



Nonprofit Finance Fund

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Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Nonprofit Finance Fund Kick Off Bold \$15.125 Million Arts Initiative to Address Sector-Wide Challenges

10 Arts Organizations Receive Grants to Explore
Promising New Business Practices and Programs

New York —October 14, 2008— [Nonprofit Finance Fund](#) (NFF) today announced the ten leading arts organizations that will participate in a landmark, \$15.125 million initiative designed to explore new business and funding models for the sector. Funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, NFF's 5-year program will allow each nonprofit to tackle sector-wide challenges such as shifting audiences, decreased funding sources, and new technologies. New York's Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation and Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company are among the pioneering groups that will participate in the program.

Leading for the Future: Innovative Support for Artistic Excellence, offers grant recipients significant funding, technical assistance, and NFF advisory services as they implement their promising programmatic, financial and operating innovations to strengthen their business models. The initiative will allow participants to test new ways for the performing arts field to bolster organizational capacity, mitigate financial risk, and increase the ability to offer top-notch relevant programming.

“Business as usual’ is no longer an option for many nonprofit arts organizations, and standard funding practices give them little room to invest in bold and experimental solutions to economic challenges,” said Ben Cameron, Director for the Arts for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. “We in the funding community must be willing to take risks to test new ideas —*especially* when the road gets rough – in order to secure a vibrant, sustainable future for the organizations we support.”

“*Leading for the Future* participants have already proven themselves adept at artistic innovation; now, they will lead the way for arts organizations to reinvent their business platforms so the artistic side will be reliably supported,” said Clara Miller, president and CEO of NFF. “At a time when restricted gifts and carefully predicted outcomes are the status quo, this program offers these organizations the latitude and support that is required for true experimentation and change.”

Leading for the Future grants have been awarded to:

- [Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation](#) (New York, NY), to explore a new model of online patron engagement for its celebration of African-American heritage through modern dance.
- [Center Theatre Group](#) (Los Angeles, CA), to explore new subscription and producing models resonant with young audiences.
- [Cunningham Dance Foundation](#) (New York, NY), to transition to a post-founder legacy period as it furthers the work of legendary choreographer Merce Cunningham.
- [Jacob's Pillow Dance](#) (Becket, MA), to extend its impact as the longest-running dance festival in the United States by using technology to become a national resource and model.
- [Misnomer Dance Theater](#) (New York, NY), to develop new relationships between technology and dance that build on its work as a pioneer in online expression and marketing.
- [National Black Arts Festival](#) (Atlanta, GA), a year-round cultural celebration of the contributions of artists of African descent, to expand the audience online for the art and performance work of education pertaining to Africa and the African Diaspora.
- [Ping Chong & Company](#) (New York, NY), to explore a new financial model by franchising a community-organizing experimental theatre project.
- [SITI Company](#) (New York, NY), to establish this ensemble-based theater company as a resident New York City organization with relevant partnerships and support.
- [Steppenwolf Theatre Company](#) (Chicago, IL), to explore new modes of producing and engaging young audiences, including partnerships with other arts groups and universities.
- [The Wooster Group](#) (New York, NY), to explore a new producing model, pursue partnerships, and take on a new educational role in contemporary theatre.

ABOUT NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND

Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) is a national leader in nonprofit, philanthropic and social enterprise finance. Founded in 1980, NFF (<http://www.nonprofitfinancefund.org>) provides loan financing, access to capital and direct advisory services that build the capacity and the financial health of nonprofits. A leading community development financial institution with over \$80 million in assets, NFF has provided over \$175 million in loans and access to additional financing via grants, tax credits and capital in support of over \$1 billion in projects for thousands of nonprofit clients nationwide. NFF has a staff of more than 75 serving nonprofits nationally from offices in Philadelphia, New York City, Newark, New Jersey, Boston, Detroit, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

ABOUT THE DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (<http://www.ddcf.org>) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.

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WHAT GRANTEES ARE SAYING

Alvin Ailey:

"We are thrilled and honored that this bold initiative will advance Ailey's mission of bringing dance into people's lives, enabling us to use cutting-edge technology to transform our interactive online experience with loyal fans and new audiences around the world." – *Sharon Gersten Luckman, Executive Director*

Center Theatre Group:

"The Leading for the Future program will enable Center Theatre Group to focus on our business needs. By allowing Center Theatre Group to use this grant to test audience purchasing behaviors and new technological innovations, we can create models that other non-profit theatres can adapt to their business practices. We normally wouldn't have the resources to accomplish these types of initiatives, especially given the current economic climate." – *Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director*

Jacob's Pillow Dance:

"It is critical that we build audiences and appreciation for dance in new ways. This initiative will exponentially advance our capacity to extend every mission area of Jacob's Pillow—creation, presentation, education, preservation, and audience engagement—to electronic form in new ways that will benefit the arts community and the public." – *Ella Baff, Executive Director*

Misnomer Dance Theater:

"We are thrilled that the Leading for the Future grant will enable Misnomer to build upon our past online audience engagement activities to realize the creation of a comprehensive online Audience Engagement Platform. We look forward to working with NFF and with the performing arts community to create new models for how the online space can serve the live arts." – *Chris Elam, Artistic Director and Choreographer*

National Black Arts Festival:

"The greatest challenge the National Black Arts Festival faces in 2008 is sustainability. Leading for the Future will ultimately enable NBAF to develop, distribute and monetize arts-based content that becomes a lifestyle choice for a global audience. We will broaden the definition and functionality of art and culture and develop a model that can be maintained indefinitely." – *Stephanie Hughley, Executive Producer*

Ping Chong & Co.:

"This program will create new opportunities for the public to interact with Ping Chong & Company through our community-specific social justice theater project, as well as through Ping Chong's large-scale multidisciplinary theater productions. Support from the Leading for the Future program will allow Ping Chong & Company to build and strengthen our organization to better serve our mission, our artists, and our communities. We are excited by the challenges ahead." – *Bruce Allardice, Managing Director*

SITI Company:

"The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation challenged us to dream positively, innovatively and articulately about our future. This initiative allows us the opportunity to take the necessary risks to develop a new model from which others can learn and benefit. The Leading for the Future program will serve as a catalyst and inspiration for our company and board to 'wright' the narrative of our future." – *Anne Bogart, Artistic Director*

Steppenwolf Theatre Company:

"Steppenwolf Theatre is honored by this extraordinary opportunity. This new initiative will allow us to create groundbreaking programming to engage young artists. We look forward to activating this new generation of theatre practitioners and fostering their conversation with audiences." – *Martha Lavey, Artistic Director*

The Wooster Group:

"The LTF Initiative is important because it allows us to launch long-term artistic and collaborative initiatives that we wouldn't be able to undertake without it. We hope that the LTF Initiative gives us the strength and flexibility to reinvent ourselves and begin a whole new life cycle for our company." – *Cynthia Hedstrom, Producer & Director of Special Projects*