Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Award

The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has awarded the National Performance Network a three-year grant of $2,250,000. The grant will support core NPN programs, including the Residency subsidies, the Creation Fund to commission new work, the Community Fund to deepen artist and community participation in the creative process, the National Arts Administration Mentorship Program to provide training and development to young and mid-career professionals by experienced mentors, and the ongoing partnership with the Network of Cultural Centers of Color. Beneficiaries of the grant will be NPN Partners (artists and presenters) and the geographic and cultural communities they serve.

NPN connects local and national cultural resources, and is regularly involved in extended collaborations. In the past year, NPN brought over $800,000 in national resources to local communities, subsidizing nearly 150 artists residencies based in 35 states; generating almost $1.5 million in matching funds. More than 425,000 audience members have attended Network-sponsored performances, and over 500,000 people have participated in NPN residency activities.

Citing the grant, Program Director for the Arts Olga Garay said, "The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is pleased to continue its support of the National Performance Network. Through its history, the NPN has touched the lives of artists and communities throughout our country. NPN is a proven mechanism for using the arts to build community and to create new resources and opportunities for contemporary artists."

Philip Morris New Choreography Fund Award

The National Performance Network (NPN) has been awarded a grant of $25,000 from Philip Morris Companies New Choreography Fund. The grant supports NPN's Creation Fund, which offers matching money to NPN Partners and other co-commissioners for the creation of new works. Philip Morris New Choreography grants are awarded to organizations that demonstrate leadership and commitment to the field: innovation and creativity in development of new works.

Philip Morris Companies Inc. has been involved with numerous cultural activities for more than four decades. The qualities that guide the successful growth of its businesses — innovation, creativity and diversity — have also served as the cornerstone of its cultural giving. Philip Morris' cultural program focuses on contemporary and multicultural visual and performing arts and the company is recognized worldwide as a leading supporter of the arts.

CrossRoads and StarMaps
Aligning Methods and Models
By Lisa McCarthy

Yes, my friends, it's once again the time of year to marshal our forces, harvest our ideas, sculpt our course and cast our model into the portals of the cultural kingdom. "What's up?" you say. Simply stated, the 18th NPN Annual Meeting is upon us.

Set for December 14 - 18, 2002 in Washington, D.C., we've worked with due diligence to design a provocative and productive meeting. Our purpose is to parlay our collective creativity into continuing to forge a formidable front that secures the stability and survival of our activist arts agenda and organizations. Too much alliteration? Anywho...

This year's meeting, CrossRoads and StarMaps: Aligning Methods and Models, will focus on illuminating and documenting our techniques. As the American artistic infrastructure experiences continued upheavals through attacks from self-aggrandized, puritanical inmates, it is imperative we, the independent, artist-driven presenter and alternative, community-centered artist, present the standards through which our art is discussed and evaluated. Concrete, communal and causative (can't escape that alliteration) data is needed to affect systemic revision at national cultural policy levels. It is those of us on the frontlines of innovation and in the trenches of our communities, with decades of expertise, who must lead the charge. It's time to bring to full fruition the organizing strength of this network.

So, your assignment, should you choose to accept this mission (and why wouldn't you as an ally committed to supporting diversity, active engagement in communities and challenging, alternative performing art) is to join us prepared to articulate ideas, impart the knowledge of your experience, offer constructive strategies and strive to advance the capacity of NPN within your communities, cities, states, regions and nation. But alas my friends, what value is work without play?

While our agenda will require your steadfast attention, it remains replete with

continued on page 6
LETTER TO THE FIELD

Providing an opportunity for NPN Partners to get to know the work of artists from all over the US is one of the most important aspects of the NPN Annual Meeting. In the last few years, touring systems for artists have been severely disrupted and it is harder than ever for artists outside of the cultural mainstays (i.e. the coasts) to gain any recognition for their work beyond the local level; breaking into national touring is harder than ever. One of the reasons that NPN emphasizes stability in its membership is to reinforce the long term relationships that can build trust among NPN Partners so that a recommendation of an artist from one NPN Partner to another, even if that artists’ work is currently only known in its local community, can lead to national touring opportunities for the artist. A significant characteristic of NPN Partners is that they are simultaneously engaged in presenting artists from many different places, nationally and internationally, while they are supporting, encouraging and advocating for their local artists’ community. NPN becomes a crossroads where new artists — young, emerging, and mid-career — can meet in the national arena.

The showcases at the NPN Annual Meeting — live and video — are a substantial opportunity to create this exchange of knowledge about artists who are ready to tour through NPN support. At each Annual Meeting the NPN National Office strives to make these showcase opportunities work as well as they can. For the upcoming meeting in Washington, DC, December 14-18, 2002 there will be multiple ways to see artists’ work both live and in video. Three nights of evening performances are scheduled, ArtBursts (brief excerpts in between sessions during the day), a video showcase on Monday morning, and the 2-hour video den.

Two of the evening showcases will be artists who are currently receiving support through the NPN Creation Fund; one night is of local, DC area artists curated by Carla Perlo and DC colleagues. The pieces are complete works or substantial excerpts and will be as fully produced as we are able. Only the local showcase will be shorter excerpts in order to see as many artists as can reasonably be included on one evening (without wearing us out). By focusing the national showcases on Creation Fund artists, NPN is able to extend support for these artists. We are encouraging the full companies (DC area and national) to participate in the entire NPN Annual Meeting/Artists Retreat, thus adding significant networking and peer exchange opportunities for artists on the national level. To everyone, artists and NPN Partners, we emphasize that the NPN Annual Meeting and Artists Retreat is not about booking, but about building relationships in the field by ensuring that all of those whose work is affected are “at the table” together.

At the video showcase, for the first time this year, we will have videos from La Red, NPN’s partner with Arts International in the Performing Americas project. The La Red curatorial committee will be attending the Annual Meeting and will be showing videos of artists they have identified as ready to tour in the US through this project. Additionally, NPN Partners are invited to not only bring videos of new artists that they want to recommend to their colleagues, but to also bring videos of artists to recommend for the Performing Americas project. Immediately following the NPN Annual Meeting and Artists Retreat, the curatorial committee will meet to select work for next year’s tour.

Seeing work and knowing one another better are the main reasons NPN convenes artists and NPN Partners with colleagues annually. I hope that all can take advantage of the many ways this happens and make the best of this occasion to expand and strengthen touring.

--MK Wegmann
Greetings, NPN Partners! Herein find some of the insights, frequently asked questions, tricks and tribulations I am party to as the NPN Core Subsidies Program Director (“Core Subsidies” include Residency Funds, Creation Funds and Community Funds).

(1) Final Reports

By now, I hope that everyone in NPN-land is aware there are NEW FINAL REPORT FORMS AND PROCEDURES for Presenters and Artists as of September 2002. These changes replace all other Final Report forms, including my recent attempt at a "universal" report form (a noble failure, I thought).

As always, my goal in making these changes is to get the NPN organization the information it needs while making the process as simple as possible for everyone involved. We in the NPN Office honestly appreciate the time people take to comply with our paperwork requirements.

The single most important change is this: from now on, NPN Partners can integrate Final Reports about Creation and Community Fund projects into related Residency Final Reports. Two subsidies, one Final Report. Wow, huh? We mean it when we say "simplify."

Please contact me with questions about the new Final Reports, including the newly-revised Facts & Figures Table. I am only too happy to schmooze!

(2) NPN 101 Makes Perfect Orientation for NPN Newcomers

I will be leading an NPN 101 BASIC ORIENTATION pre-session for NPN newcomers before the official start of the Annual Meeting on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Newcomers include:

new staff members at NPN Partners
staff members who need a refresher course
artists who are new/unfamiliar with NPN

Participants will find out all the basic information they need to submit and receive subsidies from NPN.

Please note: this is the ONLY basic orientation that will be held during the NPN Annual Meeting. "BPP 201" on Monday, December 16th will be an advanced orientation.

(3) Community & Creation Funds: "The Next Generation"

We anticipate a mid-February 2003 deadline for the next Creation and Community Fund cycles. Please note, in the Community Fund area, ONLY PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENCY-RELATED COMMUNITY FUND PROJECTS will be considered. In other words, no Technology, Administrative or Networking proposals will be considered. NPN Partners who received Community Fund subsidies in this last round (Summer 2002) should not apply.

Thanks to the recent grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, NPN will be able to maintain a stable series of subsidy cycles over the next 3 fiscal years. We anticipate that during this period (ending June 2005), Creation and Community Fund deadlines will continue to be in February and July each year.

Beginning with the February 2003 cycle, SPECIAL CONSIDERATION will be given towards residency-related Community Fund projects that include or emphasize evaluation, documentation and dissemination of promising practices. As before, NPN Partners can request up to $7,500 total for projects; now, up to $5,000 of that amount can be put towards evaluation, documentation and dissemination costs. Particularly promising practices may be published on the NPN website.

This initiative is being prompted by the need for more and better materials in our field generally, as well as NPN’s need to better demonstrate its Partners’ impact and innovations.
This ongoing column highlights the NPN Partners who are finding creative ways to use core subsidies.
This contribution by Jane Hirshberg of Dance Exchange

This project began in early 2001. Dance Exchange was approached by the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center to make a new work for its Feb. 2002 American Composer Festival, slated to feature Leonard Bernstein and the Age of Anxiety. That commission came from TBPAC Vice President George Thompson, who programs dance in one of the center’s big halls. At the same time, Karla Hartley had planned on having a Dance Exchange Express performance in her smaller space, also at TBPAC. The Center decided to use NPN residency funding to help offset the series of visits the Dance Exchange would be making to Tampa for three performances during October, then again for three weeks in February, leading up to the premiere on Feb. 16. During October, the Dance Exchange team conducted some research and discovery in Tampa and laid the groundwork for the community interaction that would be part of the anticipated larger residency program. In the meantime, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange wanted to have a composer involved with this particular commission.

At first, we were not sure if we were looking for someone to sew together several Bernstein excerpts, or if new music should be composed. We decided to work with composer Andy Teirstein, a Bernstein student who writes music for concert hall, film, theater and dance. We knew Andy could do either the sewing or the composing or both. In addition to composing, he has scored, arranged and directed a number of musical theater pieces, and has collaborated extensively with choreographers.

All the while, Liz was researching Bernstein, looking into music rights, trying to get a sense of what the new piece would be. Then September 11 introduced a whole new definition of the Age of Anxiety. In November, the Dance Exchange conducted a mini-residency with a group of funders at the annual meeting of Grantmakers in the Arts. Liz previewed an experimental section of the new work, which was now being called “Uneasy Dances for Uneasy Times.” We later dropped the Uneasy Times.

During this time, Dance Exchange was in discussions with DTW and Danspace Project about plans for January 2002 Dance Exchange performances in New York. We agreed on a repertory concert and short residency; and NPN funding to DTW was allocated for this work. Based on the strong positive reaction of the New Yorkers in the GIA audience, we were eager to include this new work in our New York program. The piece had a definite post-9/11 feel, carried deep emotional power, beautiful movement, and generally made a profound artistic statement in response to the events of September 11. To add to the evolving creative mix, we decided to bring Andy to the studios for additional collaboration on the new work. Andy spent a week with us in December, and the piece came together in a glorious collaborative process.

Without the multiple layers of NPN support, this amazing confluence of artistic inspiration would not have been possible. The January performances in New York were met with positive critical acclaim, and the February piece, with the Anxiety section revised and worked into the overall Bernstein piece was one of the strongest works our company has made in years.

This effort has truly been a pivotal artistic moment in our history. NPN support for Tampa made it possible for the Dance Exchange to visit that community twice. NPN funding for Andy Teirstein made it possible for the music to be made for the final section of the Bernstein piece, and for informed decisions about the other music that was chosen for the piece. NPN support also made it possible for our company to show a new work for its New York run, which also was supported by separate NPN funding to DTW.

We consider this year-long project to be a significant, multi-layered success story, and we acknowledge the pivotal role played by NPN’s financial support.
When You Ring NPN...
By Stanlyn Breve

The title "Administrative Assistant" doesn't really conjure up any feelings of excitement—most job titles don't. But my position at NPN thus far has honestly been fulfilling. In my fourth month as administrative assistant, I have observed and learned much about who NPN is and where NPN is trying to go.

Although I'm from a fine arts background, I was thrown into being an "Administrative Assistant" four years ago. Since then I've worked in corporate settings, so I was thrilled to land a job working with NPN in a nonprofit atmosphere. I also realized that it would be a challenge to get the office up to speed organizationally as well as communicatively.

I am very pleased with the procedures and techniques that my co-workers have initiated and that I plan to maintain as well as build on. With the addition of the database and much experimentation with methods, we are improving office flow to simply make "everything work." That being said, I have to thank everyone for bearing with us as we tighten up procedures and demand more structure with paperwork and deadlines.

A portion of my job includes reviewing Final Reports. While they may be tiresome for you to fill out, I actually enjoy reading about the stimulating projects happening around the Network. Learning is one of my favorite pastimes.

Additionally, I appreciate the new relationships that I have begun to build with the staff, artists and NPN Partners. I actually enjoy when you ring. Helping is what I was hired to do, and I have gotten to know many of the NPN Partners from doing just that. I value the opportunity of working with NPN, and intend to continue to learn and grow.

BUILDING THE CODE

A Project of the National Performance Network

Building the Code is forging ahead in its development as an arts education project. The first of 11 national contemporary artists have been documented, and the comic format chapter of performance artist Rhodessa Jones has been published in the Association of Performing Arts Presenters September/October 2002 issue of Inside Arts.

Another four artists/organizations have been interviewed and are in the process of being documented in comic form, now presently in various stages of the process. Included are: Lily Yeh and the Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia; photographer Tory Read in Denver; graphic artist Ricardo Levins Morales in Minneapolis, and the web-based Picture Projects in New York City.

The New Orleans component of the BTC project got underway Sept. 19th with a meeting of 10 arts educators and 10 faculty from the Fannie Lou Hamer Charter School in the first of nine monthly sessions. The CBAR group (Community-Based Arts Residency) will create a dialog between participants to (a) give feedback on the contents of BTC publications as they develop and (b) help form curriculum for the classroom that integrates community-based arts into public school settings; e.g., music into the mathematics classroom.

The participants will also contribute to a web log, found on the BTC website. Visit www.buildingthecode.org for more information.

-Kim Dummons, Project Coordinator

Frame from Building the Code Changing Lives A profile of Rhodessa Jones. Copyright @ Keith Knight (kchronicles.com) and Mat Schwarzman, 2001.
Performing Americas Launches at Highways

After more than a year in planning, NPN, La Red and Arts International kick off the national tour of Grupo Krapp, from Buenos Aires, Argentina — the inaugural residency of the Performing Americas project. This young company will be performing ¿No Me Besabas? at Highways Performance Space November 7, 8, & 9, 2002, as part of a one-week residency. From there the company will travel to Austin’s Dance Umbrella November 12-17 and to San Antonio, presented by the Carver Community Cultural Center, November 17-23, 2002.

Grupo Krapp works by investigation within the overlap of dance and theater, trying to align these disciplines into a whole. The company consists of dancers, musicians and actors. ¿No Me Besabas? addresses issues of violence in contemporary society, using humor and physicality. It premiered in November 2000 at the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas.

Performing Americas is a partnership among NPN, La Red and Arts International to increase artistic exchange in the Western Hemisphere and is funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Creation Fund Awards
Summer 2002

Columbia College Chicago, Office of Community Arts Partnership, St. Joseph’s Historic Foundation, Inc., Carver Community Cultural Center for Chuck Davis’s Juntamio.

Dance Place, Dance Umbrella/Austin for Jane Comfort & Company’s Persæphonora.

Dance Workshop, Walker Art Center, Flynn Theatre for the Performing Arts for Robin Holcomb’s O Say a Sunset.

Elia Arce’, St. Joseph’s Historic Foundation, Inc. for Keith Antar Mason’s Shango Desert Bridge.

Everett Dance Theatre, Dance Theater Workshop, New World Theater, Contemporary Dance Theatre, Inc., for Everett Dance Theatre’s Home Movies.

Elia Arce’s The Fifth Commandment.

La Peña Cultural Center, New World Theater for Marc Bannister Joseph’s Word Becomes Flesh.

MECA, Cross Community Coalition, and El Centro Su Teatro for Tony Garcia’s Papí, Mí and Cesar Chavez.

New World Theater, Dance Theatre Workshop for Dawn Akemi Saito’s Blood Cherries.

On The Boards, Contemporary Dance Theatre, Inc., Florida Dance Association, Dance Theater Workshop, for Pat Graneys The Vivian Girls.

Community Fund
Summer 2002

Asian Arts Initiative
Asian American Artists Exchange
Cultural Odyssey Technology Project
Dance Theater Workshop
Expansion of David Drake Residency
Dance Umbrella/Austin Organizational Uplift
Dog & Pony Theatre Company
Communications/Publishing
El Centro Su Teatro
Continuation of Touring Encuentro
Elia Arce Introduce Artists Residency Program
Flynn Theatre for the Performing Arts
Expansion of Universes Residency
Highways Performance Space
Expansion of Performing Americas
Junebug Productions Technology Upgrades
La Peña Cultural Center
Expansion of Bannister Residency
Legion Arts Young Audience Development
Links Hall Building Audiences
Out North Contemporary Art House
Upgrade Media Production
Pat Graneys Company
Rennie Harris Hip Hop Project
St. Joseph’s Historic Foundation
Celebration—KWAAN

Annual Meeting continued from page one: pleasantries and potent performances (alliteration-prone – one of those newly discovered genetically-triggered syndromes).

Prepare to be tantalized by Artburns, media presentations, cutting-edge performance works; and of course Papa Bizzo 2002. Rejoice with kindred spirits engaged in enlightened and profound dialogue. Release yourself into the wondrous mystical ambiance of “the NPN.”

OK, that last one might have stumbled over the precipice, but you get the idea. We’re planned, we’re ready; we want you. To that end, I leave you with this message, and no questions please:

You, me, D.C. – Posse Up.