



PRESS RELEASE

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Press contact: Lori Patrick, Public Relations Manager
(206) 684-7306
lori.patrick@seattle.gov

Mayor announces 2011 Mayor's Arts Award recipients

*Recipients to be honored at Sept. 1 ceremony
with free advance viewing of Bumbershoot Visual Arts Exhibits*

SEATTLE — Mayor Mike McGinn today announced the recipients of the 2011 Mayor's Arts Awards.

The Seattle Arts Commission recommended the recipients from a pool of more than 300 public nominations. The Mayor's Arts Awards recognize the contributions made by artists, arts and cultural organizations and community members who make a difference through arts and cultural activities.

“The arts are an essential part of a great city. While the collective achievements of this year's award recipients are impressive, what's truly inspiring is their commitment to making a difference in our community through the arts,” said McGinn. “They engage our youth, connect different cultures, give artists a place to grow and create access for all people to participate in the arts and tap their own creativity.”

The recipients of the 2011 Mayor's Arts Award are:

- Donald Byrd, choreographer and artistic director of Spectrum Dance Theater
- Jack Straw Productions
- Quinton Morris, DMA, musician and professor
- On the Boards
- Pratt Fine Arts Center
- Tet in Seattle, producer of the annual Tet Festival

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The recipients will be honored at the **Mayor's Arts Awards ceremony, 4 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 1 at Seattle Center on the North Fountain Lawn.** The Mayor's Arts Awards ceremony is presented in partnership with Bumbershoot®: Seattle's Music & Arts Festival and sponsored by *City Arts* magazine. The outdoor ceremony, which is free and open to the public, will feature award presentations as well as the official opening of the Bumbershoot 2011 Visual Arts Exhibits. The free public preview of the exhibits will be open 3 to 9 p.m. and are a great way to kick off or close First Thursday.

The exhibits will include W. Scott Trimble's "Skater's Gauntlet," a sculptural installation in the Seattle Center Skatepark. Nearby, Marlow Harris and JoDavid's "Bumber by Number," a participatory paint-by-number exhibit, will be mounted in the Seattle Center Pavilion Courtyard. Inside the Pavilion, Leslie Lyons' interactive video story "Expedition," will unfold over the three-day Bumbershoot festival (Sept. 3 to 5) and curator Kathy Lindenmayer's "The Magic Show" will feature video, photography and sculptural works that defy explanation. For more information on the exhibits, visit Bumbershoot's website: www.bumbershoot.org. Bumbershoot's visual arts exhibits are presented with support from the Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs.

This is the ninth year of the Mayor's Arts Awards, which are nonmonetary. To reflect the diversity of artistic achievement throughout the city, the awards do not have set categories. For more information about the Mayor's Arts Awards, including past recipients, visit:

http://www.seattle.gov/arts/events/arts_awards.asp.

The Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs promotes the value of arts and culture in communities throughout Seattle. The 16-member Seattle Arts Commission, citizen volunteers appointed by the mayor and City Council, supports the city agency, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

2011 Mayor's Arts Award recipients

Donald Byrd

Acclaimed choreographer and artistic director of Spectrum Dance Theater, Donald Byrd left New York for Seattle nearly a decade ago because he was attracted to Spectrum's mission "to make dance accessible, without limitation to the community."

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Byrd has transformed Spectrum, a former jazz-dance group, into a groundbreaking modern dance company, which supports local talent and offers dance classes at its rehearsal studio on Lake Washington to more than 500 students of all ages each week.

Byrd has created more than 80 works for his former company of nearly 25 years, the New York-based Donald Byrd/The Group, Spectrum and many major dance companies including The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

Through Byrd's leadership, Spectrum partners with many Seattle arts groups, including The 5th Avenue Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet and most recently Seattle Art Museum, which tapped Byrd to help enact performance "invasions" by dancers wearing artist Nick Cave's otherworldly sound suits.

Jack Straw Productions

Jack Straw Productions—the Northwest's only nonprofit multidisciplinary audio arts center – will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2012.

Jack Straw's mission is to foster the communication of arts, ideas, and information to diverse audiences through audio media, including radio, theater, film, video, music and literature.

A community-based resource, Jack Straw provides a top-tier production facility for local artists who work creatively with sound. The organization offers artist residencies, a writers program, a new media gallery, and education programs for all ages. Jack Straw also collaborates with arts and heritage organizations to integrate sound and music into their programs.

Jack Straw's youth education programs give students hands-on experience in a recording studio, allowing them to create their own audio programs including radio theater, oral histories and music recording projects. Many of the participants are disabled or immigrant youth whose access to arts training is limited.

Quinton Morris, DMA

Quinton Morris enjoys a multifaceted career as a concert violinist, chamber musician, teacher, director and founder of The Young Eight String Octet, the nation's only string octet comprised of distinguished African American string players from the nation's most prestigious music schools. Morris earned a Master of Music degree from The Boston Conservatory and a Doctor of Musical Arts at The University of Texas at Austin.

Morris is the Director of Chamber and Instrumental Music and Assistant Professor of Music at Seattle University, where last week he won the Outstanding Scholarship and Creative Work Award from the College of Arts and Sciences.

According to one nominator, "Morris' long list of achievements and awards is impressive, but even more impressive is his determination to make a difference for aspiring young musicians – particularly for youngsters of color who do not always have role models close at hand in the classical community."

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Street Address: 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1766, Seattle, WA 98104

Mailing Address: PO Box 94748, Seattle, WA 98124-4748

Tel: (206) 684-7171 • Fax: (206) 684-7172 • arts.culture@seattle.gov • www.seattle.gov/arts

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Morris has performed solo and chamber music performances across the country and around the globe, and recently marked his New York City recital debut with soprano Indra Thomas and pianist Maimy Fong to a sold out audience at Carnegie Hall.

On the Boards

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, "On the Boards (OtB) is one of America's best theaters for contemporary performance. Its stages are graced by top-tier artists from around the world, as well as locals."

Founded by artists in 1978, OtB's mission is to introduce audiences to international innovators in contemporary dance, theater and music while developing and presenting new work by Northwest performing artists.

OtB has featured breakthrough performances by art stars including Laurie Anderson, The Wooster Group, Sankai Juku, Romeo Castellucci and Mark Morris and locals Pat Graney, Reggie Watts, Crystal Pite, Dayna Hanson, and Zoe Scofield and Juniper Shuey.

Through performance series and a festival, OtB provides artists room to grow and take risks. OtB's programs include the experimental 12 Minutes Max series; the curated NW New Works Festival; the Northwest Series, which features regional artists and companies; and the Inter/National series which presents artists from around the world.

Pratt Fine Arts Center

Pratt Fine Arts Center makes art accessible to *everyone*, offering a place for spirited exchange, self expression and personal transformation through creativity.

Founded in 1976 to provide high quality visual arts training in Seattle's Central District, one of the city's most economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, Pratt creates opportunities to learn, make, and experience the visual arts through equal access to free and subsidized classes, a low-cost studio rental program, and free exhibitions, lectures and events.

Pratt offers hands-on instruction in glass, sculpture, jewelry, printmaking, painting, and drawing, giving individuals of all ages their first exposure to making art and teaching aspiring, emerging and established artists new techniques and skills.

Pratt's ARTSpark Program provides free art classes to more than 600 underserved children and youth. Throughout its 35-year history, Pratt has served as a creative hub for working artists, arts patrons, and community members to share ideas and learn new skills.

Tet in Seattle

Tet Festival is a free community celebration held annually as part of Festál, a series of world festivals at Seattle Center.

For the past 15 years, Tet Festival has celebrated the Vietnamese Lunar New Year and Vietnamese culture through the visual and performing arts and cuisine unique to Vietnam. The volunteer-run festival attracts 10,000 to 15,000 participants each year in late January or early February.

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Tet in Seattle's mission is to preserve and promote Vietnamese culture and to help bridge gaps between first and second generation Vietnamese immigrants as well as help foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

As part of the festival, Tet in Seattle publishes a bilingual magazine that features Vietnamese history and stories. The organization also helps develop future leaders in the Vietnamese community and is committed to public service year-round, including participating in the International District /Little Saigon clean up, creating a Vietnamese community float for the Seafair Torchlight Parade and participating in fundraising campaigns for cancer research.

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