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KATE D. LEVIN
Commissioner

Mayor's Awards for Arts and Culture 2007 Performers

Astoria Performing Arts Center and Senior Stars

Founded in 2001, the Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) is a not-for-profit theatre organization that brings top quality theatre and entertainment at an affordable cost in Astoria/Long Island City. Each season, APAC produces plays, musical revivals, and showcases of new works of theatre. Our 2004 production of *Is There Life After High School?* was honored with an Off Off Broadway Review Award. Revivals of *Forever Plaid* and *A New Brain* were honored with nominations from the New York Innovative Theatre Awards. In addition to mainstage productions, APAC demonstrates special commitments to local youth and senior citizens, and offers annual performance programs for them.

APAC's Senior Stars is a performance program for Queens residents over the age of 60 who have a desire to perform. In 2005, APAC put out a call for seniors who wanted to sing, dance or act. Dozens of seniors, a group as diverse as Queens itself, auditioned. No experience is required, and because of support from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Con Edison and the NYC Department for the Aging, there is no fee for the seniors who participate. Over the course of seven weeks of rehearsals with Director Sandra Bargman and Musical Director Jeffrey Campos, the Senior Stars develop an original musical revue built around their individual talents and personalities. The program culminates in two performances for the public. Since the program started over twenty seniors ranging in age from 60-87 have become 'Stars.' A documentary about the program is currently in an editing phase and planning for the next round of the program in Spring '08 is underway.

Jeffrey Campos

Musical directing credits include *Show Choir - the Musical* (2007 NYC Fringe Festival), *Violet* (The Gallery Players), *Lucky Stiff*, *Forever Plaid*, and *A New Brain* (Astoria Performing Arts Center), *Seussical*, *How to Succeed in Business...*, *Mame* (Cohoes Music Hall), *Guys and Dolls*, *Finian's Rainbow*, as well as operatic excerpts from *La Bohème*, *Die tote Stadt*, and *The Tender Land*. He wrote the orchestrations and arrangements for the long-running Off-Broadway musical *A Stoop on Orchard Street* and served as musical supervisor. He also had the great pleasure of assisting Andrew Lipka with music for the *Asphalt Beach*. He is the recipient of a grant from the Queens Council for the Arts for the development of his musical *The Man in the Iron Mask* (book and lyrics by Shad Olsen).

Edna Robinson

Edna Robinson has been an Astoria Performing Arts Center's Senior Star since the program began in 2005. Edna is a retired registered nurse. She was a nursing administrator for a Community Health Agency for 25 years, and practiced for over 50 years. She had four children, but lost her daughter in 2002. She has two grandchildren, 7 and 4 years of age. She lives in East Elmhurst and is active in the community, coordinating performances with the Queens Library East Elmhurst Branch and senior centers. She is also active in the Corona Congregational Church, especially in the choirs. She sings every chance she gets.

John Leguizamo

A multi-faceted performer and Emmy Award winner, John Leguizamo has established a career that defies categorization. With boundless energy and creativity, his work in film, theatre, television, and literature covers a variety of genres, continually threatening to create a few of its own.

Leguizamo recently completed M. Night Shyamalan "the Happening" opposite Mark Walberg. The film is about a family on the run from a natural crisis that presents a large-scale threat to humanity. 20th Century Fox is set to release the film on June 13th, 2008.

This summer he filmed "Righteous Kill" for Overture films opposite Robert Deniro and Al Pacino. The film revolves around two Veteran New York City Detectives who hunt a vigilante who may be one of their own.

Leguizamo will next will be seen in "Love in the Time of Cholera," the screen adaptation of celebrated writer Gabriel García Márquez' novel. Directed by Mike Newell, the film also stars Javier Bardem, Benjamin Bratt and Giovanna Mezzogiorno. The film charts the evocative story of an unrequited love spanning five decades in turn-of-the-20th-century South America, with the tale of 'Florentino' (Bardem) and 'Fermina' (Mezzogiorno). Leguizamo stars as 'Lorenzo Daza,' Fermina's father determined to keep them apart. The New Line Cinema film will open November 16, 2007.

Also upcoming for Leguizamo are the independent films "Where God Left His Shoes", Franc Reyes's "The Ministers", "The Take."

Leguizamo was last seen in Spike's limited series "The Kill Point," Leguizamo will played the leader of the robbers, who happen to be a team of U.S soldiers who recently returned from serving in Iraq. Also an accomplished author, Leguizamo penned his autobiography "Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas, and All the Rest of My Hollywood Friends." Harper Collins released the fast-paced, hilarious, and poignant memoir in October 2006.

In spring 2006, Leguizamo was heard in theaters in "Ice Age 2: The Meltdown," in which he reprised his voice role as 'Sid, the Sloth' and co-stars alongside Ray Romano, Denis Leary and Queen Latifah. Additionally, the ever versatile Leguizamo appeared as a guest star in twelve episodes of NBC's cornerstone drama "ER" during the 2005/2006 season.

In 2005, Leguizamo earned rave reviews for his role as a popular TV reporter who's willing to sacrifice everything to get the story of a notorious serial killer in "Crónicas." The film screened at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and 2004 Toronto Film Festival and was honored as an Un Certain Regard selection at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

For his performance as a sensitive drag queen in "Too Wong Foo: Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar," Leguizamo garnered a Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

Leguizamo's credits include "Land of the Dead," Ed Burns' "The Groomsmen," "Lies & Alibis" , "Assault on Precinct 13" , "Sueno," "Spin," , Baz Luhrmann's "Moulin Rouge," (ALMA nomination, Best Supporting Actor), "Ice Age," Spike Lee's "Summer of Sam," Seth Zvi Rosenfeld's "King of the Jungle" (ALMA nomination, Best Lead Actor), the cult hit "Spawn," Baz Luhrmann's "William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet," and "Dr. Doolittle." Brian de Palma's "Carlito's Way," Brian de Palma's "Casualties of War" starring Sean Penn and Michael J. Fox.

Leguizamo also starred in HBO's "Undeclared," his feature directorial debut. Scripted by Frank Pugliese from a story by Leguizamo and Kathy DeMarco, the film is a drama about a young Latino boxer dealing with love and career success.

In 1991, Leguizamo created an off-Broadway sensation as the writer and performer of his one-man show, "Mambo Mouth" in which he portrayed seven different characters. He received Obie, Outer Critics Circle and Vanguardia awards for his performance. The play's HBO special led to his first television comedy special, Comedy Central's "The Talent Pool," for which he received a CableACE Award.

Leguizamo's second one-man show, "Spic-O-Rama," had an extended sold-out run in Chicago at the Goodman and Briar Street theaters before opening in New York. The play received numerous accolades including the Dramatists' Guild Hull-Warriner Award for Best American Play and the Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance. Leguizamo received the Theatre World Award for Outstanding New Talent, as well as a Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance. "Spic-O-Rama" also aired on HBO, receiving four CableACE Awards

"Freak," Leguizamo's third one-man show, ended a successful run on Broadway in 1998. Billed as a "Semi-Demi-Quasi-Pseudo Autobiography." "Freak" was described as "scathingly funny" (The New York Times.) Along with the Tony Award nominations for Best Play and Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play, Leguizamo won the Drama Desk and the Outer Critic's Circle Awards for Outstanding Solo Performance. A special presentation of "Freak," directed by Spike Lee, aired on HBO and earned Leguizamo the Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program as well as a nomination for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special.

Fall of 2001 saw Leguizamo's return to Broadway with his "Sexaholix...a Love Story." Directed by Peter Askin, the play is based on the sold-out national tour, "John Leguizamo Live!" Leguizamo was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for "Outstanding Solo Performance" and the show received a Tony nomination for Best Special Theatrical Performance. "Sexaholix" aired as an HBO Special in Spring 2002 and also toured the country. Additional stage credits include "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "La Puta Vida" at the New York Shakespeare Festival and "Parting Gestures" at INTAR.

Raised in New York City, Leguizamo studied acting with Lee Strasberg and Wynn Handman at New York University. He was the recipient of the 2002 ALMA Award for Entertainer of the Year.

Shaun El C. Leonardo

Shaun El C. Leonardo blends personal narrative and pop-cultural iconography within self-portraiture to convey the complexities of his own racial and masculine experience. El C. received his MFA from the Painting Department at the San Francisco Art Institute and currently lives/works in New York City. He has received residencies/ grants from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, The New York Studio School, The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and just recently, Art Matters. El C.'s work has been shown nationally and internationally. He is now represented by Rhys Gallery, Boston and March Gallery, New York City.

Flamenco Latino

Established in 1979 by Aurora Reyes and Basilio Georges, Flamenco Latino has performed throughout New York City and on tour, continually refining and honing its cutting-edge mix of Spanish and Latino cultural styles.

While each dancer dazzles in traditional flamenco style, the repertoire also includes solo and ensemble numbers set to Cuban, Puerto Rican and other Caribbean or South American forms. Both dancers and musicians combine their strength in Flamenco technique with their love for the spicy, tropical Salsa grooves.

MikeyLov - "El Proffesor"

Born in the Dominican Republic as Michael McCleod, 29 year-old MC & performer, *MikeyLov* - aka El Proffesor - currently resides in Queens, New York. His influences include well known Dominican Merengue singers Fernando Villalona and Sergio Vargas, and hip hop duo Mobb Deep. "All these different artist help me better understand both English & Spanish styles of music," says MikeyLov. "Which has giving me a crossover style that appeals to both audiences." He plans to continue performing as an MC and write music for other artists and performers.

Free Style Arts Association

Free Style Arts Association is a group of artists that are commissioned by community based art funders, museums, galleries, schools, colleges, and businesses to build their community's creative confidence and interest in the arts. Free Style Arts sets up public collaborative art projects in the sponsor's community that get community members to all add to a multi-media art piece, motivating them to feel more comfortable and confident with being creative and overall, building a more creative community that is more conscious of the arts and more capable of dialogue.

Free Style Arts projects have been commissioned by the Queens Council on the Arts, the Brooklyn Arts Council, the New York City Parks Dept., Socrates Sculpture Park, the Queens Museum of Art, P.S.1 MoMA, Scope Art Fair, NYC public schools, and New York University among others and featured in the New York Times art section, Daily News and NY Post.

Basil Twist

Originally from San Francisco, Basil Twist is a third generation puppeteer, who lives and works in New York. He became the only American to graduate from the École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres, France, one of the world's premiere puppetry training programs.

Twist's work was first spotlighted in New York in 1995 with his creation *The Araneidae Show*. Later presented in the 1996 International Puppetry Festival at The Public Theater, Twist was awarded a 1997 Bessie Award and a UNIMA Citation of Excellence. The production has toured internationally and most recently *The Araneidae Show* was seen at Pittsburgh's Andy Warhol Museum. 1998 was a landmark year for Twist with a Drama Desk Award nomination for his work with Theatre Couture's Off-Broadway hit *Tell Tale*, and the premiere of *Symphonie Fantastique* at HERE Arts Center. *Symphonie Fantastique* subsequently has toured to San Francisco, Montreal, Washington DC, France, London and Munich and as a part of Lincoln Center's New Vision's series in New York in 2003. In the fall of 2004 *Symphonie Fantastique* was the inaugural production for Dodger Stages. For *Symphonie Fantastique*, Twist received a 1999 Drama Desk Nomination, a UNIMA Citation of Excellence, the Henry Hewes Design Award, and an OBIE Award.

Since 1998, Twist has continually expanded the realm of puppetry by creating and touring new works, focusing especially on work integrated with live music. In 2000, Twist's Lincoln Center commissioned *Petrushka* premiered in New York and appeared at The Irving J. Gilmore Keyboard Festival in Michigan, The International Festival of Arts and Ideas in Connecticut, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Massachusetts and at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

The production was awarded a 2000 UNIMA Citation of Excellence. Twist created Master Peter's Puppet Show with Eos Orchestra, which premiered in New York and traveled to Chicago's Ravinia Festival, and to The Cleveland Art Museum. Twist developed the puppetry for Paula Vogel's new play *The Long Christmas Ride Home* which received its world premiere at Rhode Island's Trinity Repertory Company in May 2003, then at The Vineyard in November 2003 and The Long Wharf in January 2005. Twist was the underwater puppetry consultant on the third Harry Potter film. With a grant from The Asian Cultural Council and Creative Capital he spent four months in Japan, and through a commission from The Japan Society premiered a new work "Dogugaeshi" in November 2004.

His staging of Respighi's rarely performed "La Bella Dormiente Nel Bosco" premiered at Spoleto, USA in May 2005 and subsequently at Lincoln Center Festival in July of 2005. *Red Beads*, Twist's collaboration with director Lee Breuer and composer Ushio Torikai, premiered at the Skirball Center in New York in September 2005. In September 2006 Twist made his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Walt Disney Hall with "Master Peter's Puppet Show" with conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. Twist was commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera and The Atlanta Opera to create a new *Hansel & Gretel*, which premiered in December of 2006 in Houston. Twist is the director of The Dream Music Puppetry Program at HERE Arts Center in New York City where he works to ensure development and presenting opportunities for other puppetry artists.