

ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION
140 E. 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 838-8400
(212) 223-2778 FAX
www.mellon.org

DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
650 Fifth Avenue, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10019
(212) 974-7000
(212) 974-7590 (FAX)
www.ddcf.org

Contacts: Cheryl Ikemiya (212-974-7108 / cikemiya@ddcf.org) at DDCF
Diane Ragsdale (212-838-8400 / der@mellon.org) at AWMF
(Theatre Profiles & Press Contacts Follow This Release)

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Announce Grants to Seven Leading National Ensemble Theatres

New York, N.Y., April 3, 2006 -- The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation announced today that grants totaling \$640,000 were awarded to seven ensemble theaters for use over a two-year period. The grants were made as part of their new Leading National Ensemble Theatres Program, which is part of a larger Theatre Initiative launched by the two foundations in 2000 to support the country's nonprofit theatre community.

“Ensemble theatres are a segment of the theatre community often overlooked and under-funded,” said Joan E. Spero, president of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. “We consider this initiative an opportunity not only to support the stellar artistic work these groups produce, but to draw attention to the critical need to support ensemble theatres and increase their visibility and touring opportunities across the country.”

Rarely tied to a facility, ensemble theatres are generally a group of artists working together over time to develop a body of theatre work that represents the ensemble's collective artistic vision. The Leading National Ensemble Theatres Program provides combined AWMF and DDCF artistic programming and general operating support to ensemble theatres of national significance. The seven theatres receiving grants are:

- **Circuit Network on behalf of Culture Clash, San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA**
Awarded DDCF support of \$40,000 and AWMF support of \$40,000
- **Dell'Arte International, Blue Lake, CA**
Awarded DDCF support of \$30,000 and AWMF support of \$30,000
- **Ping Chong & Company (Fiji Theatre Company), New York, NY**
Awarded DDCF support of \$40,000 and AWMF support of \$40,000
- **Pregones – Touring Puerto Rican Theater Collection, Inc., Bronx, NY**
Awarded DDCF support of \$50,000 and AWMF support of \$70,000
- **Saratoga International Theater Institute, Inc. (SITI Company), New York, NY**
Awarded DDCF support of \$40,000 and AWMF support of \$40,000
- **Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Minneapolis, MN**
Awarded DDCF support of \$50,000 and AWMF support of \$70,000
- **Wooster Group, Inc., New York, NY**
Awarded DDCF support of \$50,000 and AWMF support of \$50,000

The two foundations hope to strengthen the ability of these theatres to create ambitious and imaginative artistic work. The grants may be used to support research, development, education, administration, production and/or touring. The funds provide the theatres with resources to take artistic risks; deepen relationships with community organizations, theatre partners, universities or presenting partners; or expand their reach with audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

Selected theatres demonstrated artistic excellence, exceptional organizational capacity and financial health, and impact on the communities they serve. Grant proposals were solicited on an invitation-only basis and were evaluated by a peer-review panel.

The grants are part of the DDCF and AWMF's larger **Theatre Initiative**, which was established in 2000 and has three grant-making components:

- The **Ensemble Theatre Program** was established in 2005 to provide artistic program grants to leading national ensemble theatres, and to support a re-granting program administered by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters for creation and touring projects that build collaborations among ensemble theatres, arts presenters and resident theatres.
- Since 2000, the **Leading National Theatres Program** has provided 23 of the country's leading nonprofit resident theatres with multi-year artistic program support from the AWMF and matching endowment support from the DDCF.
- The **New Generations Program** is a competitive re-granting program administered by Theatre Communications Group, which has awarded grants to 142 theatres since 2000 to mentor promising young theatre professionals and to build young, culturally-specific, disabled and/or under-served audiences.

To date, the two foundations have invested a total of \$38.6 million in the Theatre Initiative.

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (www.ddcf.org)

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, wildlife conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties. The foundation's assets currently total approximately \$1.7 billion. Of its grants totaling \$437 million to date, the foundation has approved approximately \$147 million to support nonprofit performing arts organizations throughout the United States.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (www.mellon.org)

A private philanthropic institution with assets of approximately \$4.8 billion, AWMF makes grants on a selective basis to institutions of higher education, independent libraries, centers for advanced study, museums, art conservation, and performing arts organizations. The Foundation's Performing Arts Program focuses on achieving long-term results by providing multi-year grants to leading organizations in the disciplines of music, theater, dance, and opera. Annual giving in the area of the performing arts has averaged \$17.3 million per year since 2000, not including approximately \$20 million in disaster recovery relief grants made to New York based performing arts organizations in the wake of September 11, 2001. In 2004 The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was awarded a National Medal of Arts.

THEATRE PROFILES & PRESS CONTACTS

Circuit Network for Culture Clash

San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA (www.circuitnetwork.com; www.cultureclash.com) – Culture Clash was founded in 1984 and has conceived, developed and premiered over 15 fully-staged productions to date, with major commissioned works currently under way for Mark Taper Forum/Center Theater Group, Berkeley Repertory, and La Jolla Playhouse. Culture Clash physicalizes comedy and satire, blending the best traditions of Charlie Chaplin and Cantinflas, while transforming vaudeville into a political weapon.

Award Purpose: Initiation of the Portal Project which will enable Culture Clash to serve as mentors and provide access and resources to playwrights and theater artists of color.

Contact: Nola Mariano, Co-Director / (415) 863-2441; nola@circuitnetwork.com

Dell'Arte International

Blue Lake, CA (www.dellarte.com) – Since 1977 the Dell'Arte Company has created over 35 award-winning works and toured extensively both nationally and internationally. In addition to collaborative creation, Dell'Arte's primary areas of research are the physical training of the actor and the relation of artist to community. Dell'Arte's new, fully accredited MFA program in Ensemble Based Physical Theatre is training the next generation of actor-creators.

Award Purpose: To advance the ensemble's work in the realm of physical theatre and to develop new ensemble works for international touring.

Contact: Jessica Gleason, Marketing Director / (707) 668-5663; jlg0127@yahoo.com

Ping Chong & Company (Fiji Theatre Company)

New York, NY (www.pingchong.org) – Ping Chong & Company creates innovative works of theatre and art for modern, multi-cultural audiences in New York and throughout the world. Since its inception the company has created more than 50 original works that explore the intersection of race, history, culture and technology in the modern world. Artistic Director Ping Chong is recognized as one of the most significant Asian-American artists working today.

Award Purpose: Creation of two, three-month artistic residency periods over two years to develop projects in the artistic pipeline.

Contact: Bruce Allardice, Managing Director / (212) 529-1557; pingchong@earthlink.net

Pregones – Touring Puerto Rican Theater Collection, Inc.

Bronx, NY (www.pregones.org) – Working as an ensemble, this group of artists has produced more than 50 new plays rooted in Puerto Rican/Latino culture and presented twice as many visiting companies since 1979. Pregones is known for mining connections between theater and popular culture, for creating plays with dynamic visual and rhythmic character, and for developing lasting forms of audience participation among the least solvent communities in The Bronx.

Award Purpose: Development of new Main Stage works and implementation of a business plan to revamp their touring program.

Contact: Priscilla Aguilar, Visibility Coordinator / (718) 585-1202; paguilar@pregones.org

Saratoga International Theater Institute, Inc.

New York, NY (www.siti.org) – Founded in 1992 by Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki, SITI Company began as an agreement to redefine and revitalize contemporary theater in the United States through an emphasis on ensemble work, international cultural exchange and collaboration. SITI has created an exciting and eclectic repertoire of over 28 plays ranging from classics to opera, to company devised pieces, to work with new playwrights. SITI's training programs continue to influence and inspire theater artists throughout the world.

Award Purpose: Creation of a SITI Season in New York, creation of new works including the expansion of touring capability, and development of a public relations program.

Contact: Megan Wanlass Szalla, Managing Director / (212) 868-0860; megan@siti.org

Theatre de la Jeune Lune

Minneapolis, MN (www.jeunelune.org) – Jeune Lune settled permanently in Minneapolis in 1985, after seven years of splitting their seasons between France and the United States. From its anchor, Jeune Lune has toured in recent years to such prestigious venues as the Yale Repertory Theater and Trinity Repertory Theatre. Its national and international reputation has expanded with such productions as *Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream*, which won the 1993 American Theatre Critic's Association New Play Award.

Award Purpose: Provide compensation for ensemble members and expand presence in the international arena.

Contact: Steve Richardson, Producing Director /
(612) 332-3968 x107; steve.richardson@jeunelune.org

Wooster Group, Inc.

New York, NY (www.thewoostergroup.org) – For over thirty years, The Wooster Group, under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte, has been making theatre that is reflective of and responsive to our evolving culture. Wooster Group theatre pieces are radical stagings of both modern and classic texts, juxtaposing found materials, films and videos, dance and movement, multi-track scoring, and an architectonic approach to design.

Award Purpose: Support of three newly commissioned projects - a Summer 2006 premiere at Barcelona's GREC Festival, a new work based on the 16th century opera, *La Didone*, and a 360° interactive/immersive panoramic film.

Contact: Yvan Greenberg, General Manager / (212) 966-9796; yvan@thewoostergroup.org