls, ID) Eagle Rock Art Museum & Education Center, Inc.: To support the ARTworks visual arts education program. In southeast Idaho, artists participate in school residencies and teachers attend professional development training to learn methods of integrating the arts into core academic coursework. Students study art history, receive technical instruction, and visit the museum as part of the program. \$10,000

(Seattle, WA) Seattle Repertory Theater: To support Bringing Theater into the Classroom. In partnership with the Seattle Children's Theatre, the program provides classroom residencies in which professional artists and teachers combine theater education and concepts of literacy into their classroom curriculum. \$60,000

Challenge America

A grant designed to identify and support projects that connect the arts - and artist - to their broader communities through collaborative works.

(Robbinsville, NC) Stecoah Valley Arts, Crafts & Educational Center, Inc. (*aka* Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center): To support An Appalachian Evening concert series featuring traditional entertainment connected to Appalachian heritage. \$10,000

Access to Artistic Excellence

A grant designed to encourage and support artistic creativity, preserve our diverse cultural heritage and make the arts more widely available in communities throughout the country, especially by providing access to underserved populations.

(Becket, MA) Jacob's Pillow: To support residencies and performances of dance companies. The project includes a Creative Development Residency, presentation of national and international dance companies, and audience engagement and educational programs. \$80,000

(North Adams, MA) Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc. (*aka* MASS MoCA): To support a series of performances, exhibitions, residencies, and film screenings at MassMOCA. Artists will participate in school presentations, artist talks, open rehearsals, and work-in-progress performances. \$20,000

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to reinforce the positive and meaningful contributions the NEA makes to ensure access to participation in the performing arts for tens of millions of Americans throughout the country each year and for thousands of performing arts presenters to serve the millions of audience members they directly reach across the country. We believe that arts experiences exemplify and ignite the ingenuity and creativity needed to prepare a competitive workforce ready to meet existing and emerging global challenges. We also believe access to quality arts programs for students of all ages enrich their academic achievements and advance their overall development. The Endowment provides an exemplary platform for upholding the highest standards for artistic endeavors while increasing access to and participation in the arts for the underserved and underprivileged communities. Together with the NEA, we are committed to building and supporting strong cultural infrastructure

nationwide and opportunities for direct participation in the arts in each and every community. We urge you to actively support the funding level increase for FY 2010 by approving \$200 million in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.