



Written Statement of Amy Fitterer: Chair, Performing Arts Alliance and Cristine Davis: General Manager,
Performing Arts Alliance

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations | United States House of Representatives

The Importance of Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts
May 24, 2017

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, we thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Performing Arts Alliance. **We urge the Committee to appropriate \$155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts for FY18.** PAA member organizations include:

- Alternate ROOTS
- American Composers Forum
- Association of Performing Arts Professionals
- Chamber Music America
- Chorus America
- Dance/USA
- League of American Orchestras
- National Alliance for Musical Theatre
- National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
- National Performance Network
- Network of Ensemble Theaters
- New Music USA
- OPERA America
- Theatre Communications Group

The Performing Arts Alliance (PAA) is a national network of more than 33,000 organizational and individual members comprising the professional, nonprofit performing arts fields. We envision a United States in which the diverse ecology of the performing arts is deeply-valued and supported, adequately and equitably resourced, and where participation is accessible to all. The National Endowment for the Arts plays a key role in achieving this vision, and we submit this testimony to highlight the importance of federal investment in the arts.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) holds a significant federal leadership role for the arts and culture in America. Its grants reach every congressional district and support arts organizations serving their communities in a variety of ways. Through the support of direct NEA grants and NEA partnerships with state arts agencies, arts organizations are helping people experience high-quality artistic presentations, access arts education and opportunities for artistic development, and are helping communities unite.

The NEA has several granting categories that support the arts in our nation. Our Town grants support collaborative projects between arts, culture, design, and development organizations working together to transform and revitalize communities through arts-focused strategies. STUDIO 365 Foundation in Lake Elsinore, CA is an example of this; FY16 Our Town support helped it collaborate with the City of Elsinore for an ongoing project that offers vocational art and craft instruction to improve livability in the community, impacting the city's predominantly Hispanic population. The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo is also investing in its community with FY15 NEA Our Town funding. Support is helping an ongoing collaboration between the Commission and the City of Toledo which is engaging artist residents in celebrations of Toledo's cultural heritage. Collaborators are offering creative programming to the community that is helping build a sense of neighborhood pride in areas suffering from high unemployment, crime, and poverty.

The NEA's Challenge America: Arts Engagement in American Communities program supports projects of small and mid-sized organizations that intentionally reach underserved populations with the arts. For example, Rabbit

Run Community Arts Association in rural Madison, OH, received FY16 Challenge America support for a series of classical and contemporary theatre productions at Lake Erie College. Similarly, East Central University received Challenge America support to highlight the music of east-central Oklahoma in a music festival presented in the Ada Arts District Plaza. The festival featured folk musician John Fulbright as well as the Native American flute-centric group, *Injunuity*.

The NEA's Artworks funding category supports projects that create art of the highest standards of excellence; engage the public with diverse and excellent art; encourage lifelong learning in the arts, and strengthen communities through the arts. The following examples of recent NEA grantees within the PAA network are a sample of the significant ways performing arts organizations are able to serve their communities with support from the NEA.

Several arts organizations nurture new and emerging artists by creating programs that provide space for them to create new, high-quality works. **Ballet West** in Salt Lake City, UT is creating space for artists to develop new choreography through its Ballet West National Choreographic Festival. Ballet West invited ballet companies from across the country to develop new works, and participate in education and outreach by presenting their art to students from local schools.

The **Bowdoin International Music Festival** in Brunswick, ME is also nurturing artists to develop new works with program support from the NEA. FY17 support for the festival helps provide training opportunities for musicians, and offers high-quality arts experiences to the community through outreach performances at public libraries, social service agencies, and senior centers.

Many arts organizations rely on NEA support to help make their high-quality offerings broadly accessible to all in their communities. The **Idaho Shakespeare Festival** in Boise received FY16 Artworks support for its Idaho Shakespeare Festival Access Program. The program includes *Signing Shakespeare* which offers American Sign Language-interpreted performances of main stage productions for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. Artworks support will help the Festival expand its outreach initiatives to schools in neighboring states.

Artown in Reno, NV is able to present Artown Festival 2017 free of charge with the support of FY17 Artworks funding. This outdoor festival will feature more than 50 artists and performers of various disciplines and will also include free workshops and family activities. Outdoor arts festivals are among the most accessible performing arts events. In its 2010 study, *Live from Your Neighborhood: A National Study of Outdoor Arts Festivals*, the NEA noted that festivals draw demographically diverse audiences that appear to mirror characteristics of the U.S. population.

NEA Artworks funding supports lifelong learning in the arts which often begins with educational outreach programming and artists residencies in schools. The **Ririe-Woodbury Dance Foundation** tailors its dance outreach activities to the specific needs and goals of its partner schools. Based in Salt Lake City, UT, the company received FY16 Artworks funding that is currently supporting its dance residency activities. These include creative movement classes, lecture demonstrations, and question-and-answer sessions which create opportunities to connect with students and audiences one-on-one.

The **Rose Ensemble** in St. Paul, MN is taking arts education beyond schools and into the community with its program of French music that is also highlighting the work of French architect Emmanuel Masqueray. The Ensemble will present concerts in venues designed by Masqueray in the Twin Cities; Sioux Falls, SD; and

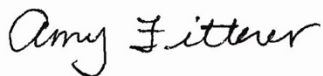
Benson, MN. The project includes an exploration of the relationship between music and architecture in pre-concert presentations and discussions.

Arts learning opportunities include the chance to learn about cultures and customs from around the world. **Portland Ovations** (Formerly Portland Concert Association) based in Portland, ME, presented the *Seeking Resonance* performing arts series with FY16 Artworks support. The multi-disciplinary series explored artistic expressions inspired by religious traditions and spiritual practices from around the world, and offered additional learning and engagement opportunities through master classes, discussions, workshops, and lectures.

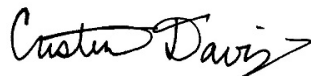
Artistic celebrations of heritage can strengthen communities and bring them together. With FY16 Artworks support, the **Centrum Foundation** in Port Townsend, WA produced the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes and the Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival. Activities included workshops in traditional music for local musicians with master artists such as NEA National Heritage Fellow Marc Savoy, a renowned Cajun musician. Similarly, **Carnegie Hall** in Lewisburg, WV received FY17 Challenge America funding to support its multi-disciplinary exhibitions celebrating the cultural history of Southern traditional music. The project includes a presentation of "Music of the Coalfields" at the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame, classes, a film screening, and a concert with Blues musician Eric Bibb. A year-long celebration of the 30-year legacy of **Churchill Arts Council** in Fallon, NV is being supported with FY17 Artworks funding, and is set to offer the community a diverse range of music performances, educational workshops, and lecture-demonstrations at the Oats Park Art Center.

The artistic programming of the arts organizations supported by the National Endowment for the Arts gives vitality to their communities in numerous ways beyond the examples provided here. The federal investment in the NEA places value on the role of arts and culture in our society, and it realizes significant returns that are both measurable and intangible. We celebrate the NEA's FY17 budget increase and urge you to support \$155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts in FY18. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Amy Fitterer
Chair
Performing Arts Alliance



Cristine Davis
General Manager
Performing Arts Alliance



Written Statement of Amy Fitterer: Chair, Performing Arts Alliance and Cristine Davis: General Manager, Performing Arts Alliance

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations | United States Senate

The Importance of Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
May 26, 2017

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, we thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Performing Arts Alliance (PAA). **We urge the Committee to appropriate \$155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts for FY18.** PAA member organizations include:

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The NEA holds a significant federal leadership role for the arts and culture in America. Through partnerships with state arts agencies such as the North Dakota Council on the Arts and direct grants awarded to nonprofit arts organizations and local arts agencies such as the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council in Oxford, MS, NEA funding reaches every congressional district. Grants support programs, projects, and collaborations that are helping people experience high-quality artistic presentations, access arts education and opportunities for artistic development, and are helping communities unite.

The following examples of recent NEA grantees within the PAA network are a sample of the significant ways performing arts organizations are serving their communities with NEA support.

NEA support helps arts organizations provide broad access to high-quality arts experiences.

Alberta Bair Theater in Billings, MT received FY17 Challenge America support to present the classical music duo Black Violin and the renowned Dance Theatre of Harlem to rural communities throughout south central Montana and northern Wyoming. A member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, the theater offered mainstage performances, public discussions, school matinees, and master classes. Challenge America funding extends the reach of the arts to

underserved populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

Also with the support of FY17 Challenge America funding, **Carnegie Hall, Inc.** in Lewisburg, WV celebrated the cultural history of Southern traditional music through multi-disciplinary exhibitions. A member of Chamber Music America, the organization served rural audiences in Greenbrier County with two exhibitions: the Music Makers Foundation's "We Are The Music Makers" and the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame's "Music of the Coalfields." The project included live performances, classes and a film screening.

Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Association is offering sensory-friendly concerts that are making classical music accessible for families and children who are differently-abled both intellectually and physically. With FY17 Art Works support, the symphony collaborates with certified music therapists to design and present these performances for community members with autism and Down syndrome.

NEA funding supports lifelong learning in the arts which includes outreach programs, teacher training, and university partnerships.

Chamber Music America member **Community Music Works** in Providence, RI received FY16 Art Works support for an ongoing outreach program that provides free lessons in instrumental music, music theory, and improvisation to local at-risk children and youth. The organization also provides leadership development and performance opportunities for advanced students.

Portland, OR-based **Network of Ensemble Theaters (NET)** received FY16 Art Works support for its ongoing "Intersection: Ensembles + Universities" symposium. NET's national symposium is connecting colleges, universities, and training programs with professional ensembles to seed new opportunities for sharing resources, learning, collaborations, and performance, building up the field of ensemble theater artists.

The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts is collaborating with Morehead State University and the Kentucky Department of Education to provide arts-based professional development to classroom teachers and school administrators in the rural eastern part of the state. A member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, the Kentucky Center received FY17 Art Works support to help educators and administrators create curriculum, lesson plans, and assessment strategies. It is also training educators to use a virtual teaching platform to video record lessons and instructional feedback.

NEA grants support projects that provide valuable opportunities for artistic development.

One of the guiding principles of the NEA's Art Works program is "art is work for the artists and arts professionals who make up the field." Opportunities for training and creating work are important to artists at all stages of their careers as well as artists who are still students.

Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT), a member of Dance/USA, received FY17 Art Works support for its *Choreography XX* residency program. It supported three North American female choreographers with a four-week intensive residency to create world-premiere ballets with OBT dancers. The new ballets were presented free of charge to the public at Portland's Rose Garden amphitheatre.

Young composers are able to train with established professionals during this year's **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**. A member of Chamber Music America, the Festival is offering a week-long composition workshop for young artists with the

FLUX String Quartet with FY17 Art Works support. Young artists present their talents to the community in a professional setting during the **Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts'** Future Stages Festival. Located in Kansas City, MO, the free community festival is supported by FY17 Art Works funding. The Kauffman Center is a member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals.

The **Old Globe Theatre's** New Voices program and Festival supports the development of new works by both established and emerging playwrights. Based in San Diego, CA, the Theatre is a member of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and its program is supported by FY17 Art Works funding. The project will commission new works from artists and offer developmental readings and workshops. The program includes a specific focus on Latinx artists and communities to promote Latin-American stories and experiences.

NEA funds support the development of works that address social issues and create safe spaces for community dialogue.

Cornerstone Theater Company, a member of Alternate ROOTS, is addressing food insecurity in its production of "The Hunger Bridge Show." The Los Angeles-based company received FY17 Art Works support for this project which will be informed through discussions with community members about their needs, fears, and hopes, around issues of hunger and food.

Sandglass Theatre in Putney, VT received FY17 Art Works support for "Babylon," an original work exploring the escalating global crisis of refugees and asylum seekers. The production has been developed through interviews with resettled refugees and looks at their relationship to their lost homelands, to their new homelands and languages, and to other migrants who are fleeing violence. Sandglass is a member of the National Performance Network.

Working Classroom in Albuquerque, NM is providing artists residencies in the Youth Arts Center where professional guest artists are collaborating with students from historically underserved communities, training them in the techniques and aesthetics of their practice. With FY17 Art Works support, the project explores issues of social justice, education, and equity, and artists and students are co-creating mural art, theater works, and animated projects around these themes. Working Classrooms is a member of the National Alliance of Latino Arts and Cultures.

NEA grants support projects that share a diversity of traditions, helping people connect across cultures and communities.

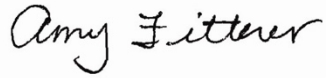
The **Bunnell Street Arts Center** based in Homer, AK is presenting the "Decolonizing Alaska" tour of works by Alaskan artists with the support of FY17 Challenge America funding. The touring exhibit features painting, dance, fiber art, and beading from the Inupiaq, Yu'pik, Denai'ana, and Athabascan Alaskan traditions. Artists on the tour are offering workshops and discussions to explore their work one-on-one with community members. Bunnell Street Arts Center is a member of the National Performance Network.

Strathmore Hall Foundation in North Bethesda, MD is presenting Step Afrika! in community and main stage performances and in-school residencies with the support of FY16 Art Works funding. Step Afrika! will share the history of stepping, the percussive movement tradition drawn from African cultures, in workshops serving local, low-income, African-American and Hispanic youth. Workshops and residencies aim to teach teamwork, discipline, motivation, and commitment. Strathmore is a member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals.

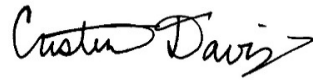
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