

# Arts & Culture

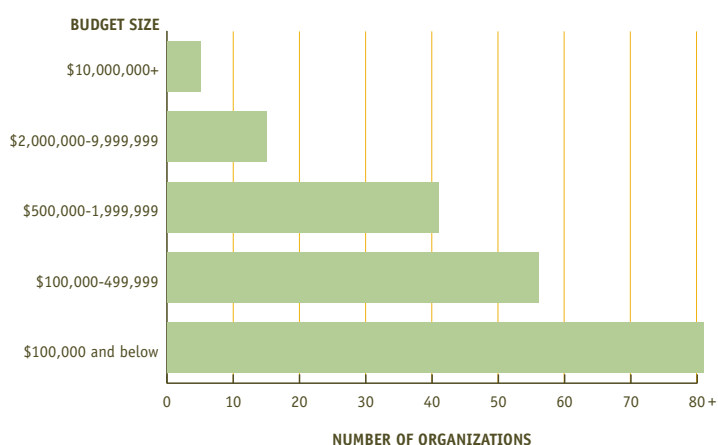


At a time when hope is at a great deficit for many people, the arts offer inspiration and a vision for imagining a new way of being. They encourage us to see issues and problems in a new light, and they move us to action. They help us connect to our inner selves and to each other. Simply put, the arts feed our souls. But that's not all they do. At The Community Foundation, we believe that arts and culture are an essential part of a healthy community. And that doesn't mean solely the emotional aspect of artistic endeavors. Arts and culture strengthen our education systems, provide young people a voice, foster community development, work with the underserved and support individuals as artists. But just as many nonprofits, businesses and families are suffering from the recent economic recession, the arts are struggling as well.

The arts are reeling from a perfect storm of financial challenges. Foundation giving, corporate sponsorships, government support and performance ticket income have plummeted at the same time. Cultural institutions of all kinds are at risk. Artists and visionary artistic leaders are unemployed. Opportunities for personal expression are declining. Diverse communities are losing a forum to express cultural history and traditions, which nurture all people and remind us why all lives are so important.

Too often the arts are seen as something extra and unnecessary. This issue of *Impact Philanthropy* demonstrates the importance of arts and culture in our Atlanta region and the deep impact cultural nonprofits have in our communities every day. Our hope is that we inspire you, our donors, to consider a gift to one of these arts organizations mentioned in *Impact Philanthropy* during this critical time for arts and culture in Atlanta.

## Arts and Culture Organizational Budgets



Annual operating budgets of independent, nonprofit arts and culture organizations located in The Community Foundation's 23-county service area.



Youth Ensemble of Atlanta

50 Hurt Plaza, Suite 449, Atlanta GA, 30303 | www.cfgreateratlanta.org | 404-688-5525 | October 2009

## The Atlanta Region's Arts & Culture Landscape

While the Atlanta region is fortunate to have several large arts institutions, we are also unique in that the vast majority of our arts organizations operate with an annual budget of less than \$2 million. The Atlanta region has more than 200 small and mid-sized arts organizations that represent the full spectrum of cultural, economic and geographic diversity reflecting Atlanta's many different neighborhoods, customs and citizens. They are the first to show new works and the most eager to explore new avenues of creative expression. They give the region valuable opportunities for entertainment and education right in the communities where they operate. They also are the groups without endowments and capital reserves and are most often in need of vital financial support.

Revenues of arts organizations have been among the hardest hit of nonprofit organizations over the past year. Individual visual artists are struggling in this recession, impacted by low gallery sales, fewer opportunities to show their work, diminishing teaching opportunities, loss of "day jobs" and publishers closing. Performing artists note that shows have lower budgets and require smaller casts. Corporate funding and sponsorship, an income stream important to the arts, has declined most significantly with organizations reporting over 50% decreases. Individual donors are the most valuable segment of the income mix, yet many individuals' income has been affected by the recession. Audiences have become unusually price sensitive, resulting in smaller audiences for many organizations of all sizes. Finally, changes in newspapers and traditional media are creating significant challenges for the arts, as reliable space for event listings are fewer, critical reviews are decreased and arts consumers are dispersed through various social media and new online communications vehicles. Connecting with audiences has become a major challenge as well as an opportunity.

Unlike many peer cities in the U.S., Atlanta or Georgia does not have any form of dedicated tax revenue that supports arts organizations or an arts district. On several recent Atlanta Regional Commission LINK trips to other cities, metro Atlanta civic leaders have taken note of the successful dedicated revenue programs in cities such as Denver in which a percentage of sales and use tax funds arts and cultural institutions.

Public funding is an essential part of the revenues that support the arts. State and local government support of arts and culture is a small percentage of large organizations' budgets and a more important percentage of the overall income for the smallest groups. On a state level we are weak: the Georgia State Council for the Arts budget of \$4.5 million in revenues is the 47th per capita in the United States. The only county in the metro region that offers a formal grant (contracts for services) program is Fulton County, with a grants budget of \$2.4 million, down significantly from previous years' highs of more than \$3 million. These funds are critical to arts and culture organizations, and require annual advocacy. The City of Atlanta's grants budget has been cut 20% to \$470,000 – a small amount for a city the size of Atlanta.

Earlier this year, President Obama included a \$50 million increase in arts funding in the final stimulus legislation. Congressional members debated over the importance of the arts during a financial crisis, and the argument was ultimately won, "after supporters made a good case that the arts are often the linchpin of downtown neighborhoods, creating jobs and providing many other economic benefits: stimulating business, promoting urban renewal and attracting tourists."<sup>1</sup>

Compelling new evidence shows that arts and culture is a significant industry in the City of Atlanta, one that generates \$274.8 million in local economic activity. This spending includes \$113.94 million by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and an additional \$160.87 million in event-related spending by their audiences, supports 8,211 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$167.17 million in household income to local residents and delivers \$27.07 million in local and state government revenue.<sup>2</sup>

While the economic impact of the arts is evident, the intersections between the arts and other areas of our communities are just as important. Throughout the pages that follow, you'll find several areas where nonprofit arts and culture organizations are helping create a healthier, stronger Greater Atlanta region.



Dekalb Symphony Orchestra

# Natural Intersections for the Arts

There are many areas where the arts connect with our communities, and below we have highlighted several. In addition, we have provided brief descriptions of nonprofits working in these areas for you to consider in your own giving. Each organization has been fully reviewed by The Community Foundation through our Common Good Funds or Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund grantmaking process.



Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre



7 Stages



Atlanta Ballet

## Improving education outcomes

The arts leave fewer children behind. Multiple independent studies have shown that high school students who take arts classes have higher math and verbal SAT scores than students who do not have arts in their curriculum. Research also shows that sustained learning in music and theater correlate to greater success in math and reading, with students from lower social-economic backgrounds reaping the greatest benefits. Two of the top three schools in Georgia as ranked by SAT scores are multi-racial, multi-income level magnet schools for the arts. Further, teachers report that the problem-solving issues presented in an arts curriculum engage students, alleviate boredom and increase success in traditional academic disciplines. Arts in education prepare students for the future as well. The arts teach skills and develop attributes that all employers say they will be seeking in future workers: people who can innovate, problem-solve, work as a team, think creatively, articulate a vision and complete tasks from start to finish – all of which are outcomes from arts education. Public advocacy for the arts in the core curriculum of our public schools is essential.<sup>3</sup>

- **The Woodruff Art Center's Young Audiences** brings professional artists to schools for performances and hands-on workshops and residencies.
- **The Center for Puppetry Arts**, known for its inventive puppet performances as well as its historical and interactive puppet museum, beams distance learning programs that use puppets to teach a range of subjects to schools nationwide.
- **Georgia Shakespeare**, based at Oglethorpe University, travels its innovative "Will Power" program of talented actors to schools around the state while the **Atlanta Shakespeare Company** hosts tens of thousands of school children annually to experience traditional Shakespeare in performances beloved by students and English teachers from around the region.
- To encourage learning about the great American playwright August Wilson, **Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre** created the nationwide August Wilson monologue competition for high school students. The winners at the regional level travel to the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway to participate in a weekend devoted to Wilson.

## Connecting with young people

Young people have curious minds and increasing interest in understanding how the world works and what their role can be as they become independent adults. For youth, creative expression and communication equals freedom, and teen energy is productive when they are able to lend their voice to artistic outlets in the community. Youth who participate in artistic programs build confidence and social skills while also increasing their emotional ability to communicate and engage with others. In addition, arts programs can be particularly helpful for youth at risk. Recently, Americans for the Arts conducted a study of 218 afterschool arts program budgets for youth at risk and found that the average annual program budget was \$158,537. In contrast, the cost for a youth in juvenile detention is \$125 per day, and an estimated \$7 billion is spent annually to incarcerate young offenders.<sup>4</sup> Providing creative spaces and experiences for all youth from many backgrounds offers a safe place for them to explore, learn and create with others.

- **Youth Ensemble of Atlanta (YEA)** engages teens who write and produce explosive and energetic full-length musical performances. Many YEA actors have gone on to successful Broadway careers. YEA also received the coveted White House's *Coming Up Taller* Award in 2008 and performed at the White House.
- **The Alliance Theatre "Collision Project"** puts groups of teens together with playwrights and an Alliance dramaturg to create works by and about themselves.
- **Synchronicity Performance Group's** Playmaking for Girls program works with young women in juvenile detention centers to develop plays about their experiences.
- **Cobb Symphony** weaves education into all of its performances and offers extensive programs to educate youth in music, putting them in direct contact with professional musicians.

Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia



Moving in the Spirit

## ❖ Impacting community development

Arts and culture organizations provide anchors for residents and destinations for visitors. They attract conventions and out-of-town visitors while also providing a gathering space for community members. As communities face population shifts and economic upheaval, many efforts are under way to create economic revitalization strategies. Communities are increasingly seeing the potential of creative economies – arts, cultural and heritage organizations, businesses and workers – as creators of revenue, employment and quality of life.<sup>5</sup> In communities working to develop an identity in the face of years of unplanned development or the decline of a downtown, an arts organization can become a catalyst for other businesses, nightlife and residents identifying with their community. With programming that reflects the population and the issues it is dealing with, arts organizations can become more than just a physical presence for a town or neighborhood to build around. It can become the soul of a community, stimulating and invigorating its citizens.

- Recent suburban developments include the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Verizon Amphitheatre**, the **Southwest Fulton Arts Center** off Cascade Road, which has become an anchor for **Kenny Leon's True Colors Theater**, and the renovated **Strand Theatre** on the square in Marietta, which the **Atlanta Lyric Theatre** now calls home. The **Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center**, with its fine acoustics and clean sight lines, has energized two of Atlanta's oldest organizations – the **Atlanta Ballet**, which considers the 2,750-seat venue to be an ideal size for many of their productions, and the **Atlanta Opera**.
- A Gwinnett County developer provided incentives and a new theatre for the popular nonprofit **Aurora Theatre** to move its base from Duluth to Lawrenceville, seeding a vibrant downtown area. Restaurants in Marietta report decreased patronage when **Theatre on the Square** has dark nights.
- The arts are central to Little Five Points' vitality, with the nonprofit professional theatres **7 Stages** and **Horizon Theatre**.
- **The Woodruff Arts Center and High Museum of Art's** recent campus expansion, designed by Renzo Piano, was visioned around the idea of access to terraces and a piazza for public sculpture and community gathering conveniently located next to a central MARTA station.

## ❖ Working with underserved populations

The arts are universal, but unfortunately they are not as present in some communities as in others. Opportunities to experience or take part in arts and culture can be limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability. Access to and participation in these creative experiences through performances, exhibitions and more should be available to all individuals. The arts serve as a connecting point for many individuals' ethnicities. Recent studies indicate that students who participate in arts programs that engage their culture and racial identity are more likely to learn a wider range of skill sets.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Urban Institute's *Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project* (ACIP) is a compelling study about the importance of the inclusion of arts, culture and creativity in local neighborhoods. Quality of life is improved when neighbors with varied backgrounds, values and approaches are brought together to be involved in the arts and community building.<sup>7</sup>

- **The Atlanta Ballet** has teamed with the **Latin American Association** at its site on Buford Highway to offer year-round dance instruction in ballet, modern, jazz and hip hop for students aged 8 to 21.
- **Moving in the Spirit** is a nationally recognized youth development program that uses dance as a vehicle to educate, inspire and unite diverse young people in Atlanta's urban communities.
- **Arts Clayton**, based in downtown Jonesboro, is a vibrant visual arts gallery that shows art by local and regional artists.
- **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's** talent development program trains highly talented young classical musicians of color preparing them for careers in symphony orchestras.

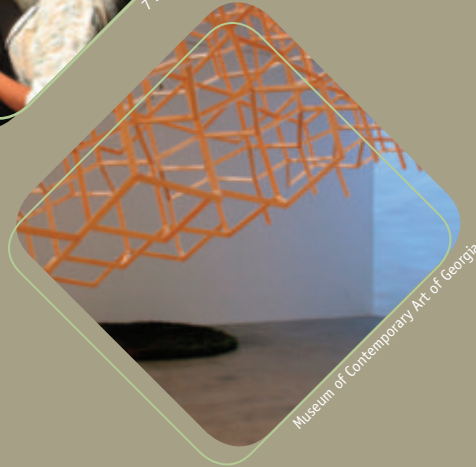
## ❖ Supporting individual artists

Individual artists are the heart of the creative community. They communicate about humanity, contribute to the vitality of their communities and encourage changes in society. Artists need time, space and materials to create new work. However, the support system that exists for individual artists is far from adequate and makes it difficult for artists, particularly younger or controversial ones, to create their best work. Many artists lack resources for health care coverage, housing and for space to produce artistic work, and funding for artists is fairly limited.<sup>8</sup> Several nonprofits offer working space to artists to not only help the individuals financially, but also to create a collaborative environment where ideas and resources can be shared. This helps support artistic development and benefits the artists and the community members who engage with the art through performances, gallery shows and more.

- Atlanta recently became the fifth city nationally to partner with **Artadia**, a national foundation that matches local dollars for grants to local individual artists.
- **The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center's** West Midtown campus includes artists' studios, and **MOCA GA**, the Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia, now located at Tula in South Buckhead, archives and shows the work of Georgia artists.
- **Atlanta Celebrates Photography** commissions artists to produce exciting new pieces of public art as part of its month-long promotion of hundreds of photography exhibitions and programs around Atlanta each October.
- In addition to providing space for small groups and individual artists to produce projects, **PushPush Theater** in Decatur works with individual performers to develop personal strategic plans to guide their professional development and career paths.



7 Stages



Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia



Theatre on the Square



Atlanta Contemporary Art Center



Atlanta Ballet

## How You Can Help

While we have featured several arts organizations throughout this issue of *Impact Philanthropy*, our Atlanta region is home to many more. As you and your family consider your giving, please consider providing support to one of the many arts organizations in need. For more information about any of these organizations or to visit an arts group or recommend a grant, please contact your philanthropic advisor, Erin Drury, Audrey Jacobs, Barrett Krise or Robert Smulian, at 404-688-5525.

In addition, The Community Foundation will be hosting a future community conversation about the arts in Atlanta for you, our donors. Contact information and website links for all organizations featured in *Impact Philanthropy* are available on The Community Foundation's website at [www.cfgreateratlanta.org](http://www.cfgreateratlanta.org).



Moving in the Spirit



The Community Foundation  
FOR GREATER ATLANTA

## The Community Foundation's Support for the Arts

The Community Foundation has long considered a vibrant arts and culture community an essential characteristic of a healthy and strong Atlanta region. We have supported nonprofits in arts and culture through financial grants, management consulting, loans and leadership in the community. Seizing a critical opportunity in 1992, The Community Foundation partnered with the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce to create the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund led with a substantial gift from The Coca-Cola Company. Since that time, the Arts Fund has grown with gifts from more than 300 donors and has provided \$7.1 million in grants and management consulting to more than 85 arts organizations in our 23-county region.

However, the Arts Fund is only able to fill approximately 25% of the requests from nonprofits. In the long term we plan to build the Arts Fund endowment to meet the need in the community, and in the short term, the Arts Fund's Arts Recovery initiative is working with funding partners to award \$1 million in grants and increased management consulting and loans to arts groups in the region.

Fortunately, many of you, our donors, have shown a strong passion for the arts in our region and have provided significant investments in multiple organizations. Since 2005, you have provided more than \$14 million in grants to arts and culture nonprofits. While these contributions are substantial, we are still seeing a greater need in the region for support of the arts.

Grants made from Jan 1, 2005 – Sept 30, 2009			
	The Community Foundation's Donor-Advised Grants	Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund	All other competitive grants (Common Good, Local Fund, Initiatives, etc.)
Total number of grants	1,398	108	44
Total amount of grants	\$14,437,045	\$3,329,400	\$571,300
Average amount	\$10,327	\$30,827	\$12,984
Largest grant	\$400,000	\$150,000	\$40,000
Number of Orgs funded	294	62	36



Synchronicity Performance Group

## Why I Give

“The arts are an absolutely essential element of the experience we call life. This is not just something I feel, it is something I know from my own early development. From my elementary school, I have fond memories of my music, art and dance teachers. Their regular and consistent visits were always anticipated with excitement. In later years I recall the rich experiences derived from participation in the marching band and the orchestra. Then too there were those church plays and memory exercises at Easter and Christmas, and oratorical contests to develop speaking and voice projection. These and other performing and visual art encounters, while not necessarily appreciated back then, added greatly to my creative and interpersonal skills, and my emotional balance.

Based on my own life experiences, I believe the arts are indeed a necessary part of society. The arts help unite us, they are a universal language. They help us understand and appreciate the value of each other. It is critical that society not deprive our youth of such a key element of their cultural enrichment. For all these reasons and more, the arts are a priority in my family's personal philanthropy. I say family because my wife, Helena, and I are equally committed donors and patrons. We believe in sharing our time, our talent and our treasure when it comes to the arts, and we are both collectors as well as supporters. Beneficiaries include the National Black Arts Festival, the Woodruff Art Center, the Spoleto Festival USA, the Southern Arts Federation, the Afro American Cultural Center and the Penland School of Craft where we have established an endowed scholarship. To help preserve our culture, to enjoy the gleam and excitement in the eyes of a youngster just discovering the wonders of the arts, or to appreciate a painting or a performance makes it all worthwhile.”

— Isaiah Tidwell, Board member and donor



Atlanta Contemporary Art Center

“Dorothea Lange, one of the 20th century's most influential artists said, ‘The human face is the universal language.’ So, too, is art. It transcends cultural and economic bounds. It develops our spiritual side... adding balance to the highs and lows of life. The arts are an essential part of our growth and that of our communities. A source of inspiration and perspective...allowing us to become much more than our own selves.”

— Robert Yellowlees, donor

“The arts mean passion, inspiration, beauty and enhanced quality of life to me. The performing and visual arts are a central focus in our family, providing careers (my wife and daughter in dance) and avocations (our son and me in music) and for me as an arts volunteer and supporter. As former chairman of the Fulton County Arts Council and through my involvement with the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the High Museum, I have seen how the arts are an anchor for a community, providing positive economic impact, enhancing quality of life and perhaps most importantly reflecting the soul and spirit of a community.”

— Wayne Vason, donor

### Footnotes:

1. *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression* by Morris Dickstein, a professor of literature and film at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York.
2. *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* study, Americans for the Arts in partnership with the City of Atlanta, June 2007.
3. *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement* by Sanda S. Ruppert. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Arts Education Partnership, 2006.
4. Americans for the Arts; <http://www.americansforthearts.org/youtharts/costs/>
5. *Building Creative Economies: The Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development*. Americans for the Arts, March 2003.
6. *Cultural Responsiveness, Racial Identity and Academic Success: A Review of Literature*. Prepared for The Heinz Endowments, June 2009
7. *Culture Counts in Communities: A Framework for Measurement*, Maria-Rosario Jackson Ph.D and Joaquin Herranz Jr., The Urban Institute, 2002
8. *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, Maria Rosario Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, Daniel Swenson, Joaquin Herranz, Kadja Ferryman, Caron Atlas, Eric Wallner, Carole E. Rosenstein, The Urban Institute, May 2006.