

# Chairman's Statement



Photo by Vance Jacobs

**F**iscal Year 2004 represented a year of growth and renewal for the National Endowment for the Arts. Through the appropriations process, the budget increased by more than \$5 million over the FY03 level, and the agency received an unprecedented \$1 million from the Department of Defense to bring theater to military bases.

Most important, the Arts Endowment made enormous progress in strengthening the core mission set at the beginning of my term—to support excellence in the arts, bring the arts to all Americans, and provide leadership in arts education. The results have been impressive:

- Nearly 50 million Americans were reached by NEA grants in FY 2004—not counting television and radio broadcasts, which reach additional millions.
- Nearly 4,000 communities throughout the country benefited from Arts Endowment support through both direct grants and touring/outreach projects.

- Grants supported an estimated 30,000 concerts, readings, and performances, and about 4,000 exhibitions, enabling approximately 160,000 artists to share their work through NEA-supported projects.
- NEA grants provided support for more than 10,000 artist residencies in schools and other locations.
- Approximately three million children and youth were expected to benefit from our Learning in the Arts efforts alone.

In FY 2004, we made a substantial impact on the cultural life of the country, as this annual report will demonstrate. We have expanded the agency's reach, especially in underserved communities, through our National Initiatives and Challenge America grants. We have expanded our commitment to arts education with new nationwide programs, such as the Summer Schools in the Arts project.

The NEA also has identified issues of concern to the nation, such as the decline in literary reading as documented in our research report, *Reading at Risk*.

We have addressed accessibility needs such as arts programming for older Americans. All these activities lead toward the NEA's goal of fostering a nation in which artistic excellence is celebrated, supported, and made available to all Americans.

## BUDGET

Our appropriation in FY 2004 was \$120,971,000. Of this total appropriation, approximately \$40 million went to our important partners, state arts agencies and regional arts organizations.

In 2004, the NEA once again funded the Challenge America initiative, with more than \$20 million going toward bringing the arts to underserved communities throughout the country and better serving the Challenge America goal of providing artistic excellence and extensive outreach.

The Endowment provided grants to arts organizations of all sizes, in all areas of the country, in all disciplines. In FY 2004, the NEA awarded more than \$102 million in funding, totaling more than 2,100 grants. These include not only the Challenge America grants and partnership agreements with state arts agencies and regional arts organizations, but grants to organizations in creativity, heritage and preservation, arts on radio and television, arts learning, and services to arts organizations and artists; fellowships for creative writing in prose and translation; and lifetime achievement awards in jazz (the NEA Jazz Masters Award) and the folk arts (the NEA National Heritage Fellowship).

## EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

The NEA has worked toward supporting access to art of the highest quality to Americans and showcasing the cultural diversity and distinction of the country. One such grant was \$22,000 to the Eastman Memorial Foundation in Laurel, Mississippi. The grant was to support the exhibition, *Sam Gilliam: Folded and Hinged*, at the Baton Rouge Arts and Science Center and the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art in Laurel. Sam Gilliam is one of the most inventive colorists of the past 30 years and arguably the most prominent African American abstract painter working today. Received enthusiastically by both the press and public, the Laurel exhibit was Gilliam's first show in his native Mississippi. Grants such as this are highlighted throughout this report, showing some of the stellar art the NEA is supporting in every state in the country.

## NATIONAL INITIATIVES

### NEA Jazz Masters

The Arts Endowment also has created several National Initiatives that support excellence in the arts. One builds on a program that has been one of NEA's premier lifetime achievement awards: NEA Jazz Masters. In addition to expanding the program in terms of number and amount of awards, the Arts Endowment added special components that together bring a higher profile to this extraordinary American art form and help to ensure its continued existence, evolution, and excellence. These include the NEA Jazz Masters on Tour, a series of presentations featuring NEA Jazz Masters in performances, educational activities, and/or speaking engagements for audiences in all 50 states that will run through 2006; NEA Jazz in the Schools, an educational resource for high school



1990 NEA Jazz Master Gerald Wilson leads his orchestra during the NEA Jazz Masters ceremony and concert in Long Beach, California.  
*Photo by Vance Jacobs*

teachers of social studies, U.S. history, and music, including a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and DVD toolkit, developed in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center and supported by the Verizon Foundation; and radio and television programming in partnership with National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System.

### **Shakespeare in American Communities**

A National Initiative begun in 2003, Shakespeare in American Communities continued providing high quality theater programming throughout the country with support from The Sallie Mae Fund and in partnership with Arts Midwest. In 2004, the initiative, through an unprecedented partnership with the Department of Defense, provided Shakespeare performances on military bases, the first such outreach for the agency. The Alabama Shakespeare Festival performed *Macbeth* on 13 military bases in 11 states, with an additional three companies performing on five bases in three states.

### **NEA Arts Journalism Institutes**

The arts do not survive alone; they depend on lively and informed criticism, especially on the local level. That is why the Endowment has funded the NEA Arts Journalism Institutes, a new National Initiative in 2004. Aimed primarily at journalists from outside of major cities, the initiative provides crucial professional development not ordinarily available to journalists in smaller communities. These institutes in the disciplines of dance, classical music, opera, and theater provide performances, lectures, and seminars with leaders in higher education, the arts, and journalism to improve participants' ability to analyze and write about the arts.

### **Operation Homecoming**

In another partnership with the Department of Defense, and with support from The Boeing Company, the NEA created Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience. This new National Initiative provides writing workshops for U.S. military personnel and their families by nationally known writers—novelists, poets,

historians, and journalists—at various military bases throughout the country (and in four foreign countries). The workshops will occur at 20 bases in at least ten states in 2004-2005.

More on all the National Initiatives can be found in the National Initiatives section of this report.

## ACCESS TO THE ARTS

Bringing art to military bases is just one illustration of the Arts Endowment's commitment to provide better access to the arts for underserved communities. In FY 2004, the NEA awarded a direct grant in 433 of 435 Congressional districts in the country—the broadest reach in the agency's history.

The major funding mechanism for providing access to the arts to all Americans is Challenge America. These grants offer support primarily to small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations. In Brevard, North Carolina, for example, a town of fewer than 7,000 people, an NEA Challenge America grant of \$10,000 to the Brevard College Corporation helped support the A

Little Now Music festival, which presented a series of concerts, lectures, and school presentations for town residents in 2004.

Challenge America grants also serve to enhance and invigorate the arts and culture already embedded in the community. The NEA Challenge America grant of \$10,000 to the Northern Tier Cultural Alliance in Mansfield, Pennsylvania supported the Forest Heritage Intergenerational Project, in which traditional artists and Native American community residents shared their art with the community in workshops, storytelling sessions, visits to artists' studios, and performances.

In addition, the NEA works in myriad ways to provide the greatest access to the most Americans. In Washington, DC, the Arts Endowment has worked with fellow agencies such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution to support arts events, such as the Poetry Pavilion of the National Book Festival, held every fall since its inception by Mrs. Laura Bush in 2001. In 2004, with NEA support, the Poetry Pavilion featured poets William Jay Smith, Suji Kwock Kim, and United States Poet Laureate Ted Kooser, among others.

As part of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, held every summer to highlight the folk and cultural arts of various regions of the country and world, the NEA in 2004 sponsored a series of evening concerts of NEA National Heritage Fellows. In keeping with the theme of the festival, the NEA Fellows were artists working in the Latino/Hispanic traditions, such as mariachi master Nati Cano, Puerto Rican percussionist Juan Gutiérrez, and New Mexican musicians Robert and Lorenzo Martínez.

Actor/writer Stephen Lang greets Senator Daniel Inouye (Hawaii) after a special Operation Homecoming performance of Lang's one-man play *Beyond Glory* on Capitol Hill.

*Photo by Steven Purcell*





Poet Suji Kwock Kim (2002 NEA Literature Fellow) reads at the NEA-sponsored 2nd Annual Poetry Pavilion, part of the National Book Festival in Washington, DC.

*Photo by Jim Saah*

## LEARNING IN THE ARTS

Ensuring that future generations of Americans enjoy and appreciate the arts is an important goal of the NEA. Through its grants and National Initiatives, the Arts Endowment has been supporting arts education projects in every part of the nation.

NEA Jazz in the Schools, part of the NEA Jazz Masters National Initiative mentioned previously, will provide a better understanding of this indigenous art form, one that is such an important part of our American history, by integrating jazz into social studies curricula.

### Shakespeare for a New Generation

Arts education is the main component of another National Initiative, the second phase of Shakespeare in American Communities: Shakespeare for a New Generation, which tours exclusively to middle and high schools. By the end of 2005, the Shakespeare in American Communities initiative will have engaged 47 theater companies to tour more than 550 communities

and approximately 900 high schools in all 50 states, and 18 military bases. The program aims to bring one million students to a live, professional production of Shakespeare. For most of these students, these performances will be their first experience with professional theater.

The tour also includes artistic and technical workshops, symposia about the productions, and educational programs in local schools. The Arts Endowment has developed an educational resource package of exceptional quality that is available free to teachers. It includes a teacher's manual, recitation booklet, brochure for students, timeline poster, audio CD, educational video, and bookmarks. Using these materials and events, we are helping to integrate Shakespeare into the arts education programs of our middle and high school students. More on Shakespeare in American Communities can be found in the National Initiatives section of this report.

An additional offshoot of the Shakespeare in American Communities initiative was Shakespeare Comes to LA, a program in partnership with Shakespeare Festival/LA, which brought professional Shakespeare productions and educational activities to stages and schools throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area. This special festival offered free performances and workshops to the more than 70,000 students in Los Angeles schools during the summer months.

### Summer Schools in the Arts

In 2004, the NEA announced a new arts education initiative, Summer Schools in the Arts. Ten sites in ten states received grants for the pilot phase of the initiative to support summer learning programs in the arts. Each site will measure students' gains in artistic



knowledge based on national and state standards. Additional goals are to enhance the students' study habits and create a life-long interest in the arts. In Boise, Idaho, for example, the Log Cabin Literary Center managed the Writing Camp at the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Reservation in which students interacted with tribal elders and explored natural sites to develop their creative writing skills.

The Arts Endowment will use the results of the pilot program to expand the initiative in 2005 and document effective practices in the teaching of art. Twenty-five sites will be included in the 2005 Summer Schools in the Arts.

The Arts Endowment created a new arts education tool in 2004 for parents and caregivers: *Imagine: Introducing Your Child to the Arts*. This new issue of the 1997 NEA publication revises and updates the

Malvolio (Tim Choate) is duped into fancying himself an object of romantic fantasies as his concealed detractors Sir Toby Belch (Harold Surratt), Fabian (Will Beinbrink) and Sir Andrew Aguecheek (Bryan Cogman) listen in on his musings in Shakespeare Festival/LA's production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, directed by Jason King Jones, as part of the NEA's Shakespeare Comes to LA program.

Photo by Craig Schwartz



previous edition's material and includes activities and suggestions in literature, dance, music, theater, visual arts, folk arts, and media arts aimed specifically at children ages 3-8 years old.

Also included is a pull-out guide of arts activities that parents and children can do together.

## RESEARCH

The NEA funds research that examines various aspects of the arts to provide a better understanding of the arts world and to broaden the conversation about American culture. In 2004, the NEA released *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, a comprehensive survey that suggested, for the first time in modern history, that less than half of the U.S. adult population now reads literature. The report presented a detailed assessment of the decline of reading's role in the nation's culture. The report can be summarized in a single sentence: literary reading in America is not only declining rapidly among all groups, but the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young.



*Reading at Risk* is not a collection of anecdotes, theories, or opinions. It is a descriptive survey of national trends in adult literary reading. Based on an enormous sample size of more than 17,000 adults, it covers most major demographic groups—providing statistical measurements by age, gender, education, income, region, race, and ethnicity.

The data source for *Reading at Risk* was the NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, which was conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, spanning 20 years of polling. While not every measurement of

reading was built into the study, the report provides so much data in such detail that it constitutes a comprehensive factual basis for any informed discussion of current American reading habits.

## ARTS AND ACCESSIBILITY

The NEA also has continued championing accessibility issues through the activities of our Office for AccessAbility. Over the past four years, the NEA has funded a study to measure and evaluate the effects that professional arts programming has on the quality of life of older adults. The study measured the mental and physical health, as well as social activity, of 300 older people from ages 65 to 99 at arts centers in Brooklyn, San Francisco, and the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The preliminary final report of this



The NEA-sponsored study, *Creativity and Aging*, showed that arts activities, such as Susie Robinson of the CEYA Poetry Ensemble rehearsing with guitarist Paul Finocchiaro (pictured), make older adults happier and healthier.

*Photo by Chenoa Estrada*

study, *Creativity and Aging*, highlighted some interesting results. Participants who were actively involved in high-quality arts programs reported better overall health, more energy, and increased involvement in social activities than those in the non-arts control group. In addition, arts participants reported lower levels of loneliness and higher morale than their

counterparts. As Dr. Gene Cohen, primary investigator for the study, pointed out, "These findings are indeed remarkable in the amount of stabilization and improvement observed in those with an average age of 80 who are engaged in arts programs."

## EXPANDING OUR REACH

The NEA is continuing to evolve as an agency, and continuing to find new resources and new partnerships. On the state and regional level, the Arts Endowment is now working with regional arts organizations on several National Initiatives. On the federal level, an innovative relationship with the Department of Defense has led to two important initiatives for our troops and their families. And in the private sector, important funding from corporations not normally known for their arts support—The Boeing Company, The Sallie Mae Fund, and Verizon—has sponsored projects and provided educational materials to hundreds of thousands of Americans.

This report provides examples of projects the NEA has supported in every state, projects representing the vast array of lively, rich, and diverse art being created in this country. It demonstrates the NEA's ability to provide much-needed support to small arts communities like Topeka, Kansas as well as larger ones like New York City, to partner with small as well as large organizations. Our motto—A great nation deserves great art—includes the entire nation, and it is our goal to bring great art to every community.

Dana Gioia  
Chairman