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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND ALEC BALDWIN PRESENT 2011 MAYOR'S AWARDS  
FOR ARTS & CULTURE AT ALICE TULLY HALL**

*Mayor Presents Composer and Lyricist Stephen Sondheim with the 2011 Handel Medallion, the City's Highest Award for Achievement in the Arts*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Emmy Award-winner Alec Baldwin today presented the 2011 Mayor's Awards for Arts & Culture to six individuals and organizations in celebration of their outstanding contributions to New York City's cultural life. The Mayor also presented the 2011 NYC Handel Medallion, New York City's highest award for achievement in the arts, to composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Recipients of the Mayor's Awards were Mikhail Baryshnikov, Alice Diamond, Jimmy Heath, Maya Lin, P.S. 94 Principal Ronnie Shuster, and the Theatre Development Fund. The event was held at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The Mayor was joined at the awards ceremony by Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin and Cultural Advisory Commission Chair Agnes Gund. The event featured performances and appearances by special guest artists.

"New York City's artists and cultural groups help make the City a great place to live, learn and work, and a destination for ambitious and creative people from across the world," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Tonight's awards give us a chance to recognize the achievements of some of the people who work hard every day to ensure that New York City remains the place to be for artists and audiences from the five boroughs and beyond. I'm thrilled to present the Handel Medallion to Stephen Sondheim, one of the consummate artists of our time who embodies the City's energy, creativity and passion."

"New York City's tremendous public support for culture helps ensure that the City continues to serve as a destination to experience the very best," said Alec Baldwin. "It was a privilege to co-host the Mayor's Awards with Mayor Bloomberg, and to celebrate some of the individuals and organizations whose contributions to the arts enrich so many lives each year."

"New York City's world-class arts organizations and the visitors they bring to New York generate more than \$11 billion in annual economic activity," said First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris. "The Bloomberg Administration continues to invest in the City's cultural community because we recognize its importance to our economy and New Yorkers' quality of life. The Mayor's Awards for Art and Culture give us an opportunity to celebrate the entire industry and recognize the achievements of some of its most dynamic members."

The NYC Handel Medallion was established in 1959 by Mayor Robert F. Wagner to honor outstanding achievement in the fields of art and music. Named for the composer George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), the award was first presented at the Handel Festival, a series of 32 concerts held in New York City in 1959 to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Handel's death. Past NYC Handel Medallion recipients have included Alvin Ailey, Benny Goodman, Richard Rodgers, Charlie Chaplin, Dizzy Gillespie, Lena Horne, Merce Cunningham and Neil Simon.

Stephen Sondheim was born in New York City and has written the music and lyrics for *Saturday Night*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Frogs*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods*, *Assassins*, *Passion* and *Road Show* as well as lyrics for *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Do I Hear A Waltz?* and additional lyrics for *Candide*. Anthologies of his work include *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Marry Me A Little*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, *Putting It Together* and *Sondheim on Sondheim*. For films, he composed the scores of *Stavisky*, co-composed *Red* and wrote songs for *Dick Tracy* and the television production of *Evening Primrose*. He co-authored the film *The Last of Sheila* and the play *Getting Away With Murder*. Mr. Sondheim is on the Council of the Dramatists Guild, having served as its President from 1973 to 1981. His collected lyrics with attendant essays are published in two volumes: *Finishing the Hat* (2010) and *Look, I Made A Hat* (2011). In 1981, Mr. Sondheim founded Young Playwrights Inc. to develop and promote the work of American playwrights aged 18 years and younger.

The Mayor's Awards for Arts and Culture were created in 1976, when the Department of Cultural Affairs was founded, and given annually until 1994. Mayor Bloomberg revived the awards in 2004 with the assistance of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, whose members are a diverse and distinguished group of advocates for the City's non-profit cultural community. The Awards acknowledge and celebrate the role individual artists, arts educators, cultural organizations, corporations and philanthropists play in the public-private partnerships that sustain the City's creative vitality and economic well-being.

"Tonight's event reminds us of how lucky we are to have the highest-caliber artists, educators and organizations dedicated to serving New York City's audiences," said Ms. Gund. "The Commission is proud to work with Mayor Bloomberg on the Mayor's Awards for Arts and Culture, and build on the strides Commissioner Levin and her staff have made in supporting and sustaining our City's cultural community."

"The Mayor's Awards ceremony allows us to celebrate artists, administrators, philanthropists and cultural organizations across the five boroughs who make essential contributions to New York's economy and quality of life," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Levin. "We are particularly grateful to Agnes Gund and the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission for their committed leadership as we work to serve and support the City's extraordinary creative community."

The ceremony featured live performances by dancers from Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana, the Charanams, the Xylopholks, the New York All-City High School Chorus and the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts Concert Choir. Special guests included actors Michael Cerveris, Liz Callaway, Susie Essman and Patti LuPone, Grandma from the Big Apple Circus, and theater critic Frank Rich. Musical Director Phil Reno and the house band, Michael Kuennen and Tom

Murray, performed throughout the ceremony. The reception featured wines donated by Red Hook Winery. Flowers were donated by Shair Tertner and Shiraz Events. Generous support was provided by Bank of America, with additional support from The Estée Lauder Companies Inc., Alan and Judith Fishman, Agnes Gund, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Michael Lynne, and Jeanette Wagner.

### **2011 Mayor's Awards Recipients**

#### **Mikhail Baryshnikov**

For his prolific and hugely influential career as dancer and choreographer, and his visionary leadership of the Baryshnikov Arts Center. In addition to his breathtaking performances with major ballet companies around the world, he co-created the White Oak Dance project to expand the repertoire and visibility of American modern dance. In 2005 he founded the Baryshnikov Arts Center in Hell's Kitchen which serves as a nurturing home for local and international artists to develop and present contemporary, innovative work across the spectrum of dance, theater, music, and film. Thanks to his commitment to promoting high quality art at affordable prices, the Center welcomes visitors from across the City and around the world to engage with cutting-edge work all year round.

#### **Alice Diamond**

For 50 years of service as arts advocate for Staten Island's vibrant cultural community. Ms. Diamond's commitment to enhancing the presence of arts and culture on Staten Island has included the founding of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, the creation of the Lynne Robbins Steinman Foundation, and stewardship as a trustee of the Staten Island Foundation and the Historic House Trust among other prestigious organizations. She is a driving force behind New York City's vitality as a world-class cultural center.

#### **Jimmy Heath**

For his outstanding career as an internationally celebrated saxophonist, composer, arranger, teacher, and author. In addition to his exceptional contribution to the canon of American jazz, Mr. Heath's service as professor at the Aaron Copland School of Music at the City University of New York was instrumental to the creation of the Jazz Program at Queens College, which continues to nurture younger generations of musicians.

#### **Maya Lin**

For her tremendous contributions to art and architecture, creating a dynamic portfolio of work ranging from intimate studio art, to large-scale installations, museums, and memorials. Ms. Lin's involvement on the design selection jury for the National September 11 Memorial and her extraordinary redesign of the Museum of the Chinese in America have permanently enhanced Lower Manhattan. Her work continues to captivate New Yorkers and audiences around the world.

#### **Ronnie Shuster**

For her extraordinary leadership as Principal of P94M, a public school made more dynamic by integrating theater arts into the academic experience of students with autism as well as other disabilities. Through her outstanding contribution to education and her commitment to the arts, Ms. Shuster has been an unwavering champion for arts education and its importance to all aspects of learning.

