

**Testimony in Support of FY 2010 Funding for the National Endowment for  
the Arts**  
**Submitted to the Subcommittee Interior and Related Agencies  
of the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations**

Sandra Gibson, President and CEO  
Association of Performing Arts Presenters  
(Arts Presenters)  
May 15, 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.

Many of the organizations in the performing arts presenting field offer educational outreach to school children, programs for the elderly, and provide artists who reach deeply into their communities to bridge social gaps and improve the quality of life for those who may be less advantaged. 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 those 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.

2009 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.

(Burlington, VT) **Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, Ltd. (Consortium)**

To support Words Come Alive. Designed and implemented in partnership with the Burlington School District, summer training, workshops, and classroom collaborations will be featured activities for elementary school teachers in theater and dance. \$45,000

### **American Masterpieces: Presenting**

A grant designed to celebrate the extraordinary and rich contribution that presenters make in American communities.

(Hanover, NH) **Dartmouth College (on behalf of Hopkins Center)**

To support presentations of influential works and residency activities at the Hopkins Center. Performer Meredith Monk, Pilobolus Dance Theatre, Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and choreographer Trisha Brown will participate in workshops, post-performance discussions, school visits and matinees, master classes, and public discussions. \$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.

(Billings, MT) Alberta Bair Theater Corporation

To support New Music for the Old West, a concert series featuring diverse musical styles. Proposed guest artists ScrapArtsMusic (rooted in world music traditions), the string quartet Ethel, jazz vocalist Rachael Price, Edgar Meyer, and Mike Marshall (masters of modern acoustic music), and the American Chamber Players will perform and participate in outreach activities for audiences from Montana and northern Wyoming. \$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.

(San Francisco, CA) Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (aka YBCA) (Consortium)  
To support the African Consortium. In partnership with Mapp International Productions in New York City, the international exchange initiative is designed to create a new level of artistic collaboration between artists and arts organizations and develop cultural dialogue between the United States and African countries through activities such as panels, seminars, workshops, performances, residencies, interview, and a Web site. \$40,000

(Providence, RI) FirstWorks  
To support the production of FirstWorksProv Festival 2009. The program of performing arts premieres will be accompanied by community and outreach activities, such as forums, workshops, master classes, school programs, and discounted admissions. \$15,000

(Helena, MT) Helena Presents (aka Myrna Loy Center)  
To support a series of commissioning, presenting, and residency projects at the Myrna Loy Center. Guest artists will create new works in collaboration with local and regional artists. \$35,000

## **State Partnership Grants**

Arkansas Arts Council  
Little Rock, AR  
\$697,800 to support Partnership Agreement activities

California Arts Council  
Sacramento, CA  
\$1,194,800 to support Partnership Agreement activities

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 a 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.