



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2010

No. 462

www.nyc.gov

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND MERYL STREEP PRESENT 2010 MAYOR'S AWARDS
FOR ARTS & CULTURE AT ALICE TULLY HALL**

Mayor Presents World-renowned American Dancer and Choreographer Judith Jamison with the 2010 NYC Handel Medallion, the City's Highest Award for Achievement in the Arts

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Academy Award-winner Meryl Streep presented the 2010 Mayor's Awards for Arts & Culture to five individuals and organizations in celebration of their outstanding contributions to New York City's cultural life. The Mayor also presented the 2010 NYC Handel Medallion, New York City's highest award for achievement in the arts, to dancer and choreographer Judith Jamison. Recipients of the Mayor's Awards were Amy Fischetti-Boncardo, Bill Cunningham, the Brooklyn Community Foundation, Deborah Effinger, and Sandy Ground Historical Society. The event was held at Alice Tully Hall, which reopened in 2009 after a massive 21-month renovation funded, in part, by the City – the first major project of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' redevelopment initiative. The Mayor was joined at the awards ceremony by First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin and Cultural Advisory Commission Chair Agnes Gund.

"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 Judith Jamison, one of the consummate artists of our time who embodies the City's energy, creativity and passion."

"Audiences around the world deserve access to excellent art, and New York City's unique public support for culture helps ensure that the City continues to serve as a destination to experience the very best," said Ms. Streep. "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."

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 200th 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, Neil Simon, and Jessye Norman.

“I’m personally so grateful to Mayor Bloomberg for this heartfelt tribute and proud to accept the Handel Medallion on behalf of the entire Ailey organization and our audiences,” said Ms Jamison. “It’s a privilege to lead one of the world’s premiere dance companies that is a light on the cultural landscape of this great city, and a torchbearer for New York to the rest of the world. I am always excited and energized by the non-stop cultural vibrancy of New York. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater looks forward to inspiring New Yorkers through dance each December at our New York City Center performances, as this is the city that inspires all of us – our home.”

Judith Jamison has been artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for two decades. One of the most renowned figures in modern dance, she was Alvin Ailey’s muse for whom he created the tour-de-force solo *Cry* and other enduring roles. As a highly regarded choreographer, Jamison has created works for many different companies. She is also an author, whose autobiography was edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Named to TIME’s 2009 list of the world’s 100 most influential people, Jamison was recently honored by First Lady Michelle Obama at the first *White House Dance Series: A Tribute to Judith Jamison* and is the recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors, the BET Honors, and the National Medal of Arts.

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, chaired by Agnes Gund, 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.

“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 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.”

“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 dynamism, and to our identity as an international destination,” said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Levin. “We are particularly grateful to Agnes Gund and the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission for their leadership all year long as we work to serve and support the City’s extraordinary creative community.”

The ceremony featured live performances by Arturo O’Farrill and members of the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, dancers from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and The Ailey School, and Chinese Theatre Works. Special guests included actor and singer Darius de Haas, Grandma from the Big Apple Circus and a voiceover recorded by Alec Baldwin. Musicians of The Academy—a program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education, performed throughout the ceremony. The reception featured young artists from The Kaufman Center’s “Face the Music” ensemble. Flowers were donated by Van Wyck & Van Wyck. Generous support for the event was provided by The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc.

2010 Mayor’s Awards Recipients

Amy Fischetti-Boncardo

For her outstanding leadership of the Queens County Farm Museum, which provides many visitors with their first exposure to agriculture each year. Under her leadership, the Museum has developed one of the largest annual audiences of any cultural organization in New York City, offering exciting programs in science, history, horticulture, agriculture, and art.

Bill Cunningham

For his prolific career as a photographer and journalist through which he has documented New York City’s dynamic arts scene across the spectrum of styles, races, and ages. One hundred years from now, people will look to Mr. Cunningham’s essential record of New York City’s off-stage creative vitality.

Brooklyn Community Foundation

For celebrating Brooklyn pride, innovation, and civic spirit, and funding arts access for Brooklynites of all ages and backgrounds. Building on the accomplishments of its predecessor, the Independence Community Foundation, the Brooklyn Community Foundation has displayed outstanding philanthropic leadership in its pilot year as the only foundation in the City dedicated to supporting nonprofits within a single borough.

Deborah Effinger

For her extraordinary leadership as founding Principal of the Bronx Theatre High School, a public school made more dynamic by integrating theatre arts into the academic experience. Through her outstanding contribution to education and her commitment to the arts, Ms. Effinger has been an unwavering champion for arts education and its importance to all aspects of learning.

Sandy Ground Historical Society

For preserving the legacy of Sandy Ground on Staten Island’s North Shore, one of the oldest communities established by free blacks in North America and a vital stop on the Underground Railroad. Through its public programming and extensive documentary collection, the Society educates new generations about this important part of our City’s history.

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs is the largest funder of the arts in the United States. The agency supports and sustains New York City’s cultural life by investing in programs and operations at over 900 nonprofit cultural organizations throughout the five boroughs, and has committed \$740 million in capital funding for 190 organizations over the next four years. The agency also supports the City’s cultural community through extensive technical assistance and advocacy, working closely with the field to articulate the profound impact of culture on New York City’s quality of life and economy.

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