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**Bronx Council on the Arts Receives the “Mayor’s Award for Arts & Culture”  
at an October 30th Awards Celebration at Lincoln Center**

(Bronx -- November 7, 2006) **The Bronx Council on the Arts** (BCA), the official cultural agency of Bronx County for more than 40 years, received the prestigious “Mayor’s Award for Arts & Culture” at an October 30th Awards Celebration at Lincoln Center. The award, given for “Outstanding Contributions to the City’s Cultural Life” was presented to Bill Aguado, BCA’s Executive Director for more than 25 years, by Bronx choreographer Arthur Aviles, founder of the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance.



Pictured (l. to r.) are Ella Weiss, Brooklyn Arts Council; Phong Bui, artist; Galt MacDermot, composer; Laura Jean Walters, Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island; Tom Healy, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg; Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer, Queens Council on the Arts; Suzanne Vega, musician; Arthur Aviles, choreographer; William Aguado, Bronx Council on the Arts; Danny Simmons, artist; and Agnes Gund, chair of the Cultural Advisory Commission for the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Photo by Scott Whittle Photography

**Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg** presented the award at an event held in the Frederick P. Rose Hall at Jazz at Lincoln Center and featured a host of celebrity presenters and performances. The event marked the 30th anniversary of the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), which was created in 1976. Today, DCA is the largest public benefactor of the arts in the United States, funding 639 arts and cultural organizations with almost \$152 million in annual program support, while also investing \$868 million in capital projects at 195 organizations over the next four years. In addition, through the agency’s Materials for the Arts program, DCA provides important resources to more than 3,000 non-profit organizations and public schools annually. Through the Percent for Art program, the agency provides the opportunity for individual artists to create public artworks that help transform civic structures. DCA is also an advocate for the City’s cultural community, providing technical assistance to individual organizations, developing promotional initiatives to boost participation in the City’s cultural life, and articulating the profound impact of culture on NYC’s quality of life and economic well-being.

**The Bronx Council on the Arts**, which will celebrate its 45th year in 2007, is a leading arts service organization that works to promote the arts in the Bronx and support artists and arts organizations of all disciplines. In addition to providing direct financial support, BCA develops cutting-edge programming in arts education and works to revitalize local neighborhoods. BCA programs include the Longwood Arts Project, which works to raise the profile of artists from underrepresented groups; an Intensive Art Handlers Training Program, which trains working artists and museum personnel in caring for and transporting fine artworks and artifacts; the Bronx Writers’ Center, devoted to the artistic and Professional development of Bronx writers; the Cultural Venture Fund, which provides seed funding for cultural ventures that build capacity and stability for Bronx-based arts organizations; the Bronx Cultural Card, designed to connect cardholders to cultural activities in the Bronx; and the Bronx Culture Trolley, which carries riders to various cultural destinations and encourages arts participation and business development along the Bronx’s lower Grand Concourse. The City has supported the Bronx Council on the Arts since 1973. (Additional information on BCA can be found at [www.bronxarts.org](http://www.bronxarts.org) or by calling 718-931-9500).

“Tonight’s honorees embody why New York City supports the arts,” said Mayor Bloomberg at the ceremony. “These individuals and organizations educate our children, support our artists, dance our dreams, stage our aspirations, and never allow us to forget the brilliant artists who have come before us. Since 1976, the City has partnered with the cultural community through the Department of Cultural Affairs, which is today the single largest public funder of the arts in the country. Tonight we celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments made possible through this thirty-year partnership.”

*continued on page 2...*

## 2 - BCA Receives “Mayor’s Award for Arts & Culture” - 2

“New York City invests so actively in arts and culture because we understand that they are essential to the City’s success,” said First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris. “Last year, more than half of our City’s 42 million tourists came specifically to experience and enjoy our abundance of cultural attractions. Our nonprofit arts organizations alone create over \$5.7 billion in economic benefits for New York City and indirectly drive billions of dollars in the commercial industries.”

“This awards ceremony offers us the opportunity to showcase the artists, cultural organizations and audiences who comprise one of New York’s signature industries,” said DCA Commissioner Kate D. Levin. “It also allows us to celebrate 30 years of DCA’s work to nurture and strengthen cultural organizations in every neighborhood and ensure that arts and culture are central to the City’s economic vitality and quality of life. This administration is particularly grateful to Agnes Gund and the entire Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, which, for four years, has worked as a partner to Mayor Bloomberg and the Department of Cultural Affairs.”

“Thanks to Mayor Bloomberg, First Deputy Mayor Harris, and Commissioner Levin, culture is increasingly on the minds of New Yorkers. Nobody takes the arts for granted,” said Agnes Gund, Chair of the Mayor’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission. “Mayor Bloomberg has helped New Yorkers appreciate the actors, artists, dancers, musicians, and other performers and cultural organizations that make this City so great.”

**The Mayor’s Awards for Arts & Culture** were created in 1976, when DCA was founded, and were given almost annually until 1994. Mayor Bloomberg revived the awards in 2004, with the assistance of DCA and a newly established Mayor’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission. The Commission’s 21 members are a diverse and distinguished group of advocates for the City’s non-profit cultural community.

This year’s honorees represent the extraordinary range of cultural activity across New York City. Along with the Bronx Council on the Arts, recipients included: The Public Theater, Mark Morris, The Louis Armstrong House & Archives, American Express Company, Brooklyn Arts Council, Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Queens Council on the Arts, and Dr. George York, founder and principal of the Bronx High School for the Visual Arts.

The awards ceremony featured a number of performances including Paquito D’Rivera, winner of 8 Grammy awards; the 52nd Street Project, which pairs youth with professional theater artists to create original work; Will Power, award-winning actor and playwright and pioneer of Hip Hop Theater; Priscilla Lopez, Tony Award-winning singer and actress who performed in the original cast of the Broadway hit *A Chorus Line* (first staged at The Public Theater), and buskers from Coney Island U.S.A. who greeted guests as they arrived at the theater. The event also featured a comic voiceover by Philippe de Montebello, director and CEO of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Following the ceremony puppets from the annual New York’s Village Halloween Parade led guests into a reception where P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center’s curator of DJ music performed.

The Mayor’s Awards for Arts & Culture were made possible by generous support from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, New Line Cinema, Judith and Robert Rubin, the Silverweed Foundation, the Laurie M. Tisch Foundation, and Jeanette Sarkisian Wagner and Paul Wagner through The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, Bedell Cellars, and Pentagram.

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