

in·spired

1: filled with the urge
or **ability** to do or
feel something creative

2: to create a **positive**
feeling in a person

3: of **extraordinary**
quality, as if arising
from some external
creative impulse

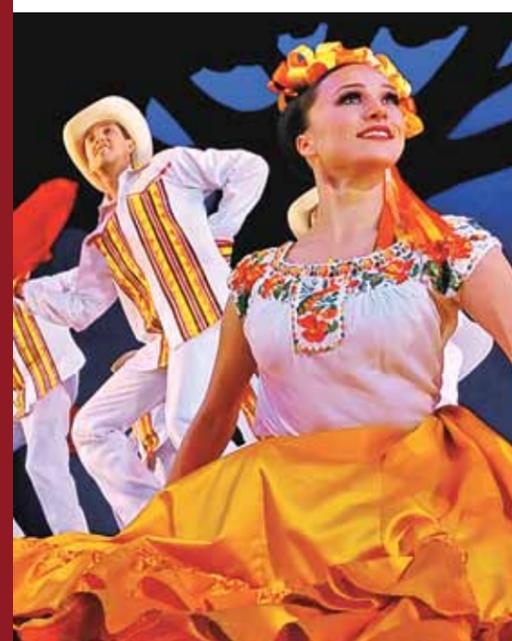
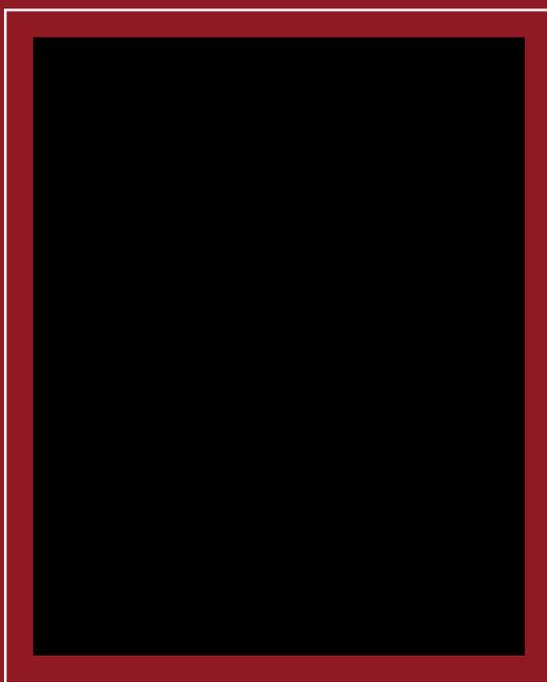
for you, by you

NJPAC

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

report to the community 2015

in·side



1: filled with the urge or **ability** to do or **feel** something creative

2: to create a **positive** feeling in a person

3: of **extraordinary** quality, as if arising from some external **creative** impulse



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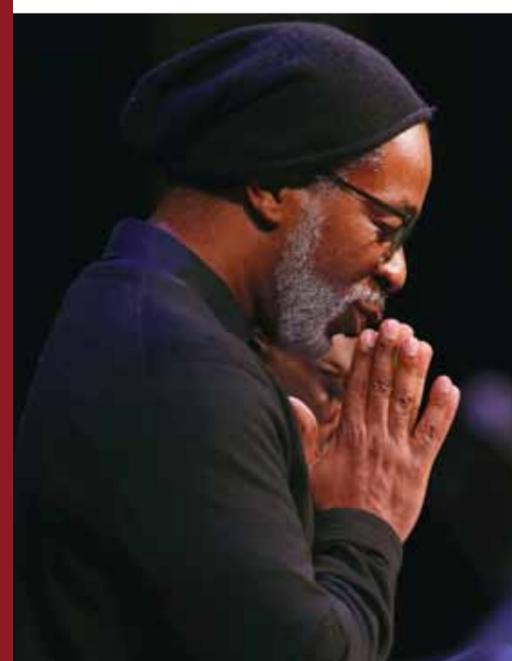
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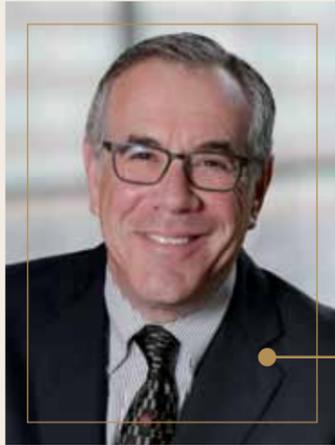
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A Message from
John Schreiber
 President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friend of the Arts Center:

While *Life, Look* and *The Saturday Evening Post* may be fond memories, I invite you to page through the Arts Center's homage to those weeklies from days gone by: our annual *Report to the Community*, a glossy magazine-ish retrospective of 2015, an important and memorable year in our young history.

Thanks to your support and advocacy, and the 24/7 efforts of our talented and dedicated family of arts and education professionals, NJPAC is cooking on all burners. The payoff on our mission and business has been marvelous.

While our financial, attendance and fundraising results were among the best we've posted in many seasons, I am especially pleased with how the Arts Center has utilized its position as the State's anchor cultural institution to increase our role as a leader in creative arts learning and community engagement, both on and off campus.

We've done this in a variety of innovative ways:

We are providing the *Orff in Your Community* early childhood music education program, designed for 2- to 6-year-olds and their parents and caregivers, throughout the five wards of Newark. This effective and fun program gives toddlers their first crack at music-making, while simultaneously engaging the caring adults in their lives.

We partnered with the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark, WBGO and Congregation Ahavas Sholom in Newark to produce a series of concerts and conversations, as well as an exhibition at the temple's Jewish Museum of New Jersey, on the relationship between African Americans and Jews, experienced through the lens of jazz.

NJPAC Stage Exchange and *Jersey Moves! Festival of Dance* are performance programs that allow NJPAC to turn up the volume on deserving theater and dance companies from throughout the State: a chance for creative non-profit companies to produce new work for themselves, and then have the chance to make new friends and fans by performing it in our theaters. It's a win-win-win: for them, for us, and for audiences.

I'm proud that we create new and exciting content. *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, which merged hip-hop, rap and Tchaikovsky, is an NJPAC property that sold out Prudential Hall, played 11 cities nationwide, then toured Russia under the auspices of the State Department. Very cool.

Next season, we'll introduce *Carefree*, a collaboration with RKO Pictures, which provides a new take on the songs and dances of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Look for it at NJPAC in November, and touring nationally after that.

Enjoy this *Report to the Community*. It is a snapshot of the vitality, creativity and positive activity that I am thrilled to experience every day on the job.

And do share with me your good ideas and thoughts. As I hope you know by now, everybody at NJPAC is wide open to what's next. You're a valued stakeholder in our future, and we're all ears.

With gratitude and affection,

John Schreiber



A Message from
John R. Strangfeld
 Chair, Board of Directors

To NJPAC Friends and Supporters:

Your New Jersey Performing Arts Center was built to be many things to many people—concert hall, center of education, community gathering place—but metaphorically it acts as a lighthouse.

The NJPAC campus and stages glowed with high-wattage events 62% of all of the days in FY15—that's a 9% increase over the previous year—attracting more than 386,000 audience members to its doors.

This beacon doesn't shine from some remote place. NJPAC is ambitiously engaged with the broader community through dynamic collaborations that epitomize the spirit of its mission and leadership. In these pages you'll find many examples of partnerships that conjured remarkable experiences, from a jazz exhibit and dramatic play readings to free concerts and a traveling book series for children.

As NJPAC continues to intensify its momentum as an arts innovator and champion for the resurgence of the City of Newark, this nonprofit institution relies mightily on the generosity and forward-thinking ideas of its benefactors. Many people are surprised to learn that only 60% of the overall operating budget is covered by earned business income (for example, ticket revenue and parking), while contributions and endowment represent 40%.

A terrifically proactive base of donors, members and corporate sponsors enables NJPAC to not only present more than 400 events each year, but to fund scholarships for promising young performers in need. They turn hopes into reality by placing students in studios with masters like bassist Christian McBride or providing musical instruments and instruction to underserved communities.

NJPAC's radiance is clearly visible as you navigate this annual report. You'll detect it in photos of laughing kids and artists of international stature...behind-the-scenes stories about visiting dignitaries and loyal staffers...comments from people inspired by their connection to the Arts Center. This was the year that NJPAC shared hands and resources with Newark in anticipation of a citywide, 350th anniversary celebration; launched a U.S.-to-Russia tour for its astounding *Hip Hop Nutcracker*; and galvanized Disney to choose NJPAC and students in Greater Newark as one in a handful of outposts in the nation for the *Disney Musicals in Schools* program.

Our beginnings were just a flicker of a notion that an urban center for the arts would bring immeasurable change for the good to the State. As NJPAC continues to touch more and more lives through cultural encounters, I know an even brighter future awaits us.

Sincerely,

John R. Strangfeld

extraordinary moments

First Lady Michelle Obama *Rocks*

"No matter who you are, no matter where you come from, you are beautiful, you are powerful, you are brilliant, you are funny," **First Lady Michelle Obama** enthused to honorees at the taping of BET's **Black Girls Rock! Awards**, which aired in April. The show's return to NJPAC drew a full house to Prudential Hall, which resounded with cheers for **Cicely Tyson, Erykah Badu** and **Ava DuVernay**, among many other inspirational role models for young African-American women.

Portuguese Pride

Aníbal Cavaco Silva, the 19th President of Portugal, made a stop in Prudential Hall by invitation of the Portuguese Consulate in Newark during his visit to the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. In his speech, Cavaco Silva paid tribute to Portuguese-Americans for their industriousness and contributions to the U.S. and urged them to continue this proud tradition. Newark's Portuguese community has long been active in the Arts Center's history and advances such programming as June's performance of **Danças Ocultas** and fado singer **Nathalie Pires**.

Arts and Letters

Last time we hopped aboard **Books on the Move**, young readers at four locations throughout Greater Newark were fascinated as guest volunteers read *Alvin Ailey*, a biography of the choreographer by **Andrea Davis Pinkney**—and afterward took home a free copy. Not only has the program become a compelling page-turner, reports the Department of Community Engagement, but now NJPAC Teaching Artists are participating as readers in the latest edition of the series. "The Queen of Jazz" is front and center for the program's second excursion: *Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat: Ella Fitzgerald* by **Roxane Orgill**.



Aaron Weinstein performs as part of *Jazz, Jews, and African Americans*

Jazz Connections

An unlikely alliance of very diverse institutions, organizations and congregations—all united by a passion for jazz—rallied support for the exhibit **Jazz, Jews, and African Americans: Cultural Intersections in Newark and Beyond** at the **Jewish Museum of New Jersey** at the **Congregation Ahavas Sholom** in Newark. Co-produced by the museum, NJPAC, the **Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark** and **WBGO Jazz 88.3FM**, the consortium also included five houses of worship along Newark's Broadway, **New Jersey City University** in Jersey City and the **Newark Arts Council**.

"This is a shining example of how the arts and faith-based groups can partner in a celebration of their mutual love of jazz," said **Donna Walker-Kuhne**, Vice President of Community Engagement.

On display from October 15, 2015 – January 31, 2016, the exhibit chronicled the successful and sometimes contentious relationships between black and Jewish jazzmakers through photos and text, journeying from the 1920s to the present. Visitors packed the opening reception to survey more than 50 narrative panels and listen to the music of jazz violinist **Aaron Weinstein & Trio**.

Throughout the engagement of *Jazz, Jews, and African Americans*, a slate of free activities and events included screenings, live performances, a panel discussion, and a Romare Bearden collage workshop. The scheduling of the exhibition dovetailed neatly with the **TD James Moody Jazz Festival**, the **Newark Celebration 350 Family Fun Festival** and the Newark Arts Council's **Open Doors Citywide Arts Festival**.



President Aníbal Cavaco Silva of Portugal

First Lady Michelle Obama appeared at BET's *Black Girls Rock!* Awards in Prudential Hall



Celebrity Nerd-off with *The Late Show* host Stephen Colbert and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* director J.J. Abrams

ser·en·dip·i·ty

- 1: finding pleasant things that are not looked for
- 2: an aptitude for making desirable discoveries by accident
- 3: luck or good fortune

Tour de Force

"This is 2,700 more people than I thought would be here," wondered feature film director **J.J. Abrams** as he surveyed a packed, 2,800-seat Prudential Hall for the **Montclair Film Festival's** annual fundraiser at NJPAC.

"C'mon, this is New Jersey! They all show up," gleefully sniped his interviewer, *Late Show* host **Stephen Colbert**.

Colbert was back for another brisk go-round with a subject he finds "most amazing": This time it was the multiple Emmy-winning director, who had just caught the red-eye after completing the mix for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. The founder and chief of the production company Bad Robot, Abrams joined Colbert for a this-is-your-life journey through his career as a writer, creator and/or director of smashes like *Lost* and *Felicity* on TV and *Star Trek*, *Mission Impossible: 3* and *Super 8* on the big screen.

Among the evening's funniest revelations: In late '80s Chicago, Colbert had an unsuccessful audition for *Taking Care of Business* (a film co-written by Abrams, then titled *Filofax*). "Slusho," an imaginary slushie drink, almost always makes a cameo in Abrams' films (so does R2-D2). The filmmaker's favorite *Star Wars* alien is Kardue'sai'Malloc from the Mos Eisley Cantina. (Thank you, man on the aisle, for reminding him of the character's name.)

And, by the way, this was the first time Abrams had watched a screening of his *Star Wars* trailer before an audience—which was happier than a wookiee in a fur vault.



Branford Marsalis and Jacques Lacombe

Jacques Lacombe and NJSO meet Branford Marsalis

The **NJSO** and Music Director **Jacques Lacombe** kicked off the 2015–16 season with an opening-weekend program featuring saxophonist **Branford Marsalis**. *Q on Stage* reported, "This was a thoroughly satisfying evening whose highest praise is it leaves us hungry for what the new season holds."



Seth Rudetsky with Christine Ebersole

Sirius-ly Funny

By now, *the ah-mahzing* **Seth Rudetsky**—as he's known to New York theater cognoscenti—probably has his own entry badge to the building. The SiriusXM Broadway host has been the musical director for two *Spotlight Galas*, and interviewed and accompanied **Christine Ebersole** on piano for *American Songbook at NJPAC*. A multi-talented hyphenate (actor-singer-pianist-activist-author-humorist-etc.), Rudetsky also channels his energy into the Department of Arts Education, for which he has become a vocal advocate of aspiring vocalists. He coached younger students through the complicated lyrics of a Stephen Sondheim medley, which was a hit of this year's *Spotlight Gala*.

All the Right Notes

It's only a year old but already making enough noise to attract everyone's attention: Arts Education's **Orff** early-childhood music program reached capacity enrollment at Newark's **South Ward Community Center** in the spring and was back by popular demand in the fall. The pilot launch put xylophones, tambourines and other small percussion instruments in the hands of eager tots, who explored music-making, movement and storytelling under the guidance of a teaching artist. The South Ward Community Center is one of nine buildings designated as "Centers of Hope" by Newark **Mayor Ras J. Baraka** to expand cultural and educational programs for young people.



Orff Early Childhood Music Program



NJPAC Arts Education Alumnus Okieriete Onaodowan (left) with Anthony Ramos and Lin-Manuel Miranda in Broadway's *Hamilton*

NJPAC Alumnus in *Hamilton*

"I've done most of my growing as an artist at the PAC," says former Arts Education student **Okieriete ("Oak") Onaodowan**, (far left), who later became a Teaching Assistant in the **Summer Youth Performance Workshop** (now the **Young Artist Summer Intensive**). If you want to see what he's been up to recently, just try to get a ticket to Broadway's hip-hop juggernaut, *Hamilton*, in which he portrays President James Madison and Hercules Mulligan. Powerful in size, voice, talent and heart, "Oak" was a member of the original *Hamilton* cast during its premiere engagement at The Public Theater and also appeared on Broadway in *Rocky* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Newark Turns 350

The year 2016 marks the 350th anniversary of the founding of the City of Newark, but the party had an early start time. **Newark Celebration 350** (NC350), an alliance that NJPAC President and CEO **John Schreiber** serves as Programming Chair, metaphorically lit the candles in October with a free **Family Fun Festival** in scenic Military Park. In the weeks prior to that, Schreiber, NC350 Chair **Junius Williams** and Executive Director **John Johnson Jr.** together visited each of the city's wards to brainstorm with residents

and workers on ways to best honor the occasion.

Newark **Mayor Ras J. Baraka** announced the first slate of 100-plus events soon afterward at a City Hall press conference: everything from parades, festivals and performances to a "\$3.50 for 350" promotion at NJPAC and free tickets to Devils games at Prudential Center.

She may be three and a half centuries old, but the Dowager of Essex is still the younger sibling of New York (1664) and Boston (1630).



From Newark Celebration 350

More Preludes

At NJPAC, the refrain "Let's all go to the lobby" is sound advice for music lovers. **Preludes** concerts, held in Prudential Hall lobby before curtain at select performances, are like appetizers to patrons who want to keep an ear out for up-and-coming talent.

Although the lobby is a familiar, nearby "stage" for students in **Wells Fargo Jazz for Teens** and the **Brick City Jazz Orchestra**, it is a showcase for other ensembles in New Jersey. This year they included the student orchestra of **Elisabeth Morrow School** in Englewood, which performed prior to **André Watts'** concert in May, and the **TeenTown Jazz Big Band** of the **JCC Thurnauer School of Music** in Tenafly, which warmed up the crowd before the **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** performance in November.



NJSO accompanied the screen classic *Singin' in the Rain*

Cinema Scores

The **NJSO** performed the live orchestral scores to two films at special screenings in 2015: *Singin' in the Rain* in February and *Home Alone* in December. *Manhattan Digest* writes of the former that the NJSO "has not only reminded us how fun a night of light-hearted screen music can be and what an absolutely joy-filled film *Singin' in the Rain* is; they've also reminded us that the power of live symphonic music—when played to this level of excellence—is a vital treasure." *Cinema Retro* writes of the latter: "Not only do these shows allow audiences to relish the thrill of hearing a live orchestra but it also exposes many people to the merits of worthy movies that they may not have been familiar with...preceded by the NJSO's welcome practice of encouraging audience members to show up an hour early for [pre-concert festivities]."

en•ter•tain

1: to provide (someone) with **amusement**
or enjoyment 2: to receive (someone) as a **guest** 3: to give
consideration to an idea, suggestion, or **feeling**



King of Comedy Mel Brooks brought life stories and *Blazing Saddles* to NJPAC

The Big Picture

Miss the experience of seeing a movie on a 40-foot screen and hearing the soundtrack via a state-of-the-art audio system? Cinephiles and cosplayers have been gravitating to NJPAC for a series that not only gives them the full theatrical effect, but also the inside story on Tinseltown from one of the film's stars—in person.

During *The Princess Bride: An Inconceivable Evening with Cary Elwes*, the movie's dashing lead shared insights and memories about the making of Rob Reiner's fantasy swashbuckler. In October, King of Comedy **Mel Brooks** told a life's worth of anecdotes ("It's all true!"), from Brooklyn to the Borsch Belt to Broadway, after a screening of 1974's *Blazing Saddles*. "You applauded some of the lines! It's so great," the director told the sold-out crowd. "You laughed at all of the right parts and some of the wrong parts."

One of the members of John Hughes' *The Breakfast Club*—**Molly Ringwald**, who portrayed Claire "The Princess" Standish—commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Brat Pack hit in a December appearance.

The Victoria Theater also doubles as a screening room for PSEG's *True Diversity Films* series, a free program that includes a panel discussion afterward. Families attended a showing of *Jasper, Texas* in February, which was based on a true-life, racially motivated murder case, and *42* in October, a biodrama about baseball great Jackie Robinson.

Jazz Jam Sessions

Nothing beats a *Jazz Jam Session* like a series of **Jazz Jam Sessions**—especially when they're free! When the **Jazz Advisory Committee** of NJPAC's Advisory Council came up with the idea of presenting one session, music fans and instrumentalist drop-ins couldn't get enough. Committee member **James Austin, Jr.**, an ace pianist, curates and leads the sessions with a strong assist from *Wells Fargo Jazz for Teens* students and faculty. They've bebopped around, from Paramus and Jersey City to Duke's Southern Table in Newark and our own NICO Kitchen + Bar, following **Tony Bennett's** performance.



From Jazz Jam Sessions

New Jazzman Wayne Winborne

The search committee to find a new executive director for the **Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark**, co-chaired by NJPAC CEO **John Schreiber**, had finger-snapping good news in the spring, when **Wayne Winborne** was named to the post. The former Vice President for Business Diversity Outreach at Prudential Financial wasted no time in fostering new partnerships with the Arts Center. The institute screened rare archival footage of Billie Holiday as one of the programs it contributed as a first-time partner to NJPAC's *Day of Swing* during the *TD James Moody Jazz Festival*. And it took a lead role in curating and creating the exhibit *Jazz, Jews and African Americans: Cultural Intersections in Newark and Beyond* with NJPAC at the **Jewish Museum of New Jersey**. Winborne, who now supervises the largest jazz library and archive in the country, was welcomed during a November 11 reception at the Arts Center.

Great Outdoors

The third annual *Family Fair at Theater Square*, held on July 25, was the place where creative types of all generations got in touch with their inner dancer/artist/musician/Batman. Besides an appearance by the Caped Crusader himself, a new attraction this year was a tented area for classes—where you could find **Jennifer Weber**, choreographer of *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, busting moves with the kids or **Richard Reiter** leading a drum circle. Mainstage performances spanned Bollywood dance with *Mystic India* to West African dance with *Umoja Dance Company*, with lots of jazz and world music in between. Inside NJPAC's doors, grown-ups discovered deep discounts at the box office for little ones to experience live theater on a return visit. ●



Family Fair at Theater Square

great performances



American music icon Diana Ross in Prudential Hall

dy·nam·ic 1: positive in attitude, full of energy and new ideas 2: spirited, lively, vital 3: characterized by constant activity or progress



Jim Gaffigan



Mystic India



Chaka Khan

On NJPAC's stages, internationally recognized orchestras, Broadway stars, top comedians and a world of dance were experienced by an estimated 380,000-plus people who applauded a performance during the year.

Ticket buyers had more of an opportunity to "shop by genre": Movie-goers could choose from a trio of screening-conversations, and fans of astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson were offered two enlightening events on different topics. Those who couldn't wait for the *Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival's* 2016 return attended special programs and readings that kept the verses flowing in March, April and May. In addition to many performances devoted to standards, *American Songbook at NJPAC* was back for Season Three with two tapings for public television, starring looky-here names from Broadway and cabaret like Stephen Schwartz and Christine Ebersole.

Although NJPAC's "Jazz Central" is the *TD James Moody Jazz Festival* in November, devotees could practically personalize their own subscription series from the trove of jazz concerts throughout the year, such as Catherine Russell in February, Carrie Jackson in March, Jessica Molaskey in May, Jill Scott in July—and that's only the

female vocalists. World music, which gets great play indoors and out (at *Horizon Foundation Sounds of the City*), was celebrated by Shaggy, Camané and Dead Combo, Celtic Woman, A.R. Rahman, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Mystic India, Victor Manuelle, and Mariza.

Similarly, dance companies represented various corners of the globe, from Russian productions of classical ballets and *AXIS Dance Company*, composed of differently abled performers, to *Lula Washington Dance Theatre* from the West Coast and *Ballet Folklórico de México*. *Dance Theatre of Harlem* and *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* made return visits for Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother's Day weekends, respectively. The *Jersey Moves! Festival of Dance* and *Jersey (New) Moves!* (for emerging choreographers) showcased the best of the Garden State's diverse ensembles.

NJPAC's comedy lineup not only included solo shows by the most recognized names in stand-up, but multiple artists on a single

bill, such as the *Standing Ovation* tour with Sommore and her guests. Jim Gaffigan, Kevin James, Kathleen Madigan, Russell Peters, Paula Poundstone and Mo'Nique & Friends were among the good-humor men and women who had audiences gasping.

"You can never be too old to rock and roll," sang The Brymers. Baby Boomers said yes to that by buying tickets to classic rock-outs with the *Moody Blues*, *Boston Culture Club*, *YES & Toto*, *Jethro Tull*, and *Huey Lewis and The News*. Some of the most beloved, cross-generational divas—Gladys Knight, Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, Audra McDonald and Diana Ross—had NJPAC homecomings in 2015.

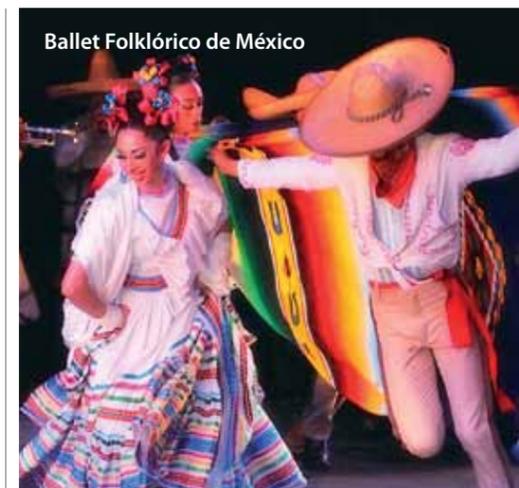
Thousands of TV viewers apparently asked themselves what good is sitting alone in a room when they could watch "Long Island Medium" Theresa Caputo, the return of *America's Got Talent* at NJPAC—which taped for a week in March—and *The Price Is Right Live* in April, circling back in October for a zany Halloween edition. ●



Guest Soloist with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company



Aretha Franklin



Ballet Folklórico de México



putting it together

When staging a new work like *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, every department keeps on its toes

by Valerie Sudol

When the lights dim and the curtain goes up, audiences expect a grand harmony of sets, costumes, lighting, music and performance, all working together to create a unified experience. That's the magic of great theater.

There's an even more complex collaboration that goes on behind the scenes before any new show debuts. If an arts center makes the theatrical production its own—commissioning, producing, presenting and touring it—the full weight of the institution is cast behind making the project a success. This, too, is a kind of performance art, requiring careful and balanced coordination of staff, facilities and resources.

When NJPAC decided to back a brash new version of a venerable holiday classic, *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, a tightly organized strategy was set in motion. Here's the backstory...

Opening acts

Choreographer Jennifer Weber had already made a name for herself in an unconventional role—director of a hip-hop dance troupe, the Brooklyn-based Decadancetheatre, bringing a gritty street art to the proscenium stage. After successful seasons in New York City, a 2012 Bessie (New York Dance and Performance Award) for “Outstanding Emerging Choreographer,” and national and international tours, Weber was ready for a new challenge.

The spark was lit in 2013 at United Palace of Cultural Arts (UPCA) in Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood, where Executive Director Mike Fitelson, discussing a commission for Weber, said four fateful words: “What about a *Nutcracker*?”

“I knew *about The Nutcracker*, but I didn't know it, didn't grow up on it—so for me, it was all new,” Weber says. “I did think it might be shifted to a contemporary urban setting and given a new spin.”

In Weber and Fitelson's sneaker-shod version, set in New York City, the *Nutcracker* is a chestnut seller, the fiendish mouse army is a street gang and the journey to the Land of Snow is an interlude in time travel to the '80s-vintage “Sweets” nightclub. Yes, there is a growing Christmas tree, a snowflake waltz,



“There are parallels between hip-hop and ballet. Both are very much about gesture, storytelling and competitive bravado. Head spins or fouettés, it's the same drive to outdo...”
—Choreographer Jennifer Weber

a conjuring Drosselmeyer. And yes, the entire Tchaikovsky score is used, with some sampled and remixed bits to mark scenic changes and showcase legendary rap artist Kurtis Blow, backed by electric violin.

“There are parallels between hip-hop and ballet,” Weber claims. “Both are very much about gesture, storytelling and competitive bravado. Head spins or fouettés, it's the same drive to outdo. After we created a short sample, I thought ‘This could work!’”

Meanwhile, Andy Donald, NJPAC's Producer of Artistic Development and Community Programming, caught wind of Weber's project and saw the possibilities.

“What we had here was a popular sell for a range of audiences—families, young people, dance people, hip-hop and classical music audiences,” Donald recalls. “We didn't yet have an evergreen holiday show unique to us as an urban arts center. By becoming co-commissioners (with United Palace), I felt this was something we could produce and send out into the world under our banner.”

The Hip Hop Nutcracker had its world premiere in 2014 in Washington Heights and Newark and a new holiday staple (“a classic rebooted”) was launched.

Backstage logistics

On board as a co-producer, Donald had some suggestions for the show's second season, mainly having to do with strengthening links to the traditional *Nutcracker* in costumes, scenic design and storytelling. Audiences would be intrigued “by recognizing the old and seeing how we twist it into something new,” he told Weber.

“These details help clue the audience in,” Weber agrees. “At the premiere, we had mice in hoodies with small ears. This season they're in baseball caps with large ears you can't miss.”

In more upgrades, the video sets have been refined to deftly picture the narrative's scenes. Six of the 11 original cast members were replaced this season in Weber's quest to identify hip-hoppers who can make the leap from a club setting to a big stage.

“With a stable and creative institution as a partner, so much is possible,” says Weber. “The show just gets better and better.”

Every theatrical production is also a hard-headed economic venture, a balance

of profit and expense. The buck stops at the desk of NJPAC's Chris Moses, Senior Director of Production, who is charged with getting the show onstage—on time, on budget and in top form.

“The pendulum swings between art and money,” Moses says. “We want the show to look fantastic, but even when we're co-producers, we don't bend the rules. If we can't make it on the income side, we have to make it up on the expense side.”



Moses' department is responsible for getting productions loaded in and out, for coordinating sound and light teams, assigning stagehands, running technical rehearsals and performances and managing backstage amenities. Are the dressing rooms clean? Do performers have the food they've specified? Moses insists on detailed note-keeping, building an institutional memory that never forgets.

He's serious about the in-house economic impact of each show, wanting every one to be a plus for his NJPAC community. On average, that community runs to 300 people, including house managers, backstage help, parking attendants, housekeeping staff, kitchen and restaurant workers, ushers and security personnel.

“This is not just about making art and sustaining the arts center,” Moses says. “It's about sustaining our people and keeping them in work.”

(continued next page)

col·lab·o·rate

1: to work jointly with others 2: to cooperate 3: to work with another person or group in order to achieve something



(continued from preceding page)

Filling the house

As impresario Sol Hurok famously said, “If the public doesn’t want to come, you can’t stop them.” NJPAC pays meticulous attention to spreading the word about programming and making sure that everyone—regardless of their cultural background—will find themselves represented onstage.

“*The Hip Hop Nutcracker* met critical points of our mission: to acknowledge diversity and draw people in,” says David Rodriguez, NJPAC’s Executive Vice President and Executive Producer. “More than anything, we have an ongoing concern to present programming that resonates with all segments of our audience.”

That directive is especially well-served by a hip-hop production that speaks to young urban patrons, as well as more traditional theater-goers. Like every major arts venue, NJPAC is eager to counter the aging of audiences for classical arts. Melding a 122-year-old ballet staple with today’s hip-hop culture defines “fresh perspective.”

Working with Rodriguez to get that

message across are Katie Sword, Vice President of Marketing, and Nathan Leslie, Marketing Manager.

“In 2014, the challenge was selling a new show with no track record,” Leslie says. “We did that on a minimal budget, focusing on the New York market. This season, the budget jumped by a factor of four to \$17,500, allowing for more online,

NJPAC is sole producer, general manager and booking agent for *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* on tour; so far, the production has visited 11 U.S. locations and two Russian cities...

television and radio spots as well as direct-mail advertising.”

As the production becomes better known, it’s easier to attract press attention, Sword points out. And with successful runs behind it, word-of-mouth advertising becomes an exponential asset.

In 2014, NJPAC booked *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* in its smaller Victoria Theater, selling out two shows to 900 patrons. For the 2015–16 season it moved to Prudential Hall, the 2,800-seat main stage, and went out on the road on its first tour (more on that later).

Not to be discounted is NJPAC’s personal outreach to regular patrons in phone calls managed through the office of Erik Wiehardt, Director of Ticket Services—it’s a concierge approach to building relationships. Through its own box office and through a rigorously trained staff of Ticketmaster personnel, ticket purchasing is made deliberately pleasant, easy and efficient.

“It’s all about people,” says Wiehardt. “Everyone here always keeps that in mind.”

Community outreach, audience care

Another way to build those all-important patron relationships is to take the cause beyond the walls of NJPAC. Donna Walker-Kuhne, NJPAC’s Vice President of Community Engagement, understands the task.

“We work at building a local constituency of every race, ethnicity, geography and class because we really believe the arts are for everyone,” says Walker-Kuhne. “In the case of dance, many people don’t know much about it so we demystify it with free dance classes in community venues, taking it where people live.”

Through advisory councils, newsletters and social media, her efforts build and strengthen support for stage performances of every kind. The idea, she says, is

to make everyone feel welcome.

That philosophy is front and center from the moment patrons approach NJPAC to see a show, and here’s where Robin Jones, Senior Director of House Management, and Lauren Vivenzio, Manager of Operations, take charge. With everything that happens from the stage forward, customer service is the first principle.

“We handle the ushers, lobby activity including merchandising, the membership table, the social media lounge—everything audience members experience from the moment they step across the threshold,” says Jones. “Are there enough slots for wheelchairs? Enough ushers? Have repairs been made and housekeeping chores done? It’s a

big jigsaw puzzle we tackle every day.”

What Jones plans and supervises, Vivenzio executes, managing logistical support for often overlapping events. On December 19, when *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* was booked, there also were performances by the Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, a Kwanzaa marketplace in the lobby, a children’s festival at the adjacent Center for Arts Education, a pizza party for a group of subscribers at the in-house NICO Kitchen + Bar, and artists’ receptions planned. How do they keep every detail straight?

“Our Arts Vision database, where all schedules, personnel and notes about front-of-the-house activity are logged,” says Vivenzio. “It’s our secret weapon.”

“We didn’t yet have an evergreen holiday show unique to us as an urban arts center. I felt this was something we could produce and send out into the world under our banner...”

—Andy Donald



Going places

Taking the show on the road, NJPAC is sole producer of *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* on tour, serving as general manager and booking agent. This season the production visits 11 U.S. locations and two Russian cities—Moscow and Kaliningrad—taking this *Nutcracker* back to its homeland.

The 2015 tour was concentrated along the East Coast, Miami to Schenectady, N.Y., but negotiations are under way to add West Coast dates in 2016. While it was a tricky sell in some markets, where state ballet companies were entrenched, sold-out shows have proven that the hip-hop version can be a complementary, rather

than competing, holiday offering.

“This is a show that travels well and easily, suited for small theaters and big halls,” Donald notes. “The international language barrier is irrelevant since it’s a globally known story and the updated version makes sense.”

One portable piece of community engagement in the works involves inviting community members in every venue to audition for minor roles, a time-honored tradition for the standard *Nutcracker*. It virtually guarantees that family members will be out front in the seats.

The Russian dates were a coup that has

Weber “thrilled to pieces.” Donald probably puts his finger on it with a more practical calculation: “If anyone is sick of the traditional *Nutcracker*, it’s the Russians.”

Stand by and stand back. There’s a new *Nutcracker* in town—and it’s a show with legs. ●

Valerie Sudol was dance critic for *The Star-Ledger* for 20 years. As senior cultural issues reporter, she covered the development and opening of NJPAC. Gardening has been her beat more recently. Valerie’s *Garden Diary* is on the web at valeriesudol.com

all that jazz

TD James Moody Jazz Festival



Dianne Reeves and
Christian McBride

To a certain extent, organizers of NJPAC's fourth annual **TD James Moody Jazz Festival** know how show-stopping moments will play out, but have no way of predicting the impromptu encounters that crop up when longtime jazz colleagues, friends and fans cross paths on stage or along Sarah Vaughan Way in front of the building.

jazz·y

1: having the qualities of **jazz** music 2: bright, **lively** or fancy in a way that is meant to **attract attention** 3: marked by unrestraint, animation, or **flashiness**



Tony Bennett



Sharon Jones



Wynton Marsalis

As President and CEO **John Schreiber** put it, in an homage to Duke Ellington, fortune smiles on "being at the right place at the right time, doing the right things with the right people."

Schreiber himself was part of an unbilled quartet that was seen frequently and in all the right places from Nov. 4–15. His mates included jazz aficionado **Nick Miceli**, Market President of TD Bank, the festival's title sponsor; **Linda Moody**, widow of the famed Newark saxophonist for whom the festival is named; and NJPAC Jazz Advisor and Grammy-winning bassist **Christian McBride**, whose duties took him on stage and behind the scenes. (Even busy NJPAC staffers will go out of their way to listen in when he conducts a master class at the free family event, **Day of Swing**, this year commemorating the Billie Holiday centennial.)

And not all of these reunions and special interactions among artists and their supporters occurred in front of audiences. Here are some instances of karma that could only happen at *Moodyfest*:

- Following the festival's opener of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, the orchestra's trumpeter and Artistic Director, **Wynton Marsalis**, as well as most of his musicians, met backstage with a group of jazz students to talk about artistic values like camaraderie and work ethics. "He gave the kids a life lesson they'll never forget," says Miceli, who observed the session.

- Two powerful vocalists, **Dianne Reeves** and **Sharon Jones** and **The Dap-Kings**, were booked together for a **Jazz, Soul & Funk** concert on Nov. 14, where the unstoppable Jones strutted around the Prudential Hall stage while belting "New Shoes." Setting a wistful tone, Reeves sang "Beautiful" in solidarity with a stricken Paris, while audience members held up their phone torches.

- Newark's **Bethany Baptist Church**, where the **Rev. Dr. M. William Howard, Jr.** spreads the good word on jazz for NJPAC by hosting a free concert each year, welcomed the **Oliver Lake Organ Quartet** on Nov. 7. Lake, on alto saxophone, performed a selection of original compositions such as "Move Groove," which incorporates his spoken word remembrance of the late Newark poet **Amiri Baraka**. The quartet's appearance ended on a note of praise with the rousing "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me."

- The first of three special events at NJPAC this season to celebrate Frank Sinatra's centennial, **The Real Sinatra Songbook** showcased tunes written or commissioned by the Chairman of the Board, sung masterly by **Kevin Mahogany**, **Sue Raney** and **Tom Wopat**. But three members of the sextet also lent their voices to the occasion: Music Director **Ken Peplowski**, trumpeter **Bria Skonberg** (with a sultry rendition of "Empty Tables"), and bassist **Niki Parrott**.

- Speaking of Sinatra, the "voice of God" announcement for **Tony Bennett's** back-to-back concerts on Nov. 12 and 13 was the voice of Frank, clipped from a years-ago stage introduction for the "greatest singer in the world." (Bennett returned the favor by evoking Sinatra

with Arlen-Mercer's "One for My Baby (and One More for the Road).") A couple of rarities: The 89-year-old jazz statesman sang the first number he ever recorded (Al Dubin and Harry Warren's "Boulevard of Broken Dreams") and pulled out a little soft-shoe for "Steppin' Out with My Baby." Of his recent *Cheek to Cheek* hit album of duets with Lady Gaga, Bennett encouraged the audience to pick one up because "she really needs the money."

- McBride's conversation series, **One on One with Christian McBride**, began earlier this season at NJPAC in a sit-down with **Pat Metheny**. On Nov. 12, pianist and singer-songwriter **Bruce Hornsby** recounted his escapades with McBride (they met while opening for Bonnie Raitt at Radio City) and spoke about the influence of modern classicists like Anton Webern and Elliott Carter on his compositions. To illustrate, he performed "Preacher in the Ring," "S**t's Crazy Out Here," and other examples in duets with McBride on bass.

- Jazz: a man's world? Not according to the women whose presence at the festival was felt mightily, beginning with the **Judy Carmichael Trio** on Nov. 8.

- A surprise appearance by pianist Bill Charlap's mom, acclaimed Songbook interpreter **Sandy Stewart**, had the audience buzzing at Charlap's live re-creation of **Miles Davis' Birth of the Cool** on Nov. 14. Charlap's nonet performed tracks from the iconic album by the pioneering bebopper ("Jeru," "Venus de Milo," "Israel"), along with related material, while Stewart chose a 1939 song by Jimmy Van Heusen and Eddie DeLange, "Darn That Dream."

- Earlier that day, at the **Newark Museum**, some of the greatest jazz love stories ever told were shared by wives and widows at the panel **Jazz Wives/Jazz Lives**, moderated by Linda Moody. The sisterly, insider gab revealed just as much about the women's careers as artists, attorneys, businesswomen, caregivers and road managers as it did about their spouses' pursuit of the spotlight. "Newark First Lady of Jazz" **Dorthaan Kirk** of festival co-presenter WBGO Jazz 88.3FM, who was married to multi-instrumentalist **Rahsaan "Roland" Kirk**, joined **Brenda Feliciano** (saxophonist **Paquito D'Rivera**); **Cecilia Foster** (saxophonist-composer **Frank Foster**); **Sandy Jackson** (vibraphonist **Milt Jackson**); and **Laurelyn Douglas** (trumpet player **Jon Faddis**). The front row of the auditorium was occupied by a community of other "jazz wives" as special guests.

- Newark's Sarah Vaughan, "The Divine One," probably would have said **Arianna Neikrug** had moxie. The 22-year-old *gamine* from Los Angeles took the grand prize in the **Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition** (The SASSY Awards) on the final day of the festival, besting more than a thousand applicants. Neikrug performed two Vaughan classics ("Devil May Care," "My One and Only Love") and the jazz standard "After You've Gone" in the final round. First runner-up was **Angela Hagenbach** and second runner-up was **Nicole Zuraitis**. ●

everybody's all-American

It sounded as good as it looked—and looked as good as it sounded: Thanks to NJPAC's new broadcast equipment, made possible by Panasonic and Prudential, **American Songbook at NJPAC** was recorded for public TV with nearly a dozen high-definition cameras and a pair of fly packs (mini-studios).

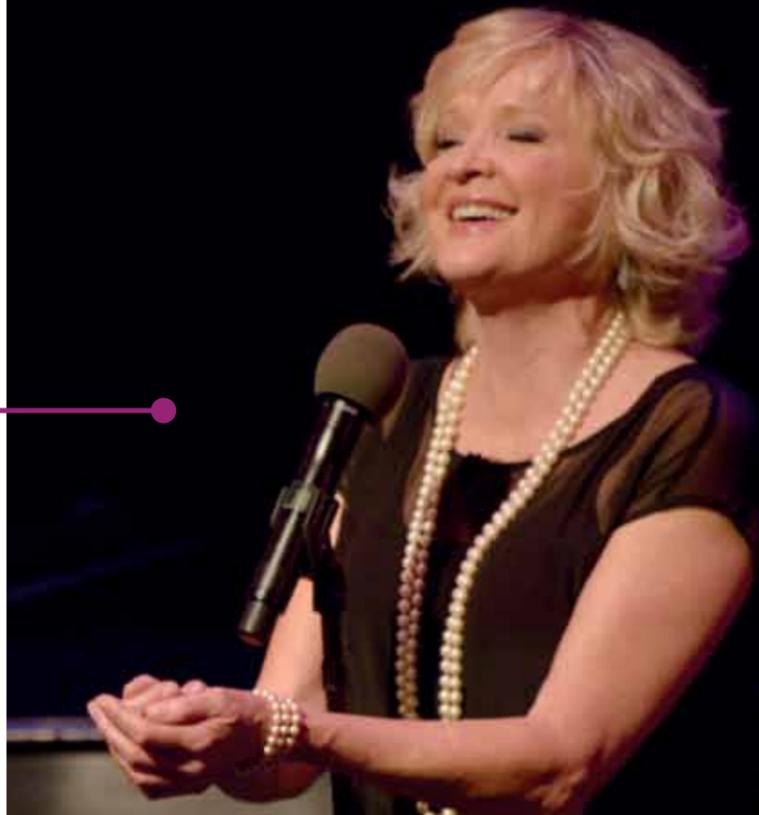
Back as host for Season Three was Broadway insider **Ted Chapin**, President and Executive Director of Rodgers & Hammerstein: An Imagen Company. The concert-and-a-conversation series, which now has a Mid-Atlantic Emmy nomination on the wall, boasts top-tier entertainers: **Marilyn Maye**, **Stephen Schwartz** & Friends and **Jessie Mueller & Jarrod Spector**, to name just a few, and fellow artists like **Marlene VerPlanck** can often be spotted in the house. As performances were recorded over two days before audiences in the intimate Victoria Theater, viewers at home could catch up with the previous season's episodes on NJTV, WNET and WLIW21.

On Oct. 26, a session with **KT Sullivan & Jeff Harnar** singing all-Sondheim, **Catherine Russell** performing standards and blues, and **Christine Ebersole** revisiting her Broadway hits, gave music lovers three memorable concerts in one.

Long before autumn, NJPAC's American Song series, presented in part through the support of the **Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation** and **Sylvia and David Steiner**, gathered many Broadway luminaries for such programs as *The Sound of Their Music: Rodgers & Hammerstein* and *Portraits of Joni: Jessica Molaskey Sings Joni Mitchell* with host **Jonathan Schwartz**.

Two American Song concerts in March were accorded "encores" at the Arts Center. **Jessie Mueller** and **Jarrod Spector** of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, who didn't let the elements derail their performance when March blew in like a lion, were back seven months later for *American Songbook at NJPAC*. *Wicked* composer **Stephen Schwartz**, who accompanied friends **Debbie Gravitte**, **Scott Coulter** and **Kelli Rabke** on the piano for his *Defying Gravity* concert, rejoined them, along with **Michael McCorry Rose**, at *American Songbook*. ●

Support for the 2015 American Songbook at NJPAC broadcast was provided by the Joan and Allen Bildner Family Fund.



Two-time Tony winner
Christine Ebersole



Jeff Harnar and KT Sullivan



Catherine Russell

the kid from Hoboken at 100

NJPAC celebrates the timeless genius of Frank Sinatra with a trifecta of concerts, each paying tribute to the greatest of all popular singers in a unique and special way—each unfolding at the primary performing arts center of the Chairman's home state.

"They tell about the big terrible things they've done and the big wonderful things they will do. Their hopes, and their regrets, and their loves, and their hates. All very large, because nobody ever brings anything small into a bar."

Mary Chase wrote that line in her classic play *Harvey*, and it seemed particularly resonant in the year of Frank Sinatra's 100th birthday. After all, Sinatra loomed larger than any other figure in American popular culture, in every medium from radio to recordings to movies to television to the internet, and his life and music are crammed full of the big wonderful things (the kind he sings about in "I've Got the World on a String"), as well as the big terrible things that people bring into bars. (That's why he also specialized in what he called "saloon songs.")

Because nearly everything about Sinatra was larger than life—even larger, in fact, than Elwood P. Dowd's semi-imaginary friend—the difficulty in celebrating his centennial is trying to do justice to him without his actual presence: Symphony orchestras can play Mozart without Amadeus himself being there, and Broadway theaters can revive *Annie Get Your Gun* minus Ethel Merman in her iconic role, but how do you celebrate Sinatra without Sinatra?

NJPAC, the primary performing arts center of the Chairman's home state—situated within spitting distance of Hoboken, where Sinatra was born and raised—found several varied and stimulating answers to that question.

So far, NJPAC has presented two major Sinatra centennial events, and a third is scheduled for spring 2016. Each is different and pays tribute to the greatest of all popular singers in a unique and special way; none makes the obvious move, for instance, of hiring an imitator to stand up on stage, singing recreated orchestrations and mimicking his mannerisms.

The first show, on November 9, was titled *The Real Sinatra Songbook*, and was focused on a specific part of the Chairman's canon—those songs that were written expressly for him, by him, and which wouldn't exist if not for him. The headliner was **Tom Wopat**, a reigning star of both the Broadway and jazz worlds, along with veteran vocalists **Sue Raney** and **Kevin Mahogany**, in a sparkling revue under the musical direction of **Ken Peplowski**, and co-produced by Sinatra specialist **Will Friedwald**.

The big event of the Sinatra Centennial occurred on the actual day—Saturday, December 12—at NJPAC. This was a spectacular concert starring **Michael Feinstein**, who is widely regarded not only as the greatest contemporary interpreter of the Great American Songbook—Sinatra's music—but also its leading historian and archivist.

Feinstein insists that "it would be folly to copy Frank's vocal style because it would sound like parody at worst and a flat imitation at best." Rather, he emphasizes, "When I sing a song connected with



him, I try to emulate his sensibility and approach, and then interpret it my own way. The emphasis on telling a story is supremely important as is the rhythmic equation. He knew how to phrase!"

The third concert will take place on May 28, 2016, and is again co-produced by Peplowski and Friedwald. This time they're shifting the focus to another important aspect of Sinatra's voluminous canon, his film career. The songs will be selected from the dozens of movie musicals that Sinatra starred in, from the 1943 *Higher and Higher* to the 1964 *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. The cast hadn't been firmly set in stone at press time, but rest assured it will consist of the finest performers from the worlds of musical theater, jazz and pop music.

As Feinstein puts it, a proper tribute to Sinatra should be anything but generic or by-the-numbers. As he explains, "It's a grand celebration but also a highly personal approach to Sinatra. People might be most surprised by some of the song choices, because I try to really mix it up and have unusual repertoire next to the beloved warhorses." As a parting shot, he adds, "The appeal of Ol' Blue Eyes will never leave us."

Amen to that. ●

high notes

a year of classical fireworks



André Watts



Charles Dutoit



Yannick Nézet-Séguin

The year in classical music was defined by a first (**L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande**), a happy return (**Philadelphia Orchestra**), and a rarity (pianist **Lang Lang** as solo recitalist).

The **Bank of America Classical Series** at NJPAC also made it possible for audiences in acoustically fine-tuned Prudential Hall to thrill to the **London Symphony Orchestra** with pianist **Yefim Bronfman**, and pianist **André Watts** with the **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra**.

Opening on January 29 with Beethoven's noble warhorse, the Fifth Symphony, the Fabulous Philadelphians and their new conductor, **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, were back for the first time in nearly a decade. "Opening with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, the conductor immediately showed his ability to make even the most ubiquitous of works feel fresh and bracing," praised *The Star-Ledger*. Guest artist **Kirill Gerstein** also mesmerized with his lighthearted interpretation of Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto.

Charles Dutoit, the Philadelphia Orchestra's Conductor Laureate, arrived

with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and pianist **Nikolai Lugansky** on February 20 in an NJPAC debut featuring a program of early 20th-century masterpieces. (The Swiss orchestra, by the way, was recently under the musical leadership of **Neeme Järvi**, former music director of the NJSO.)

The celebrated Watts, performing with the NJSO under the baton of **Peter Bay**, made a welcome return to the hall in springtime with a showcase of works by Grieg, Beethoven, Stravinsky and Mozart. **Lang Lang**, who has appeared before millions at the 2014 World Cup in Rio and at the 2015 GRAMMY® ceremony, was appreciated in more intimate surroundings in September when he interpreted pieces by Bach, Tchaikovsky and Chopin.

Stravinsky's complete score to *The Firebird* ballet was the centerpiece of the October engagement of the **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Valery Gergiev**. Bronfman played Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3, which he performed with the New York Philharmonic the previous year in a rendering described by *The New York Times* as "brilliantly charismatic." ●

Other classical events:

- As in 2014, a performance of Handel's oratorio *Messiah* with the **New Jersey Symphony Chamber Orchestra**, the **Montclair State University Singers** and guest soloists gave music lovers an uplifting and magnificent start to the holiday season.

- Maestro **George Marriner Maull** of the **Discovery Orchestra** continued the popular tradition of entertaining and educating concert-goers at free **Bank of America Classical Overtures** conversations held an hour prior to curtain.

- **Metropolitan Opera Rising Stars**, a Sunday afternoon recital series presented by NJPAC and the Metropolitan Opera, allowed NJPAC audiences to be among the first to hear some of the great voices of tomorrow. Artists on the cusp of extraordinary careers through their association with the Met or its Lindemann Young Artist Development Program performed *Bel Canto Showpieces* and *Romantic Treasures*.

ah, those summer nights



How do you take your summer music? **Horizon Foundation Sounds of the City** serves it scorching hot: a blend of Motown, hip-hop and world music mixed with that special ingredient, a dance party of classic hits spun by WBGO on-air personality **Felix Hernandez**.

As is the tradition, the 18th annual series got rolling with Hernandez's *Rhythm Revue* under starry skies and before a convivial crowd that numbers into the thousands on Thursday evenings in July and August. This year's slate of eight free concerts included the always flamboyant **George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic**, R&B and soul

recording artist **Eric Roberson**, and **The Family Stone**, covering the best of Sly and the Family Stone. The **Motor City Revue** put vocalist **Layonne Holmes** out front for its salute to Motown, and Latin Grammy nominee **José Alberto** ("El Canario") and jazz singer **Alice Smith** wrapped things up with a bow in August.

Slick Rick, who performed with his crew on Aug. 13, signed a mural created by students in Arts Education's summer **Hip Hop Institute**. Some of the young people met with Slick Rick & Co. backstage afterward to ask questions about his career path and the music industry in general. ●



Black Violin



George Clinton



beyond four walls

While talk about NJPAC's high standard of live performance continues to spread, via word-of-mouth to the latest in broadcast technologies, 2015 was the year that select co-productions also allowed the Arts Center to raise awareness of its assets—but at other venues.

A half-dozen strategic partnerships with arenas like the nearby **Prudential Center** ("The Rock") served NJPAC by providing a larger canvas for programming visions. A "co-pro" of the **RMM Combinación Perfecta Anniversary Concert** with Brooklyn's **Barclays Center** in June ranked among the biggest salsa events ever produced, and later that month NJPAC linked up with **Radio City Music Hall** for the hip-hop spectacular **Masters of Ceremony**. A December double-header included **Hot for the Holidays Featuring Busta Rhymes & Friends** and **Christmas in the City** with **New Edition**, both at "The Rock."

"The arenas are colleagues, not competitors," explains Executive Vice President and Executive Producer **David Rodriguez**. "Tours designed for arenas are not interested in performing in 2,800-seat houses and vice-versa. However, NJPAC has built a reputation for success in the R&B, Latin and select fine arts areas. Many artists now trust NJPAC and make it their first call in the market, regardless of the size of the venue." ●

talents of tomorrow

“Great performance” is what we expect from artists of international stature. At NJPAC, it’s also an exclamation that commonly follows a show or concert presented by Arts Education students.

nur·ture

- 1: to care for and encourage growth or development
- 2: to cherish (a hope, belief or ambition)
- 3: fostering, development, cultivation

Najah Hetsberger, an advanced musical theater student, participated in last summer’s Young Artist Summer Intensive

Springtime is when students at the elementary and high school levels give culminating stage performances to showcase their newfound accomplishments in music, dance, acting, singing and more. Even summer residencies are focused on rehearsing for that special final production before beaming friends and family members. The flurry of presentations is an indication of the success of such programs as the **Young Artist Summer Intensive (YASI)**, the **Hip Hop Institute**, **Recorder Arts for Musical Pathways (RAMP)** and **Music Advancement for Newark Area Youth (MANY)**. Here are highlights of a few others:

- The fourth annual **Dancing Classrooms™ Colors of the Rainbow Team Match**, a social dance competition for fifth-graders, was held on May 28 in the Victoria Theater, where the decibel levels were tested by hundreds of cheering, pennant-waving spectators. Six schools chose six couples to dazzle the audience with their footwork and impress with their respect for teamwork and social graces. Under the sharp eyes of three judges, the teams swirled through merengue, foxtrot, rumba, tango and swing dances. Even though each group had a specialty dance, students rehearsed twice-weekly for 10 weeks to learn all five proficiently.

- On June 2, an audience watching the original musical *Destiny Fulfilled* in Victoria Theater were also seeing **The Johnny Mercer Foundation** at work. For the third year, the **NJPAC-Mercer Musical Theater Program** set up residencies in five schools during the academic year to introduce students to the American musical by creating a show, from page to stage. The script for *Destiny Fulfilled*, a Cinderella story about Beyoncé Knowles’ stormy tenure with Destiny’s Child and her rise as a solo artist, was written by students, along with lyrics to five original songs. Participating schools were **BRICK Peshine Academy** and **Harriet Tubman School**, both in Newark; **Cicely Tyson Community School of Performing & Fine Arts** and **Whitney Houston Academy**, both in East Orange; and **Heywood Avenue School** in Orange. Johnny Mercer, the composer and lyricist who reminded us to “accentuate the positive,” was a champion of the art of songwriting and its value in educating the young through creativity and self-expression.

- A jazz session wrapped the weeklong **All-Female Jazz Residency** for 24 young women musicians on the **Montclair State University** campus. The intensive, held for the second year in July and supported by the **Women’s Association of NJPAC**, attracted 13- to 25-year-olds from throughout the country and as close as Newark. Students received the rare opportunity to play side-by-side with some of the best in the music business, like jazz pianist and composer **Geri Allen**, the residency’s Artistic Director. In between classes on jazz theory and improvisation were field trips to the studios of **WBGO Jazz 88.3FM** and the **Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark**. Students also led a jam session at Duke’s Southern Table in Newark. “They’ve formed bonds that will last throughout their careers,” said **Alison Scott-Williams**, NJPAC’s Vice President of Arts Education. “It is so wonderful to see these young ladies of jazz create a community with one another and thrive under the mentorship of Geri and the magnificent faculty. **Jimmy Cobb, Kenny Davis, Bruce Williams, Connaitre Miller, Ingrid Jensen, Shamie Royston** and **Tia Fuller** gave them a foundation filled with the history and legacy of this American art form.”

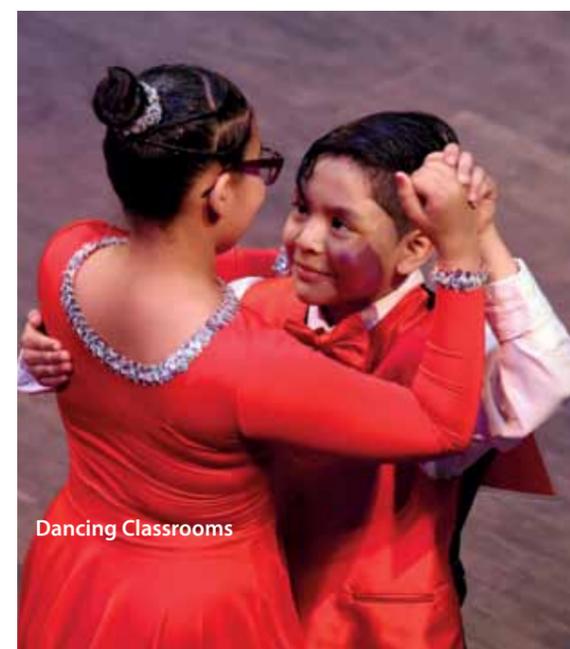
- Chicago’s famed **The Second City**, the people who brought us Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert and Key and Peele, was back in the house for the second year this summer, dispatching four faculty members to conduct sketch comedy workshops for teenagers, adults, and students on the autism spectrum. (In 2014, Newark became the fourth U.S. city to host this residency.) The two-week Teen Camp and residency for adults culminated in a performance before an audience. Second City’s methods may look like madness, but in addition to strengthening qualities like self-assuredness and team play, they teach campers how to pick up unspoken signals, think creatively and jump fearlessly into the action on stage. It’s an in-the-moment art of expecting the unexpected. ●



Hip Hop Institute



Second City Teen Camp



Dancing Classrooms

dancemakers on the move



Arielle Petruzzella

Four high-profile directors of dance companies in New Jersey worked largely behind the scenes for *Jersey (New) Moves! Emerging Choreographers*, a modern dance performance that capped a new mentorship at NJPAC for up-and-coming dancemakers.

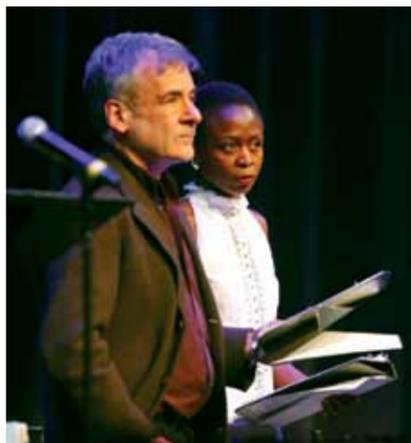
Established choreographers **Nai-Ni Chen**, **Carolyn Dorfman**, **Randy James** and **Claire**

For *Jersey (New) Moves! Emerging Choreographers*, four high-profile dance company directors acted as mentors for up-and-coming, New Jersey-based dancemakers...

Porter were each matched to a protégé and advised him or her throughout workshops and rehearsals, which culminated in a June 19 performance in Victoria Theater. The young artists, selected through an online application process, were **Robert Mark Burke** of Elmwood Park, **Lauren Connolly** of Bayonne, **Kyle Georgina Marsh** of Jersey City and **Arielle Petruzzella** of Hoboken. Their 20-minute segments were performed by small ensembles of professional dancers.

Jersey (New) Moves! was presented in association with **Dance New Jersey**, the service organization for dance in the state, and supported by the **Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation**. It was an offshoot of NJPAC's 5-year-old *Jersey Moves! Festival of Dance*, which also offered an evening with **Carolyn Dorfman Dance** in March. Happily for future choreographers, *Jersey (New) Moves!* will be back at the Arts Center on June 17, 2016. ●

culture and conversation



Mark Nelson and Zainab Jah in a reading of Emily Mann's *Hoodwinked*

NJPAC Stage Exchange, a playwrights' series launched in 2014 with a dramatic reading of **Martyna Majok's** *Ironbound*, introduced audiences to a diversity of subjects through a brainy combination of artistry and dialogue.

The dramatists—all with New Jersey roots—were not only able to assess

audience perspectives and reactions to their developing works during the script-in-hand readings, but contributed to post-performance panels with experts. Five free-admission programs, presented in partnership with **Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey** and **Yendor Productions**, were held on and off campus.

The combined efforts of Programming and Community Engagement resulted in robust attendance and open, honest discussion. In January, **Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj's** *Little Rock* coincided with NJPAC's *The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration 2015. The Talented Tenth* by **Richard Wesley**, scheduled during Black History Month, took an unflinching look at African-American empowerment and estrangement.

Staged at **All Stars Project, Inc.** in Newark, **Pia Wilson's** *Generation T*, about war veterans in transition, incorporated a gallery exhibit by **Combat Paper NJ**. A project of the **Printmaking Center of New Jersey**, **Combat Paper NJ** encourages veterans to tell their stories through art by

pulping pieces of their uniforms to produce paper for their creations.

Emily Mann, Artistic Director of Princeton's **McCarter Theatre Center**, concluded the series in May with *Hoodwinked*, her stage documentary about the media's misrepresentation of the Fort Hood massacre and radical Islam.

In 2015, *NJPAC Stage Exchange's* second season took a different turn, while still adhering to its mission of supporting provocative new plays and fostering community interaction. Three emerging playwrights—**David Lee White**, **Nikkole Salter** and **Chisa Hutchinson**—were each sponsored by a professional theater in New Jersey, which will stage world premiere productions of the current works-in-progress for the 2016–17 season.

The readings and public forums, set to take place in spring 2016, will benefit three Essex County organizations whose purposes reflect the plays' themes or issues. In addition, a teaching component will enable the authors to share their craft with young writers in the classroom. ●

Arrivals and Departures



New Jersey Symphony Orchestra named internationally renowned Chinese-American conductor Xian Zhang its 14th music director (more on page 33). NJSO is proud to be the resident orchestra of NJPAC.

tran·si·tion

1: a musical passage from one state or stage to another
2: a change in energy
3: movement, development, or evolution

board news



William J. Marino



John R. Strangfeld



Michelle Y. Lee



Ann M. Limberg

William J. Marino announced his retirement as Co-Chair of NJPAC's Board of Directors at a meeting held on November 3. Co-Chair **John R. Strangfeld**, Chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc., assumed full responsibility as Chair of the Board of Directors.

Marino, who is the retired Chairman, President and CEO of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, has been a member of NJPAC's Board for a dozen years, half of which were served as either Chair or Co-Chair. He will remain an active member of the Board and Chair of Theater Square Development Company, LLA (NJPAC's real estate subsidiary). Under Marino's guidance, NJPAC successfully installed **John Schreiber** as the Arts Center's second President and CEO and completed an

ambitious strategic plan. Among his many other accomplishments were tenures as a member of the Executive Committee and Chairman of Theater Square Development Corp.

In a resolution, the Arts Center's board and management extended heartfelt gratitude to this visionary pacesetter for his devotion to NJPAC. **Ann Hampton Callaway** gave a command performance of the song "Oklahoma!" set to lyrics fit for the occasion. ("Bill Marino! / He's the man you wanna have in charge. / He's a brilliant guy. / His IQ's high, / And his golf score's ev'ry bit as large.")

The resignations of two board members—**Michelle Y. Lee** and **Ann M. Limberg**—were accepted with a note of appreciation for the time and talents they brought to leadership. ●

comings and goings



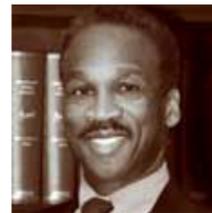
Bobbie Arbesfeld



David Rodriguez



Warren Tranquada



Lennon Register



Lisa Hayward

In 2015, the most significant restructuring of executive management since the arrival of President and CEO John Schreiber four years ago enhanced NJPAC's leadership and vision for achieving future goals.

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Bobbie Arbesfeld**, a senior manager since 1999, retired in June, setting in motion new appointments for two veteran NJPAC executives. Executive Producer **David Rodriguez** became Executive Vice President and Executive Producer, with oversight of Programming, Broadcast, Marketing, Performance Rentals, Community Engagement and Production. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Warren Tranquada** was named Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer;

reporting to him are Finance, IT, Operations and Real Estate, Human Resources, Ticket Services and Special Events.

Lisa Hayward, who had been employed for many years at the Metropolitan Opera, where she was Director of Patron and Individual Giving, arrived at NJPAC in April as the new Vice President of Development. **Lennon Register**, former CFO and Senior Vice President of Racing Operations for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, was on board the following month as the Arts Center's new Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

Ross S. Richards joined NJPAC in 1997 as Production Manager, rising through the ranks to become Senior Vice President of Operations and Real Estate. Richards bid a

throat-catching farewell to his friends and colleagues at the Arts Center in October, upon accepting the role of Senior Vice President of Operations and Facilities at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia.

"Ross has set an unbeatable standard of excellence for the quality of the NJPAC experience for customers, artists and staff," Schreiber said. "Under his leadership, our campus and its facilities have always looked fantastic, sounded amazing, and were staffed with superb team members."

Other senior leaders receiving promotions included **Katie Sword**, now Vice President of Marketing, and **Chad Spies**, Vice President of Operations and Real Estate, who assumed Richards' former role. ●

in remembrance

The Scottish poet Thomas Campbell famously said, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." We take comfort in these words as we mourn the loss of five incredible people, who will be remembered for their friendship, passion, vision, and the legacy they leave behind.

A beloved, respected and generous member of the NJPAC Board of Directors since 1997, **Allen Bildner** was a founding member of the Human Resource Committee. Along with his wife, Joan, Allen created the Bildner Family Foundation Ticket Subsidy Fund, which each season makes tickets to Arts Center events available to underserved members of our community. Allen Bildner was the former Chair and CEO of Kings Super Markets, a family-owned company for 52 years until it was sold in 1988. A respected leader in the Jewish and secular communities, Allen and Joan Bildner founded the Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers.

Robert Curvin is remembered as lifelong fighter for social justice and a passionate Newarker. His life was filled with countless effective and important accomplishments, such as: co-founder of the Newark chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality; executive at the Ford Foundation; professor at Brooklyn College; a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times*; and the author of the definitive political history of NJPAC's home



Allen Bildner



Robert Curvin



Edward P. Gilligan



Leonard Lieberman



Schary Cole

city, *Inside Newark*. He was a member of the Arts Center's Council of Trustees, and he and his wife, Pat, were named recipients of the 2015 Ryan Award for Commitment to NJPAC and Leadership in the City of Newark.

The national business community was parted from one its most visionary leaders and philanthropists and NJPAC lost a dear friend, benefactor and advisor with the passing of **Edward P. Gilligan**. President of American Express since 2013, he served his company devotedly for 35 years, beginning as a college intern and advancing to Vice Chairman in 2007. As an invaluable member of NJPAC's Board of Directors from 1999–2004, he was always attuned to the Art Center's growth and success, and was a strongly active member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Marketing Committee.

Leonard Lieberman was a founding member of NJPAC's Board of Directors and Executive Committee whose single-minded

dedication to the creation of an Arts Center in Newark helped to ensure that the NJPAC vision became a reality. As past Chairman and CEO of Supermarkets General Corp., he, along with his wife Arlene, built a far-reaching philanthropic legacy across the state. The couple were applauded as recipients of the Ryan Award at the 2004 Spotlight Gala. Their powerhouse abilities to advocate and motivate are evident to this day at the Newark Museum, and in all the worthy causes supported by the Leonard Lieberman Family Foundation.

The NJPAC staff lost one of their own in 2015 with the passing of **Schary Cole**, a cherished friend and compatriot who joined the Development Department in 1998, but worked at the Arts Center even earlier in Marketing. She began her career at Macy's in New York, followed by nearly 20 years in retail and fashion at Henri Bendel, Liz Claiborne, Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom, Inc., and also owned a catering business. ●

women's association developments

Following four years of exemplary service and leadership to the Women's Association of NJPAC, **Christine C. Gilfillan** retired as Board President at the WA annual board meeting held on December 2. She will be succeeded by **Mary Beth O'Connor**.

Gilfillan is President of the MCJ Amelior Foundation, her family's foundation in Morristown, which supports organizations committed to helping those less fortunate by promoting harmony and understanding, furthering education and workplace skills, and improving the overall quality of life.

O'Connor is a founding member

and managing partner of Lucky VIII, an independent film, television, and theater production company. With partners Shaquille O'Neal and Michael Parris, Lucky VIII is focused on cultivating a continuing pipeline of viable productions and industry-leading content creators to its Newark media company and its strategic partners.

The new cabinet announced for the coming year includes **Tenagne Girma-Jeffries** and **Archie Gottesman**, Co-Executive Vice Presidents; **Terri MacLeod**, VP, Marketing and Promotions; **Suzanne M. Spero**, VP, Fund Development;



Christine C. Gilfillan



Mary Beth O'Connor

Mary Kay Strangfeld, VP, Advocacy; **Robin Cruz McClearn**, Treasurer; **Ferlanda Fox Nixon, Esq.**, Assistant Treasurer; and **Beverly Baker, Esq.**, Secretary. ●



Mark Gross

an education in jazz

You can find **Mark Gross** in movies and recording studios. On Broadway and TV. On stage and in concert. And in class—one of his favorite “rooms.”

In August, the alto saxophonist returned to NJPAC—where he spent many years coaching jazz students—as the Arts Education Department’s Director of Jazz Instruction.

At the time of this interview, the River Vale resident was brushing off the road dust from a 10-day concert tour and recording session in Russia. He was looking forward to playing in the band of *Shuffle Along*, a revival of the Harlem Renaissance sensation, which is the latest in a list of Broadway shows on his résumé (like *Five Guys Named Moe*, *After Midnight* and *Swing*). He has performed in *Sound of Redemption: The Frank Morgan Story* (a feature documentary about another masterly saxman), Spike Lee’s *Malcolm X*, Season 4 of *Boardwalk Empire*, and Martin Scorsese’s *Vinyl*, both on HBO.

The Baltimore-bred educator draws upon each of these encounters, and his considerable time in the recording studio, to give students perspective and knowledge about the working life of a journeyman musician. Gross’ philosophy of “go outside and play” is likely to result in more performance exposure of **Wells Fargo Jazz for Teens** and the **Brick City Jazz Orchestra** outside

NJPAC’s walls.

In starting his new position at NJPAC, he discovered a number of teens entering the program had never received private instruction or couldn’t read music.

“There’s a place for them. NJPAC’s prep courses feed into the performance division, but I think the program will be amplified if they can get a one-on-one with someone of their instrument,” he says. “The younger we start training them will make the program that much stronger and make the ensembles that much richer.”

Gross says his experiences make it easy to answer students’ questions about the biz and believes they’ll learn even more from artists conducting meet-and-greets and master classes at NJPAC. Growing up in a jazz-drenched city, he was fortunate to play and listen to elder artists. “You’d be in the back of the club where they were holding court,” he recalls. “That’s something that you don’t get at a conservatory for the arts.”

The youngest of seven, Gross discovered his dad’s saxophone tucked under a bed and noodled with it on the sly. After being caught, he dreaded the consequences until his father turned up two weeks later with a box containing a new alto sax.

“He said, ‘This one’s for you, leave mine alone,’” Gross remembers. “From that moment on, I was smitten.” ●

guest work

At last count, Princeton University enrolled 5,275 undergraduate students, representing about 7 percent of total applicants. It’s a lot tougher to get into NJPAC, where 1,700 individuals recently applied for guest services positions and 25 ushers were hired—that’s about 1.5 percent accepted.

Guest services, run by the Operations Department, was bowled over by the numbers too, and couldn’t be more pleased with the response. The turnout could be attributed in major part to the lagging economy, but House Manager

Molly Roberson explains that many résumés were accompanied by personal notes that spoke of the applicants’ fondest experiences at the Arts Center.

In early autumn, when the employment ads were posted, about 1,400 applications were received online and roughly 250 to 300 were walk-ups and referrals. By October, the new recruits were trained and ready to welcome the public—and as the first friendly faces encountered by visitors to NJPAC, they’ll be paying those fond memories forward. ●



NJSO names **Xian Zhang** as its next music director

“There was an instant connection the first time I conducted the NJSO. Ever since then, every time we collaborate, these musicians impress me with their commitment, intelligence and musicianship...”



On November 16, the **NJSO** announced **Xian Zhang** its 14th music director, effective September 1, 2016. Zhang—the internationally renowned Chinese-American conductor who has been music director of the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi since 2009—joins the NJSO for a four-year term, succeeding NJSO Music Director **Jacques Lacombe**, who departs the orchestra in June 2016 following a critically acclaimed six-year tenure.

“The deep connection she has already

forged with NJSO audiences and musicians has been palpable at each of her frequent guest-conducting engagements with the orchestra,” said NJSO Board of Trustees Co-Chair **Ruth C. Lipper**. “We are excited to bring her combination of world-class musicianship and powerful leadership to our concert halls and communities across the state.”

Zhang said: “I remember there was an instant connection the first time I conducted the NJSO. And ever since then, every time

we collaborated, these musicians impressed me with their commitment, intelligence and musicianship.

“I am proud to become the leader of an orchestra that shares my belief in the power of music to transform lives both in and outside of the concert hall. The NJSO’s mission to bring music that touches the hearts and engage with communities and students throughout the State of New Jersey is one I fully embrace. I am looking forward to getting to know our musicians, patrons, artistic partners and the students in our education programs.”

In a rave review of her guest appearance with the NJSO at NJPAC in May, *The Star-Ledger* praised Zhang’s artistry and relationship with the NJSO, writing: “Zhang once again proved a thrilling leader who has already established a strong rapport with the orchestra. The program showed her interacting with the orchestra in a variety of contexts. ...In each one, her innate musicality and ability to communicate intention with clarity invested every gesture.” ●

worthy of note



Although not employed by NJPAC, but certainly intrinsic to the team, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra President and CEO **James Roe** announced his departure to assume leadership of Orchestra of St. Luke’s in New York City, effective December 1. The OSL’s new President & Executive Director had led the NJSO since July 2013; he was previously acting principal oboe.

During Roe’s tenure, the NJSO inaugurated multiple initiatives that focused on audience engagement, emphasizing participation, interaction and relevance to both individuals and communities. The orchestra’s signature series of audience engagement programs, *NJSO Accents*, is the cornerstone of those efforts. The NJSO also made continued progress toward achieving a balanced operating budget through key fundraising initiatives, including a burgeoning major gifts program. ●

Sarah Chang and Sounds of Shakespeare

Acclaimed violinist **Sarah Chang** arrived in Newark for a two-week residency with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by **Bank of America**. As part of the NJSO’s 2015 Winter Festival, **Sounds of Shakespeare**, Chang was featured in a virtuosic arrangement of Bernstein’s *West Side Story* as well as a performance of Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* with actors from celebrated artistic partner the **Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey**. Chang’s residency also included visits to two of the NJSO’s flagship education programs: the **NJSO Youth Orchestras** and El Sistema-inspired **NJSO CHAMPS**. ●

reasons to celebrate

At the Women's Association of NJPAC's 2015 Spotlight Gala

celebrate

1. to publicly acknowledge (a significant or happy event) with a social gathering 2. to honor or praise publicly

Hurricane glass surrounded hundreds of decorative candles and #hurricaneJoaquin was imprinted on the cocktail napkins, but Joaquin was a no-show at the **Women's Association of NJPAC's Spotlight Gala 2015**, held on Oct. 3 in tribute to composer Stephen Sondheim's 85th birthday.

The more than 900 guests encountered only a fine mist by the time they entered the Prudential Hall lobby, which was dressed to the nines as a swank Manhattan nightspot, with orchids in centerpieces and jewel tones splashed dramatically from floor to domes via lighting and projections. As Sondheim wrote in the song "Rain on the Roof" from *Follies*, the byword was: "Let's have a drink and shelter from the showers."

The 20th anniversary Gala, NJPAC's largest single fundraiser and one of the state's luxe social gatherings, generated nearly \$2 million for arts education programs and general operations.

Christine C. Gilfillan, who retired on December 31 as President of the Board of the WA after serving four years, proudly told attendees that the WA had raised some \$46 million for the Arts Center since its inception in 1994.

Sophisticated, but never stuffy, the celebration allows New Jersey dignitaries, business leaders, arts advocates, students, Arts Center senior staff and the Newark community to mingle and network in festive surroundings. Guests chatted while waiting their turn to mug at the photo booth or while busting a move on the dance floor, captained by DJ D-Nice.

The evening's award recipients were **Nicolas Berggruen** and **Ron Beit** (Chambers Award for Service to the Community and to the Arts), the late **Dr. Robert Curvin** and **Patricia Hall Curvin** (Ryan Award for Commitment to NJPAC and Leadership in the City of Newark), and **United Airlines** (Vagelos Award for Corporate Commitment to the Arts),

The 20th anniversary Spotlight Gala generated nearly \$2 million for arts education programs and general operations

accepted by **Jim Compton**, Vice Chairman and Chief Revenue Officer for United. Many audience members felt heavy hearts when Curvin, a beloved Newark scholar and civil rights activist who passed the week prior, remarked on a pre-taped video of awardees: "It's hard to conceive of a Newark without NJPAC."

Welcomes were delivered by Gala Co-Chairs **Robin Cruz McClearn** and **Tenagne Girma-Jeffries**, Dinner Co-Chairs **Thasunda B. Duckett** and **Patrick C. Dunican, Jr.**, and NJPAC President and CEO **John Schreiber**, who thanked the 1,000 guests: "You're enabling us to bring the arts to children and there's not anything more important as far as I'm concerned."

With SiriusXM Broadway host **Seth Rudetsky** at the keys as musical director, a trio of musical theater students of NJPAC's Young Artist Institute—**Jaci Coleman** (11), **Alexandra Salort** (12) and **Jacob Tall** (15)—wowed the crowd with three-part harmonies in the opener, "Comedy Tonight." A cast of Broadway greats, all Sondheim specialists, included **Len Cariou**, **Judy Kuhn**, **James Monroe Iglehart**, **Vanessa Williams** and **Tony Yazbeck**.

While Sondheim doesn't always end things on a sweet note, the Gala does. **Theater Square Events**, which earlier served guests a seafood tasting plate and lamb chops with black garlic rub, filled buffet tables with trays of miniature desserts like passion fruit macaroons, salted caramel chocolate cake and berries marinated in Grand Marnier, topped with whipped cream. ●



a special reunion



Present at the Creation was a frank and often sentimental recounting of the events leading up to the raising of NJPAC...

John Schreiber, Gov. Thomas H. Kean, Gayle Chaneyfield Jenkins, Raymond G. Chambers, Sharpe James and Lawrence P. Goldman

They've been called "the Mount Rushmore of NJPAC"—former **Gov. Thomas H. Kean**, Newark philanthropist **Raymond G. Chambers**, NJPAC Founding President **Lawrence P. Goldman** and former Newark Mayor **Sharpe James**—and they know what it takes to build a monument.

Present at the Creation: How a Dream Came to Be was a frank and often sentimental recounting of the events leading up to the raising of an Arts Center in a derided city. Held on Feb. 23 in the Chase Room, this free community discussion, featuring the

four visionaries mentioned above, offered the inside story of how ideas, creativity and a staggering amount of fund-raising shaped a landmark.

Moderated by NJPAC President and CEO **John Schreiber**, the panel unfolded the saga of NJPAC like a memory play with disparate characters pulling together: politicians, journalists, benefactors, an archbishop and an eccentric heiress. The conversation was spiced with dropped names that included Paul Newman, Joseph Papp and John Amos. NJPAC's four

champions recited the names of other men and women whose work, charity and talents were crucial to the center's successful debut and future growth.

James nodded to NJPAC's early commitment to diversity in hiring practices and artistic performance by borrowing from the adage "the best music is played with black and white keys." When questioned by an audience member whether that mission is being fulfilled today, Goldman replied, "The short answer is yes. And the long answer is hell, yes!" ●

njpac loves volunteers

It's no secret that NJPAC volunteers know how to lay on the love, whether that means assisting a staffer with both hands full, helping a child create a work of art, or guiding guests around the campus.

At the volunteers' 2015-16 season kick-off on September 21, NJPAC President and CEO John Schreiber, appreciator-in-chief of this cohort of helpers, said, "You create a feeling of home for our customers. Everybody who comes here feels like they're a king or a queen."

Enthusiasm is never in short supply in the Office of Volunteer Services, which began the season launch in the Chase Room with a sports-themed gathering, led by the chants of its own pom-pom brigade, the blare of a whistle and marching band anthems. And here's something to cheer about: Volunteers staffed more than 200 performances in 2015, shouldering such duties as customer



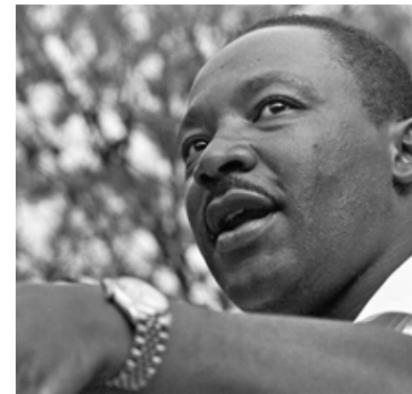
information, coat check, program distribution and social media.

About 300 volunteers serve NJPAC, traveling from as far as Garnerville, NY and Interlaken in Monmouth County. They are educators, corporate executives, computer science wizards and Prudential retirees, all considered as the Arts Center's ambassadors.

At the *Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* on May 7, Mada Liebman received the Dena F. Lowenbach Volunteer of the Year Award. The Kandice Dickinson Award was given to Lucy Wilkerson to honor her outstanding service to the front of house staff.

Director of Volunteer Services Ginny Bowers Coleman said the *Appreciation Dinner's* jigsaw décor motif suggested that volunteers help fill in the missing pieces, which is no puzzle to anyone who works at NJPAC. ●

homage to Dr. King



Dance Theatre of Harlem

At NJPAC's annual MLK Celebration, walks and marches are interpreted through rhythm, words of inspiration are translated into children's vivid cut-outs of butterflies, and all roads lead to music.

An ever-multiplying schedule of events, anchored by performances of the **Dance Theatre of Harlem** (DTH), included the return of Arts Education's *Embodying the Dream* afternoon of free family activities, a dance panel, a "camp-out" with nearly 200 Girl Scouts and their chaperones in the lobby, and a play reading. Then there were itineraries within itineraries: For example, what to do with a small army of Scouts? You invite them to the ballet, offer snacks at a meet-and-greet with dancers, rouse them the next morning for yoga and hip-hop

workouts, and bring them to *Embodying the Dream*.

Soul-shaking anthems by Grammy Award-winning **Rev. Stef and Jubilation** set the tone for this year's awards reception with the Newark Chapter of the NAACP in the Chase Room on Jan. 16. The reception and subsequent appearance by DTH were sponsored by PSEG Foundation. **Tai Cooper**, Chief Policy Advisor for Newark's Office of the Mayor, received NJPAC's Visionary of the Future Award and **Marilyn "Penny" Joseph**, Vice President of Community Relations and Corporate Outreach at Panasonic, North America, accepted the Steward of the Dream Award.

The **Rev. Jerry M. Carter, Jr.**, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Morristown, gave

the keynote address prior to curtain for Dance Theatre of Harlem. The company, founded in 1969 by New York City Ballet danseur noble Arthur Mitchell in response to Dr. King's assassination, performed on Jan. 16. The ballets also were seen at noontime by more than 2,000 Newark Public Schools students, through the support of the NJM Insurance Group.

Bookending the MLK Celebration calendar of events were a dance panel on Jan. 13, titled *Views from the Mountaintop: Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Civil Rights Era*, and a reading of Rajendra Ramoon Mahaaraj's *Little Rock: An American Play* on Jan. 17, as the second presentation of the NJPAC Stage Exchange series. Both programs were free. ●

Gov. Kean and NJPAC: perfect together

On April 20, the eve of his 80th birthday, Republican statesman and former **Gov. Thomas Kean** stood on stage in the Arts Center he had envisioned, surrounded by family, friends and New Jersey's political leaders, past and present. The occasion was to light the candles and offer a hearty, bipartisan "well done" for mobilizing the realization of that dream.

Guests dined at tables filling the Victoria Theater stage and enjoyed *45 Minutes from Broadway: A Musical Theater Salute to Governor Thomas H. Kean*, a revue of fizzy showstoppers and nostalgic standards performed by Tony Award winners and nominees **Santino Fontana**, **James Monroe**



Gov. Thomas Kean and NJPAC President and CEO John Schreiber

Iglehart, **LaChanze** and **Marin Mazzie**. Metropolitan Opera tenor **Alexander Lewis** arrived as a special guest to sing Franz Lehár's *Dein ist mein ganzes*

Herz for Kean, who is a fan of opera as well as an unabashed theater geek. For the rousing grand finale, Fontana took liberties with "The Lees of Old Virginia" from the patriotic musical *1776*, substituting customized lyrics about the Kean dynasty of public service.

Children were the evening's biggest beneficiaries, according to NJPAC President and CEO **John Schreiber**, who reported that more than \$175,000 was generated for arts education programs. Sponsors included **Philip and Tammy Murphy**, **The MCJ Amelior Foundation**, **NJM Insurance Group**, **JPMorgan Chase & Co.** and **Investors Bank**. ●

the art of giving

A Conversation with **Ann D. Borowiec**

NJPAC Board Member and Chair of the Development Committee



Ann Borowiec, former CEO of J.P. Morgan Private Wealth Management, was elected to NJPAC's Board of Directors in 2010. A resident of Summit, this steadfast advocate for the arts—she also sits on the NJSO's Board of Trustees—is committed to education reform as well, serving as Co-Chair of the Board of JerseyCAN, a nonprofit that promotes high-quality schooling for all children throughout the state. Borowiec and her family enjoy a spectrum of events at the Arts Center, spanning classical, American songbook, jazz, comedy and conversations. Here she shares her views about the value of giving to NJPAC:

New Jersey families annually; and acting as a cultural pillar in Newark, helping drive urban transformation.

What is the role of the arts in defining a quality education for children?

I believe in education of the whole child—and maybe that's a trite phrase, but arts education is one of the first things cut when budgets are tight. And we have seen that happen in our inner cities in New Jersey. As a child, I grew up playing musical instruments. I love music and it's part of who I am. For some children, the arts can be a broadening experience, and for others it can be the inspiration that leads to a career. I think it is criminal that the arts are cut from our public schools. There is much evidence that shows student learning in the arts leads to a wide spectrum of academic and social benefits. So I think NJPAC plays a really important role in serving children in our inner cities with arts education.

How do you persuade a potential donor to invest in NJPAC?

You first want to get to know the individual. Anyone who's going to get involved in philanthropy wants to make a difference in the world. And they usually have specific interests. For example, if they have a child who plays an instrument, they may care about musical training. If they grew up in Newark, they may get excited about how to smartly help with the revitalization of Newark. When you know what they care about, you can discuss NJPAC's work in the area they care about. People like to make a difference with their lives and their money, and partner with like-minded individuals or organizations. Donors also want to know their gifts are in responsible hands, and NJPAC's strong leadership, sound financial management, and track record of excellence speaks for itself. ●

What was the genesis of NJPAC's Development Committee and its primary goal?

NJPAC has been here almost 20 years and has always run itself in a very fiscally sound way. All cultural institutions rely on both earned income and contributed income, and having an effective development organization has always been key to NJPAC. We saw an opportunity to get the Board more fully engaged, and we believe an active Development Committee at the Board is just what we need to help take NJPAC to the next level. NJPAC has played a vital role in Newark's revitalization, as the state's anchor cultural institution, by presenting diverse performing arts, extensive arts education and opportunities for civic engagement. To sustain all this good work, and fulfill our ambitions to do more, we need to strengthen and increase our fundraising capabilities. The Development Committee had nine members, and we are "leading by doing" and engaging the full Board—to smartly leverage personal and professional networks. We are bringing new people to NJPAC for performances and events, and

raising the profile of our important role in Newark's urban transformation, and our extensive arts education programs. Our philanthropic donors in the past have included the corporations, foundations and individuals, and we need to strengthen and grow these relationships. We also need to increase our donor base to achieve fiscal sustainability into the future. The Development Committee is focused on that, working closely with NJPAC's Development staff. And it's really important work.

How did your 25-year career in wealth management inform your work on the committee?

I was directly in touch with people trying to be smart with their philanthropic dollars. I understand how a donor thinks. When you're focused on philanthropy, you want to make sure you're doing something you're passionate about and donating your money to an organization that is financially sound and makes a difference. NJPAC has a track record of doing that: impacting over a million children with its arts education programs since it opened; providing over 400 excellent, diverse cultural events for

in the **Vanguard**

Members of the Vanguard Society are visionaries who believe that by investing in NJPAC today, they're paying it forward for future generations. Their support ensures that not only will the brick and mortar still stand, but children will receive every opportunity to become the arts patrons and performers of tomorrow.

Vanguard Society contributors know that another great "return" is the consistent return of artists of international caliber to NJPAC's stages. By continuing to burnish the Arts Center's world-class stature, donors can count on programming that showcases the most prestigious orchestras and dance companies, singers like Tony Bennett and Diana Ross, rock'n'roll bands like Earth, Wind & Fire, and comedians like Jerry Seinfeld.

This annual giving society makes it possible for NJPAC to

succeed and thrive. Seventy percent of Arts Education's budget is shouldered by Vanguard donors, who know that as the state's largest provider of arts education, NJPAC prioritizes the role of culture and the arts in young students' lives.

The following Vanguard Society members prove by their generous spirit and dynamic presence at NJPAC that philanthropy may take many forms, but follows a single path to bettering our world.



Archie Gottesman
Co-Founder, STARCH Branding, LLC
Trustee, Women's Association of NJPAC

Archie Gottesman served as the Chief Branding Officer/Owner of Edison Properties, the parent company of Manhattan Mini Storage and Edison ParkFast, for 28 years. Manhattan Mini Storage is widely recognized and well-loved for its snarky, hilarious, meaningful and provocative ads. The Summit resident recently co-founded her own branding agency, STARCH, to help bring that joy to other organizations and businesses and help them to share their message in original, powerful ways. Her philanthropic interests include serving on various boards, among them the Foundation for Jewish Camp and Animal Haven shelter, both in New York City.



Michelle Y. Lee
President, Wells Fargo
Community Banking, Eastern Region
Former NJPAC Board Member and Trustee

Michelle Y. Lee manages Wells Fargo's Community Banking for the Eastern Region, spanning 14 states and the District of Columbia, as well as more than 2,700 banking stores and 4,600 ATMs. A 31-year company veteran, she joined Wells Fargo (then First National State Bank) as a teller in 1984. Throughout her tenure, she has taken on leadership roles of increasing responsibility. Lee serves on the boards of many organizations, including the Consumer Bankers Association, Alvin Ailey Dance School Foundation and Alliance for Lupus Research, and is a pianist, composer, choir director, playwright and poet. She is a former board member of Junior Achievement of New Jersey and Newark Alliance.



David S. Stone
CEO and Senior Managing Partner
Stone & Magnanini
NJPAC Board Member

David S. Stone is an experienced and accomplished complex litigation trial lawyer. As former general counsel of a billion-dollar sports franchise, he brings a unique understanding of the many potential challenges and litigation needs of corporations. Stone has been an active Board Member of NJPAC for more than 20 years and is also extensively involved in the arts as the Executive Director of the Drama Desk Awards. His two theater and film companies—Merlin Productions and Stoneboys Productions—have produced theatrical events including musicals, monologue slams and holiday cabarets. He and his wife, Jennifer, support many charities, as well as WNET13, the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, among other institutions. ●

members make memories



Membership has its benefits, and they ripple far beyond recognition in the program book. By becoming Members of NJPAC, patrons receive special advantages to obtain seats to performances by the artists they love most—but also the satisfaction that their dollars are doing greater good.

Depending on the level of contribution, Members are entitled to rewards ranging from discounts on tickets, selected events and restaurants to backstage tours, private receptions and concierge service for their entire NJPAC experience. The greatest payback, however, is that membership supports the continuing excellence of the Arts Education Department's programs for children over the long term.

As a former teacher in Ridgewood public schools and a devoted concert-goer, **Thomas**

C. Wallace recognized the vitality the arts brought to his students' lives and was drawn to NJPAC's mission. He signed on as a Member during a time when the Arts Center was a mass of girders, but predicted that in the years following construction, the lives of generations of children would be changed. In 2008, he increased his longtime membership support by joining the **Vanguard Society**.

By teaching kindergarteners to high school seniors how culture informs academic subjects, Wallace himself learned about the positive impact of the arts on his students' journeys of self-discovery.

"Literature, music and art. I find that they add to every single thing you do in life," he said. "If you didn't have that education...there would be a hole in your life." ●

loyal family

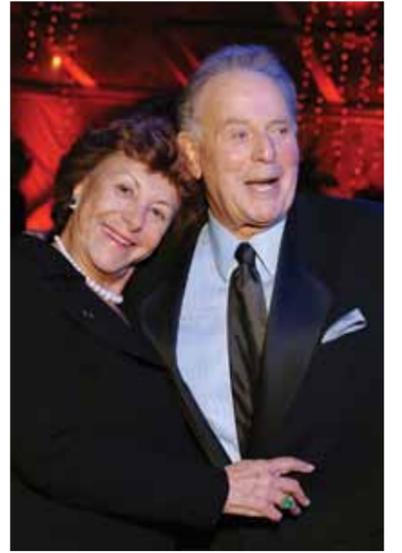
When families are unable to afford to see a live performance, or a child has never received the opportunity to explore his or her artistic nature, the **Joan and Allen Bildner Family Fund** steps in to turn that emptiness into a fulfilling, often life-changing experience.

NJPAC Board Member **James L. Bildner** and his brother, **Robert L. Bildner**, co-executors of the fund, announced in 2015 that a \$2 million estate gift would be made to NJPAC to carry on the philanthropic mission of their late parents, both of whom were esteemed advocates and contributors to the Arts Center. (Allen Bildner was a member of the Board from 1997 until his death on February 5.) The Bildners seeded NJPAC's early years with innovations such as a robust **Ticket Subsidy Fund**, which offers \$6 tickets in prime seating

locations to community-based organizations, and support of the **Campaign for NJPAC**.

The estate gift will be used to invest in catalytic projects that support the mission of the Arts Center and the interests of Joan and Allen. For example, the bequest will provide stable funding to underwrite five seasons of the public television production of **American Songbook at NJPAC**.

The bequest has also seeded an **Innovation Fund**, matched by the **Judy and Josh Weston Fund**, for supporting initiatives with potential to create ongoing revenue streams for NJPAC and the **Joan and Allen Bildner Catalytic Opportunity Fund** to support pre-development expenses related to real estate projects in the Newark arts district. ●



“why do you give to NJPAC?”

Why dedicate time, money, talent—or all of the above—to the Arts Center? Our loyal friends have their reasons. When asked “Why do you give to NJPAC?,” they raised their hands in response.



“When NJPAC was under construction I took a tour with Larry Goldman, I think that was the moment that I knew NJPAC was going to be very special. My wife, Paula, and I, as well as Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, have been involved since the PAC opened—we were there on opening night, which was really spectacular and have been engaged ever since. The Arts Center has just gotten better and better.

NJPAC was founded by a group of true visionary leaders who understood the Arts Center could be a place not just for entertainment, which it provides at a world-class level, but also for arts education and a catalyst for the continued renaissance of Newark. Our CEO John Schreiber and the team he has assembled have expanded on those possibilities; he leads the organization with great clarity of vision.

NJPAC is indeed a special place. It inspires and elevates your spirits when you're there, whether you're at a performance, engaged in supporting its good work or participating in an event.”

—**William J. Marino**
NJPAC Board Member
Former Board Chair/Co-Chair
Retired Chairman, President and CEO of
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey



“We find it very fulfilling to support NJPAC, especially its gold-standard arts education programs, because the results are immediately obvious. Children's lives are being transformed every day at this magnificent venue and in many New Jersey schools. It is difficult to imagine New Jersey without NJPAC. We are very fortunate to have such a great

center for diverse community engagement and world-class arts and cultural programming. It makes living in New Jersey special!”

—**Nina Wells**
NJPAC Board Member and Trustee of the
Women's Association of NJPAC
—**Ted Wells**
Former NJPAC Board Member



“When I arrive each year for the *TD James Moody Jazz Festival*, I take a drive around the city and continue to be amazed. It's very exciting what's been happening in Newark and Moody would have been caught up in the new vibe of his hometown. The city is coming back better than ever, and NJPAC is where people gravitate to be part of that excitement. Isn't it a wonderful thing for Newark to have such a beautiful venue?”

—**Linda Moody**
Wife of the late saxophonist James Moody



“What makes NJPAC one of the best performing arts centers in the country is the leadership of John Schreiber and the committed team of people he has assembled. They continue to collaborate with their partners as well as the local communities to ensure the best entertainment for the general public and the

right educational programs for the school systems they help serve. As the Executive Vice President of the (national) Johnny Mercer Foundation, and the Artistic Director of the (local) Development Wing here in New Jersey, I have been thrilled we've been able to increase our support of NJPAC year after year for the great work we do together.”

—**Jonathan Brielle**



“NJPAC is an anchor institution in Newark, offering food for the soul through performance art that is crucial to the city's resurgence. Supporting NJPAC is nothing short of life-giving.”

—**The Rev. Dr. M. William Howard, Jr.**
Pastor, Bethany Baptist Church,
Newark



“The No. 1 reason? NJPAC is the heart of the City of Newark and the soul of the state. The Arts Center reaches out to so many people with so many interests—you'll never be bored. I've been going to concerts at NJPAC since the doors first opened. We're lucky to have it.”

—**Judy Bernhaut**
Vanguard Society Member and classical music enthusiast



the magic of **Disney in Jersey**

In August, NJPAC was the recipient of a \$100,000 grant from Disney to bring the *Disney Musicals in Schools* program to Greater Newark. The Arts Center is one of only four arts organizations in the nation and the only one in New Jersey selected in 2015 to collaborate with *Disney Musicals in Schools*.

NJPAC chose five public elementary schools from eligible applicants for the 2015–16 academic year: **Branch Brook School**, **Luis Muñoz Marin School** and **Mount Vernon School**, all in Newark; **Rosa Parks Community School** in Orange, and **John Marshall School No. 20** in Elizabeth. The *Disney Musicals in Schools* program is free to these schools.

The after-school program is an outreach initiative developed by Disney Theatrical Group to create ongoing theater programs in elementary schools. Each of the schools takes part in a 17-week musical theater residency. NJPAC and Disney Theatrical Group train and assign 11 Arts Center

teaching artists, who help produce a Disney musical by creating a sustainable theater program with the schools' educators. Three of the schools chose *The Lion King KIDS* and the remaining two selected *Aladdin KIDS*.

The programs culminate in a performance at each school. On February 8, 2016, NJPAC hosted a *Student Share Celebration*, where each school presented a selection from its show in Prudential Hall for an audience of fellow students, family members and friends. Because the \$100,000 grant will support two years of programming, another five schools will be announced in 2016.

Disney KIDS musicals, created in partnership with Music Theater International (MTI), are about 30 minutes in length and have been adapted from such classic Disney films as *101 Dalmatians*, *The Aristocats*, *Cinderella*, *The Jungle Book*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Winnie the Pooh*.

Disney Musicals in Schools was launched in response to Disney Theatrical Group's concern that low-income students in urban public schools were not afforded equitable access to the arts. After successfully offering the program in New York City schools, Disney Theatrical Group began partnering with organizations in other communities around the United States. ●

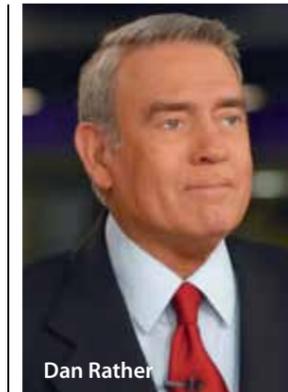


look who's talking

Throughout 2015, NJPAC hosted a wide variety of speakers, special guests and broadcast events that kept the conversation flowing...



Ken Burns



Dan Rather



William C. Dudley



Christian McBride

New Jersey Speakers Series

The second season of the *New Jersey Speakers Series* at NJPAC continued to provide thought-provoking entertainment from some of the country's most influential leaders. Presented by **Fairleigh Dickinson University**, the seven-program series let subscribers hear "news" straight from **Dan Rather** and historic insights from **David McCullough**. The latest edition opened with former CIA Director **Leon E. Panetta** and continued with CNN Chief Medical Correspondent **Dr. Sanjay Gupta** and documentarian **Ken Burns**.

Place of business

The participation of high-profile leaders from the realms of finance and life sciences made the *Business Partners Roundtables* particularly robust and newsy in 2015. This early-morning series in the Chase Room typically draws more than a hundred executives from major corporations and private firms throughout the metro area.

Mike Pedersen, President and CEO of TD Bank, opened the *Roundtables* in March with a review of recent innovations at his company that focus on environmental stewardship and the rehabilitation of urban areas. He pointed to employee loyalty and client satisfaction as two missions that steadied the company during times of economic upheaval. TD Bank, the founding

sponsor of the *TD James Moody Jazz Festival* at NJPAC, serves more than 8 million customers and ranks as the fifth largest bank in North America.

In a return appearance at NJPAC in April, **William C. Dudley**, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, offered his candid views of the national and regional economies. It was his first major address of the year and coincided with a tour to assess the pace of economic development in northern New Jersey.

The *Roundtable* was expanded into a panel, *Life Sciences and New Jersey's Innovation Ecosystem*, introduced by **New Jersey Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno** on June 23. Moderated by **Dean Paranicas**, President and CEO of the HealthCare Institute of New Jersey, the speakers included **Vincent Forlenza**, Chairman, President and CEO of Becton, Dickinson & Co.; **Christopher Molloy**, Senior Vice President of Research and Economic Development at Rutgers University; and **Brenton Saunders**, CEO and President of Allergan plc. Creating a dynamic environment for scientists, academics and local start-ups in New Jersey—the "medicine chest of the world"—was a chief point of the dialogue.

Before taking the stage in Prudential Hall for his bank's nationally streamed Town Hall on July 23, Wells Fargo & Co. CEO **John Stumpf** eased into the morning by visiting the *Roundtable*. His buoyant address to the *Business Partners* was delivered a little

more than a day after a headline in *The Wall Street Journal* whooped about the "Earth's Most Valuable Bank" nearing \$300 billion in market capitalization. That mark moved Wells Fargo ahead of Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd. and set a new high for a U.S. bank.

The *Business Partners Roundtable* is sponsored by PNC Bank. NJPAC's *Business Partners* is composed of more than 90 multi-national corporations and privately-held businesses that support the Arts Center.

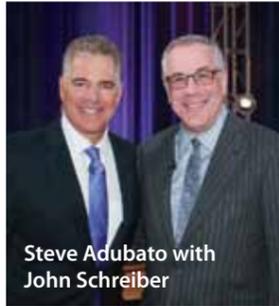
One on One: Singular Sensation

Fans of cerebral, ear-catching music are able to listen to their top-of-mind artists as part of a new live series, *One on One with Christian McBride*, in the cozy surroundings of the Victoria Theater. Bassist McBride, who is NJPAC's Jazz Advisor, settles into each program like an old friend jamming and jawing with a fellow musician—and that's a true-life scenario.

McBride's conversations with his pals are easygoing and insider, punctuated with illustrative musical interludes and duets. The audience has its say during a Q&A. In September, 20-time Grammy-winning jazz guitarist **Pat Metheny**, a *DownBeat* Hall of Famer, shared the stage with McBride. Two months later, during the *TD James Moody Jazz Festival*, pianist and singer-songwriter **Bruce Hornsby** chatted with him about musical influences and past collaborations.



Benilde Little



Steve Adubato with John Schreiber



Leon Cooperman



Business Partners Roundtable with Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno

Something's in the Air

In addition to broadcasts of *American Songbook at NJPAC* and *One-on-One with Steve Adubato at NJPAC*, the Arts Center's many appearances on the air created new audiences who didn't have to be in the building to see first-class entertainment.

For the most recent edition of *Jonathan's Choice: An Evening of Music and Conversation*, WNYC radio host and Songbook champion Jonathan Schwartz interviewed Broadway singer Jessica Molasky, who performed her interpretations of best-loved numbers by Joni Mitchell.

SiriusXM Broadway host Seth Rudetsky interviewed Arts Education musical theater students on his satellite radio show. And stay tuned for *Latin Legends* on HBO, featuring jazz pianist and bandleader Eddie Palmieri taped in concert at NJPAC.

'Welcome' to NJPAC

A book signing with Newark native Benilde Little, bestselling author of *Good Hair*, took place on May 20 in the Chase Room. The event represented a new alliance under the same roof: a collaboration between the Department of Community Engagement and the Women's Association of NJPAC for special events focused on women. Little, a resident of Montclair, joined in a Q&A and signed copies of *Welcome to My Breakdown*, her first work of non-fiction, and was interviewed by WA Trustee Marcia Wilson-Brown.

Compelling Conversation

Want to know what's on the minds of the country's top financial analysts and economists? If you're a business exec who attends *Conversations with Leon Cooperman* at NJPAC, you need only ask.

An audience Q&A is always a component of these popular dialogues created and moderated by Omega Advisors Chairman and Founder "Lee" Cooperman, a longstanding NJPAC benefactor and former Board Member, who remains active on the Investment Committee. The chats may be informal, but Cooperman hand-picks his guests from the highest rungs of the national business community.

The talks in the Chase Room, held before an invited audience of a hundred NJPAC donors, members of the Vanguard Society and Business Partners and other VIPs, typically dwell on the market and investing, and provide insights unique to each guest's expertise. The concept began when Cooperman asked Mario Gabelli, CEO of GAMCO Investors, Inc., to join him for a discussion at NJPAC—and enjoyed it so much that he followed it up in an evening with Jim Cramer, host of CNBC's *Mad Money*.

The series' second year began in May with an appearance by hedge fund manager David Einhorn, the Founder and President of Greenlight Capital in New York. Economics was on the agenda in October,

when syndicated columnist and author Lawrence (Larry) Kudlow chatted about his work as an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and as a TV host (*The Kudlow Report* on CNBC).

Dancemakers on Diversity

A panel of six women choreographers, well-regarded as professional dancers, educators, artistic directors, or all of the above, made pointed observations largely about clash and collaboration between the sexes during *Dancemakers on Diversity: Sharing Common Ground in a Multicultural Art*.

The conversation, moderated by Robert Garland, Resident Choreographer of Dance Theatre of Harlem, was a free event presented by the Department of Community Engagement on Oct. 29.

The panelists represented dance in many definitions—modern dance, neoclassical ballet, West African, hip-hop—and several run companies of dancers blended from varied ethnic backgrounds. They included Nai-Ni Chen (Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company), Carolyn Dorfman (Carolyn Dorfman Dance), Jennifer Weber (Decadancetheatre), Karen Love (Umoja Dance Company), Virginia Johnson (Dance Theatre of Harlem) and Nasha Thomas (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater); some also serve on NJPAC's Celebrate Dance Committee.



Mayor Ras J. Baraka



Scott Simon



Arianna Huffington



Andrea Jung

Women Supporting Women

Grameen America President and CEO Andrea Jung spoke before 450 guests at the Women's Association of NJPAC's Annual Spring Luncheon and Auction on May 5, telling the Arts Center's principal volunteer fundraisers that women can become "economic engines" given capital and financial identity, and can succeed "not with a handout, but with a hand up."

In seven years, Grameen America, founded by Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, has empowered more than 47,000 women in 11 cities to create their own businesses through a program of micro-loans and financial training.

The former chief of Avon Products, Inc., Jung occupies a high rung on the female executive power lists of *Forbes* and *Fortune* magazines and the *Financial Times*. She reported that 99% of Grameen America's borrowers completed payback of their loans, which provide the capital for such enterprises as flower shops, hair salons and cleaning services. The organization currently has a New Jersey presence in Union City.

As equally festive as it is focused on fund-raising, the Luncheon generated \$200,000 for NJPAC and arts education programs, including the Jazz4Girls Fund, dedicated to scholarships for young female jazz musicians to attend the *All-Female Jazz Residency*. A woman of achievement, Ruth C. Lipper, was honored with the WA's

Ronnie Goldberg Award for her outstanding membership within the WA since 2000.

The event's lead sponsors were Prudential, The MCJ Amelior Foundation and the Lipper Family Charitable Foundation.

Reasons to 'Believe'

Believe in Newark, a series of free Town Halls created by Mayor Ras J. Baraka to address citizen issues, launched in late 2014 with a session on public safety. Throughout the following year, audiences expanded as the word spread about the thought-provoking discussions on topics relevant to Newarkers.

Moderated by Marcia Wilson Brown, Rutgers-Newark Vice Chancellor for External and Governmental Relations, the panels were recorded for re-broadcast by NWK-TV Government Access Channel and WBGO 88.3FM, Newark Public Radio. The mayor joined speakers representing many of the city's departments, institutions and organizations.

"The opportunity for the mayor to speak to citizens in a direct and unfiltered way is what our democracy is all about," said NJPAC President and CEO John Schreiber. "NJPAC is proud to host these important gatherings."

In February, a purposeful forum centered on economic development, followed in April by an unblinking assessment of education. The programs concluded in June with an examination of health by experts from Rutgers, the City of Newark and East

Orange General Hospital.

Mayor Baraka later joined another education-related conversation, held at NJPAC in September: *Bonanza or Burden? Facebook's Gift to Newark Schools*. The free community program about the successes and repercussions of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's \$100 million gift to Newark schools was moderated by WNYC's Jami Floyd, local host of *All Things Considered*.

Recorded for broadcast on New York public radio WNYC, the panel included guests Dale Russakoff, author of *The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's Schools?*—a five-year study of the windfall—and former New Jersey Education Commissioner Christopher Cerf, the state-appointed superintendent of Newark Public Schools.

Topical Talks

Scott Simon, one of the country's best-known commentators, held a pair of conversations with thought leaders Joel I. Klein and Arianna Huffington during the *Trending with Scott Simon* series presented by U.S. Trust.

The host of NPR's *Weekend Edition Saturday* discussed "Lessons in Education Reform" with the former New York City schools chancellor in March, and returned for "Women Who Set the Agenda" with the media mogul two months later. Both speakers also signed copies of their latest books and engaged the audience with lively Q&As. ●

njpac, briefly



Ask Them Anything

Have question? Will answer. **NJPAC's volunteers** assisted 5,823 patrons at the customer information center during the year, a task made easier by equipping roaming volunteers with tablets and "Ask Me Anything" buttons. Want to know where to find the rest rooms, how to become a Member, what's coming up at NJPAC or if NJTransit is running on schedule? The first responder to your query is likely to be a volunteer.

In fact, volunteers logged more than 4,680 administrative hours in the last fiscal year. Off campus, they promote NJPAC at train stations, libraries and festivals in your communities. They were seen line-judging at the Women's Association of NJPAC **Ping Pong in the Park**, taking care of the children auditioning for **Annie Jr.** in Arts Education, and participating in plans for the launch of the **Newark350** anniversary celebration. For above-and-beyond service, however, **John Sowell** takes the prize. He volunteered to be splattered with 1,000 paintballs fired by **MythBusters Adam Savage** and **Jamie Hyneman** on stage. Sowell wore a 150-pound armored suit for the experiment, but still wound up picking flecks of paint from his teeth. ●



NJSO's Orchestra You

The **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra** describes it as "a little rehearsal, a little performance and a whole lot of fun." Its second annual **#OrchestraYou** performance in the Prudential Hall lobby on March 13 gathered professional and amateur instrumentalists for a go-get-'em rendition of Bizet's Farandole from *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2*. Among those tuned up and

turned on were NJPAC's own Executive Vice President and COO, Warren Tranquada, and his wife, Alexine, a flutist who last performed 15 years ago with a community flute choir at Berklee College of Music. The classical music patrons listening in the lobby reportedly couldn't tell the difference between the NJSO ringers and Warren on his borrowed tenor sax. ●



Holiday celebrations

Whenever holiday weekends are celebrated, Community Engagement steps up to enhance the main event with related attractions. Leading up to NJPAC's **MLK Celebration**, with **Dance Theatre of Harlem**, was **Views from the Mountaintop: Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Civil Rights Era**, a panel at the **Montclair Public Library**. For DTH's performance, nearly 200 Girl Scouts "camped out" in Prudential Hall lobby and rose the next morning to breakfast, yoga and dance class. Mother's Day weekend, with **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, included a happy hour for young professionals, a boutique in the lobby and Sunday brunch for moms. The Kwanzaa traditions in December, which surround a performance by **Forces of Nature Dance Theatre**, now encompass an honors ceremony for three Newark elders, a children's festival at the Center for Arts Education and an artisan marketplace. ●

In Our Own Backyard

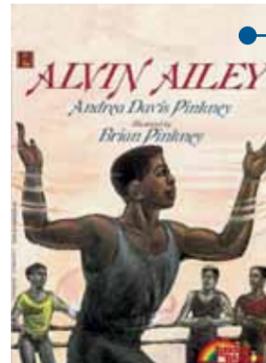
The **Arts Education Department** has been advocating for the children of Newark and their schools in significant ways.

● NJPAC is actively participating in a grant-funded study by the **Newark Arts Education Roundtable** on developing common tools to evaluate the collective impact of the work of Newark's arts providers on the city's children.

● Arts Education was also approached by **Newark City of Learning Collaborative**, a collective at the Cornwall Center at Rutgers University dedicated to increasing the percentage of residents with postsecondary degrees, to represent the arts as a career choice. In response, NJPAC offered some 800 students the opportunity to attend arts workshops at Essex County College.

● A database project in progress, **Newark Thrives**, will provide parents with listings of resources, activities and programs outside of school time with just a few keystrokes. NJPAC is one of the principal organizations on board for pollinating the calendar with after-school and weekend programs. ●

Shall We Dance?



When it comes to promoting dance programming at NJPAC, Community Engagement is the cheerleading squad captain. **Books on the Move**, its children's reading series, chose a biography of choreographer Alvin Ailey to share at libraries and community centers. Artist-members of the department's **Dance Advisory Committee**, seasoned dancemakers all, were integral to the **Jersey (New) Moves!** creation process and performance. Liturgical dance classes and other free workshops were presented on and off the Arts Center campus throughout the year. ●



Ping Pong in the Park

At this gathering, a backhanded compliment was a good thing. Spectators' darting eyeballs were fixed on the table-tennis team from **New Jersey Institute of Technology** at the **Ping Pong in the Park** tournament on April 16, a first-time event produced by the **Cultural Legacy Committee of the Women's Association of NJPAC** and in collaboration with the **Military Park Partnership**. Sure enough, **NJIT** took first and second places in the Military Park tourney, with **Essex County College** taking third place. Other attractions included an eclectic lineup of food trucks, music by DJ Sienna Chanel, prizes, and student discounts to NJPAC performances. ●

Women's Association Strategic Plan

In September, the **Women's Association of NJPAC** finalized a 2015–18 strategic plan that reaffirms its mission to "fund, promote and advocate" for the Arts Center and support its arts education programs. Two new committees grew from this evaluation: **Marketing and Promotions** (Tenagne Girma-Jeffries, Chair) and **Programming** (Mikki Taylor and Tai Beauchamp, Co-Chairs). The first committee focuses on the overall branding of the organization, especially its presence on social media and web platforms, while Programming will study new ways to create "info-taining" events for the WA, which places its membership at 2,000-plus. As the WA enters its third decade as the single largest annual funding source for NJPAC, it intends to take a closer look at increasing its fundraising potential, broadening its base of supporters, and enhancing the benefits of WA membership, among other goals. ●

NJPAC/M. John Richard Community Service Award

The **NJPAC/M. John Richard Community Service Award**—a Thanksgiving tradition at the Arts Center—is conferred on staffers who work to make the world a better place. The honoree at the eighth annual ceremony was **Brian Remite**, Database Analyst, Customer Care Systems, who dedicates himself to *Extra Life*, a 24-hour gaming marathon in support of the **Children’s Miracle Network**. (Locally, this benefits **Children’s Specialized Hospital** in Mountainside.)



In a full-circle moment, **John Richard**, NJPAC’s former Executive Vice President and COO, recalled serving as Board President of **Children’s Specialized Hospital Foundation** in the ‘80s. Remite, a seven-year fundraiser for the network, is President of the **Newark Guild**, which generated \$117,000 last year. “This means the world to me and it’s going to mean the world to them,” said Remite, referring to the children under the hospital’s care. A \$2,000 donation was made jointly by **John and Lynne Richard, John Schreiber** and **NJPAC**.

Fiddle-and-Fa-La-La-Fest

More than 300 students from six El Sistema-inspired music-instruction programs across New Jersey dazzled family, friends and audience members at **El Sistema New Jersey Alliance’s** second annual **Fiddle-and-Fa-La-La-Fest** at NJPAC on June 6. The student musicians of **NJSO CHAMPS** (Character, Achievement and Music Project), the **Paterson Music Project**, **Sister Cities Girlchoir**, **Sonic Explorations**, **Union City Music Project** and **El Sistema-Trenton** each performed a featured piece before combining for a special finale: a mash-up of Bob Marley’s “Three Little Birds” and Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.”

eTicket Delivery

With NJPAC’s **mobile entry option**, introduced in 2015, smart-phone users who select the eTicket delivery option when buying tickets can always have them in their pocket—no more “Argh! I left them on the dresser.” Mobile entry allows patrons to go directly to a guest services staff member to be scanned into NJPAC’s theaters. It also provides instantaneous transfers of purchased tickets to other people. Just download the Ticketmaster app, available for iOS or Android from the iTunes App Store or GooglePlay.



M.A.N.Y. Benefits

M.A.N.Y. (Music Advancement for Newark-Area Youth), a partnership with the **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra’s** education department, earned an ovation for its 2015 debut. The program, which provides students with quality instruction on instruments, exceeded expectations in numbers alone: The symphonic band and youth orchestra ensembles were expected to enroll about 15 players each and the final tally reached 35-plus for each ensemble, totaling 70 students. M.A.N.Y. builds leadership skills and musical proficiency in beginning and experienced students, while grooming them for acceptance into community programs and ensembles.



Exceptional Leaders

A team of six NJPAC staffers was chosen for the esteemed **American Express Nonprofit Leadership Academy**, held in New York. Addressing a shortage of emerging leaders in the nonprofit sector, American Express teams up with the Center for Creative Leadership, a top-ranked provider of executive education, to train participants in the skills needed to take their organizations into the future. The program offers slots competitively to individuals who hold manager-level positions and show strong career momentum. NJPAC was proudly represented by (l-r) **Andy Donald, Debra Volz, Evan White, Alison Scott-Williams, Mary Jaffa** and **Chad Spies**.



Community Art Party

In a project designed to engage the imagination and the neighborhood, families from throughout Greater Newark turned out in the Ironbound section on May 23 for a **Community Art Party**, featuring noted Brazilian muralist **Alexandre Keto**. The artist, who chose Newark as his only New Jersey stop on a multi-city tour, created a striking mural that evokes the cultural links between the African diaspora and Brazil. The event’s success was attributed to a coalition that included NJPAC Community Engagement, Harlem Arts Alliance, Ironbound Community Corp. and Yendor Productions.



Rap on the Map

Hip-hop artists from China, India, West Africa and the U.S. gathered for a panel at **Essex County College** in Newark on February 2 to unite cultures through the international language of rap and spoken-word performance. **Planet Rock: The Afro-Asiatic Origin of Hip Hop Past, Present and Future** was moderated by hip-hop expert **Dr. JahJah Shakur** and co-presented by **NJPAC in YOUR Community!**, **Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company**, the **Africana Institute** and **True School University**. Special guest was bamboo rapper **Ma XingYe**, who was visiting New Jersey under the auspices of the Consulate of the People’s Republic of China.

who we are

Whether it's programming or marketing, arts education or development or day-to-day operations, NJPAC's enthusiastic, professional team shares a genuine passion for making the Arts Center experience world-class, every time. In this year's Report to the Community, we shine the spotlight on three of the outstanding staff members who embody the NJPAC mission.



There aren't many people on staff who can say that they've worked at NJPAC from the ground up, but Jessie Jimenez is one of them.

"When I started here, I worked out of the phone directory, the Yellow Pages, calling people to see if they wanted to buy the inscribed bricks. That's what we were doing, selling bricks and data entry," says Jimenez, a bilingualist who was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Newark.

When the NJPAC box office opened for business, she was called upon to supervise the operations there for a few years, then was offered a group sales manager position and, afterward, Associate Director of the Call Center. In 2007, she moved into priority sales, a department she currently serves

as Associate Director, overseeing priority program representatives as well as box office personnel.

"I worked for these amazing directors," she recalls. "All of them took me under their wing and they 'grew' me."

Priority service, which Jimenez compares to one-stop shopping, is available by invitation and at no cost to frequent ticket buyers seeking a concierge experience at NJPAC. Ticket exchanges, restaurant reservations, advance notifications of shows, and parking arrangements are some of the benefits.

"People love it," she says. "They can just call someone who knows them. They build relationships with the representatives, who monitor their accounts and know what they like. They know the rep will call them when something is about to go on sale and guarantee them the better seats. And the fact is, they don't have to go through answering machines, voicemails or phone prompts. It's like having their own personal shopper."

One of her favorite activities is a night out with the girlfriends, sampling varieties of martinis. "I must say, the clique of women I hang out with are women that I've met and supervised at NJPAC. I truly can call them my sisters and it's because of the job."

Jimenez is mom to two boys, ages 21 and 13, and a pair of Chihuahuas: Pebbles and Bam Bam. She visits her own mom and relatives in Puerto Rico every year.

"I met my husband, Dean, in Puerto Rico and it turned out we were from the same area in Newark and hung out with the same people, in the same places, but never knew each other. He wanted to come back to New Jersey and I said, 'If you want to come back, then it has to be Newark.'" ●



To Thomas Dixon, it doesn't matter if you're a major benefactor or the guy who delivers lunch: You'll be treated with the same respect and protection he's provided since NJPAC opened in 1997.

Call it the Dixon Effect. In just one case, a patron felt extra special when Dixon brought her a wheelchair at curbside and escorted her to a box seat. She and her husband showed their gratitude by becoming donors.

And because the lifelong Newarker modestly considers this part of his duty, such admirable stories are heard only from his colleagues and those he assists.

Dixon reports to Chief of Security John Hook and supervises about 14 officers. They control the NJPAC environment



Evan White might describe himself jokingly as "a musician with no gig," but thanks to his aptitude for arranging "gigs," NJPAC's stages constantly brim with light and music.

As Senior Director of Programming, White books artists and coordinates performances closely with Executive Vice President and Executive Producer David Rodriguez—that accounts for 50-plus shows each season on his playlist. He began his 13-year tenure with NJPAC as a programming coordinator for three producers, then segued into booking musicians for *Horizon Foundation Sounds of the City*.

"Programming is all about audience development," he explains. "It's about reaching out to audiences and providing shows they can relate to. There are different levels of programming: There are the things

audiences expect to see at NJPAC and the artists and events we offer to entice them to come."

Raised in Chatham Township, White's early exposure to music was through his mother, a Woodstock alum who gifted him with an old acoustic guitar and a cassette by Spanish classical guitarist Andrés Segovia. ("I didn't know it was possible to play like that," he remembers.) At Eastman School of Music, he majored in music and classical guitar performance.

Because "they don't teach you in music school how to make money," White continues, he performed in rock bands

and at weddings and coffeehouses before taking a job at the Community Theatre in Morristown (now the Mayo Center for the Performing Arts) as an assistant to the artistic director. There, he learned the A-to-Z of theater operations and bookings—skills that he put to use at NJPAC about seven years ago when asked to build a summer concert series featuring Smokey Robinson, Diana Krall and others.

"NJPAC is one of the only places in New Jersey where you can be creative and produce, rather than just present," White says. "I've been at NJPAC a long time and a reason for that is I really admire its mission. I believe in bringing Newark back and have confidence that it will happen."

He and his wife, Mandie, live and play in Freehold with their trio: ages 2, 7 and 11. The couple volunteer and raise funds for the Frances Foundation for Kids Fighting Cancer, which also assists families in meeting medical expenses and coping with loss.

White is at his busiest during the September-June production season, which means July and August are programmed with the family—using a checklist of outings that take them from museums to boardwalks. "That's our time to play," he says. ●

and its accessibility—that includes NICO Kitchen + Bar—and meet with other departments to ensure readiness for any possible scenario. In his 18 years at the Arts Center, Dixon has encountered just about all of them, from illness and accidents to staying on the premises until an overenthusiastic performer's after-party concludes in the wee hours.

(Scoot over, Kevin Costner. He's even been Whitney Houston's bodyguard.)

As a young man, Dixon was employed as the security supervisor at Blue Cross

Blue Shield of New Jersey, also in Newark, when he decided to take a position with the new Arts Center. Feeling badly about leaving, he fibbed to his bosses that he hoped to "help the children" at his new job.

One day at NJPAC, totally by chance, Dixon crossed paths with his former board chairman. "He said to me, 'Where are all the kids you work with?'" Dixon recalls, laughing.

He's "Pop-Pop" to five grandchildren and enjoys taking them to Branch Brook

Park near his home. Dixon himself is in the house on performance nights, and although he raves about the variety of shows at NJPAC, he rarely gets to see them. He's busy keeping a watchful eye on gatherings as large as the crowds outside for *Horizon Foundation Sounds of the City* or as intimate as meet-and-greets with artists.

His motto could be "Always Have a Solution." But given the choice, he'd probably say, without a trace of pretense, "We Work Together as a Team." ●

the budget picture

new jersey performing arts center corporation



thinking strategically

The **FY13–15 Strategic Plan** took its final bow on June 30, but not before hitting or surpassing its marks in such crucial areas as programming, arts education and financial sustainability.

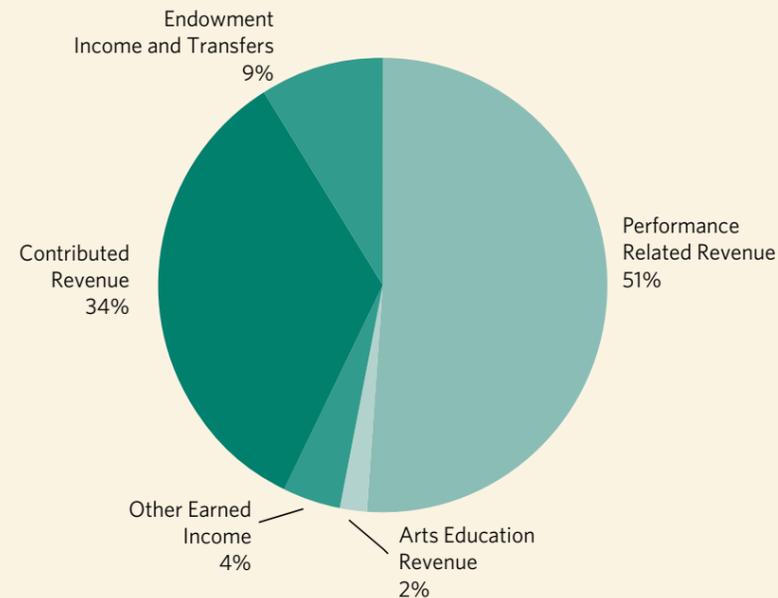
The plan's targets included expanding audiences through more diverse and distinctive programming, enhancing the positive impact of arts education programs, and improving long-range fiscal vitality. NJPAC's \$40.5 million operating budget for FY16 is 30% larger than it was prior to the plan, and FY15 showed the strongest financial results since FY08.

NJPAC reaches out to even more households each year, more than double the number before the plan was implemented. Its customer base has grown in diversity, reflecting the spectrum of New Jersey's unique communities. And the Arts Center now draws more visitors from out of state than it has at any point in its history.

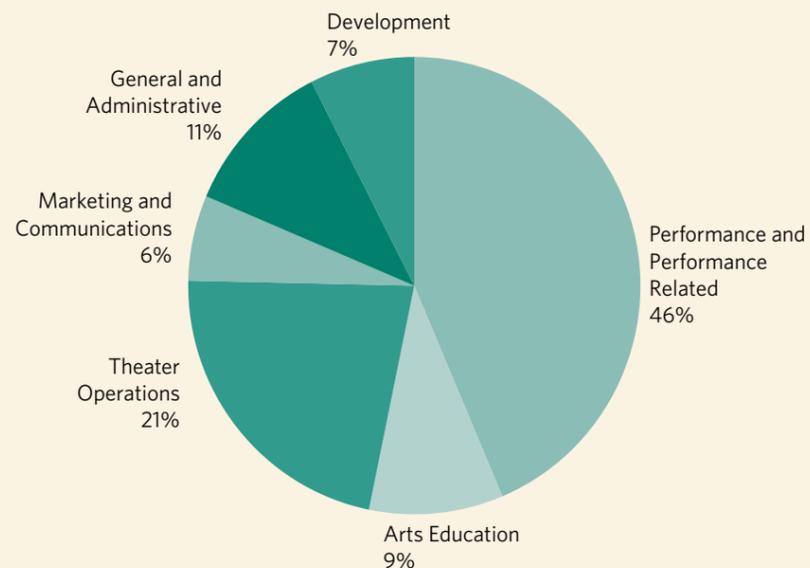
NJPAC hosted 415 performance and non-performance events last year and has seen a significant uptick over the past six years. Performances each season that are considered regionally or nationally distinctive also have more than doubled.

The number of individuals served by the Arts Education Department has increased by nearly 50% over the past three years, attributed in large part to initiatives that embrace the most compelling trends in arts education. For example, The Johnny Mercer Foundation's *Mercer Musical Theater Program* with NJPAC mirrors the Maker Movement, as students create and produce an original musical that gives voice to their experiences.

2015 OPERATING INCOME \$37.5 MILLION



2015 OPERATING EXPENSES \$37.5 MILLION



Consolidated Balance Sheets June 30, 2015 and 2014

Assets

	2015	2014
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 875,806	539,723
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts	1,440,444	1,325,877
Contributions and grants receivable, net	9,647,861	10,072,374
Prepaid expenses and other assets	982,064	917,814
Investments	72,143,051	70,534,041
Property and equipment, net	119,785,440	121,199,357
Total assets	\$ 204,874,666	204,589,186

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 3,266,845	2,402,200
Advance ticket sales and other deferred revenue	3,124,732	2,352,247
Loans payable	8,691,931	5,504,795
Other liabilities	490,112	853,776
Total liabilities	15,573,620	11,113,018

Commitments and contingencies

Net assets:

Unrestricted:

Designated for special purposes, including net investment in property and equipment	109,520,348	112,548,222
Designated for operations	(773,967)	(773,967)
Total unrestricted	108,746,381	111,774,255
Temporarily restricted	17,255,405	18,412,541
Permanently restricted – endowment	63,299,260	63,289,372
Total net assets	189,301,046	193,476,168
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 204,874,666	204,589,186



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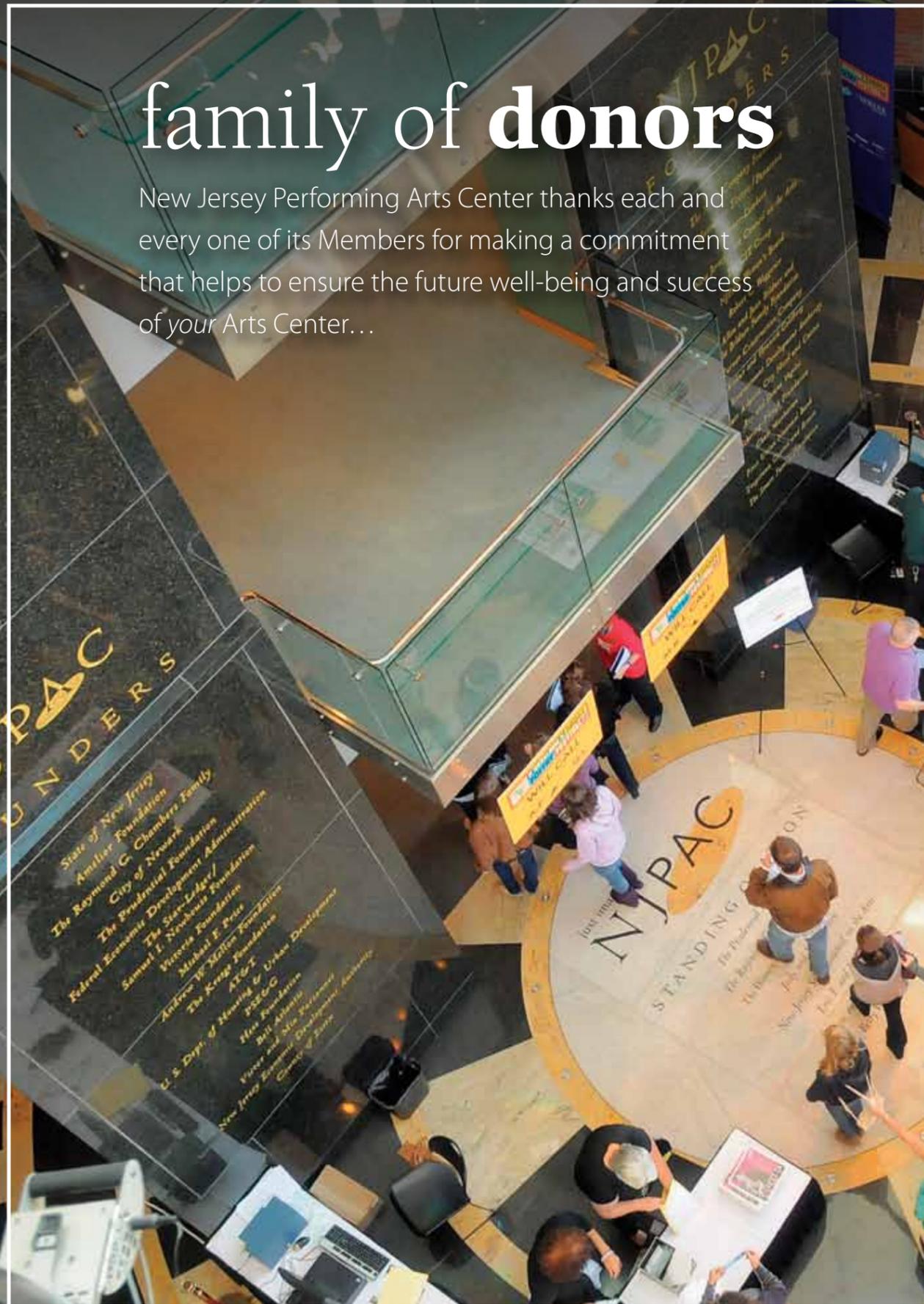
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muse

1: each of nine goddesses who preside over **the arts** and sciences

2: the source of **inspiration** for a creative artist

3: **creative** influence or stimulus

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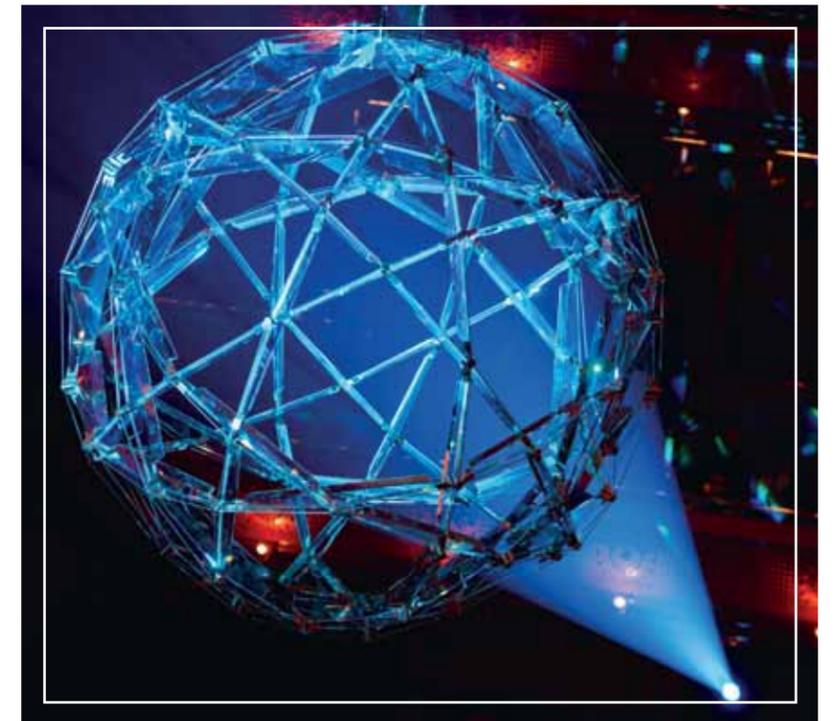
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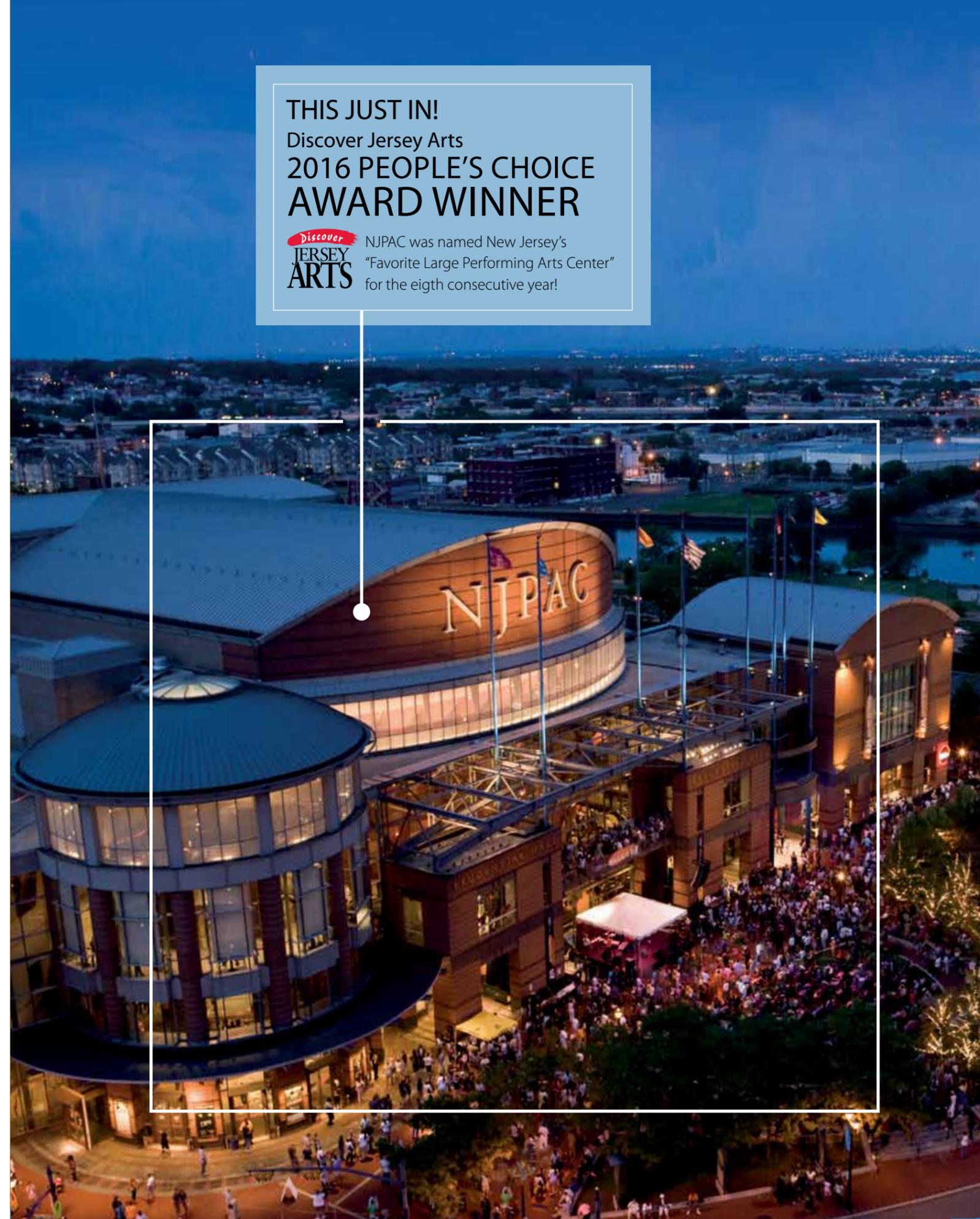
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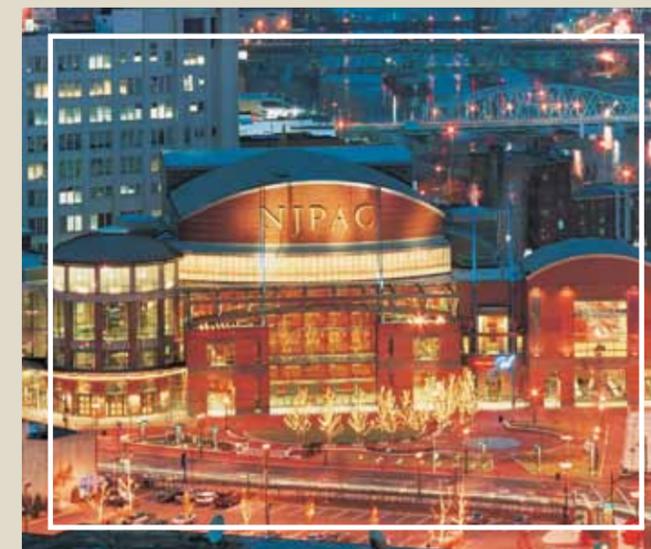
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Report to the Community 2015 was compiled by Linda Fowler, Director of Content Marketing.

Special thanks to Michael P. Scasserra, Creative Director; Bonnie Felt, Graphic Designer; and Debra Volz, Director, Advertising & Graphic Production.

Among the photographers whose works are included in the Report to the Community are: Amanda Brown, Gilbert Carrasquillo, Norman DeShong, Laura DiMeo, Benjamin Ealovega, Flying Giant Productions, Joan Marcus, Tristan Pope, Jon Simon Photography, Kersten Stevens, Fred Stucker, Van Jahnke Photography and Wild Combination, LLC



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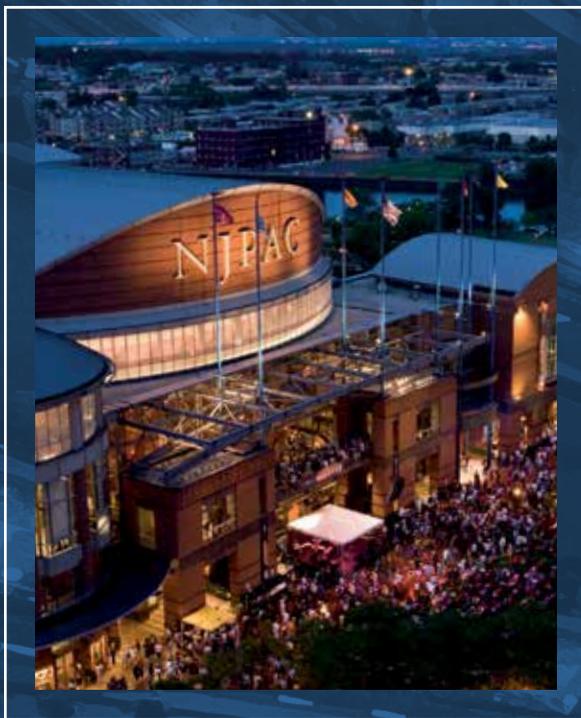
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