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Maryland Citizens for the Arts announces renewal of *Arts Step Up for State Employees* program

The Maryland state government has been forced to furlough nearly all of its 67,000 State employees, for the third year in a row, to curtail costs during the current recession. Arts organizations in Maryland face their own revenue shortfalls and sympathize with the plight of affected state workers, as well as all Marylanders facing pay cuts, lay-offs, and benefit reductions.

In a gesture of small but meaningful support, many arts organizations have agreed to participate in the **Arts Step Up for State Employees** program, coordinated by MCA. Each of the more than 35 organizations below, representing 15 Maryland counties, is offering a special discount or giveaway to all State employees in Maryland during the course of fiscal year 2011 (through June 30, 2011). Originally launched in December of 2008, the Arts Step Up program has grown each year as it has been renewed with further public worker layoffs.

In past years, the program has received praise from both state workers and from elected officials, including Governor Martin O'Malley: *"In the midst of a national recession, it can be easy to overlook the positive impact that the arts can have on our lives," said Governor O'Malley. "I want to thank the arts community for this thoughtful gesture. Our State workforce – the best team of public servants in the nation – certainly appreciates it and looks forward to taking advantage of the opportunity."*

MCA's Executive Director, John Schratwieser, on the **Arts Step Up for State Employees** initiative: "Arts organizations across Maryland continue to feel the pinch of a slowly recovering economy. Nevertheless, they recognize the important role they play in revitalizing their own communities and are ready to step up, once again, in support of state employees who share the burden of these difficult economic times. As the state's arts advocacy organization, MCA is proud to coordinate this effort for the third year in a row."

To find out about these special arts opportunities for State employees, visit the **Arts Step Up for State Employees** page of MCA's website:

http://www.mdarts.org/advocacy/talking_points/arts-step-up-in-support-of-state-employees

New organizations and special offers are being added to the program daily. State employees will need to show their State identification cards to take advantage of these offers.

Participating Organizations

(As of 9/13/2010)

Adventure Theatre

Annapolis Symphony Orchestra

Arts on the Block

American Visionary Art Museum

Baltimore Choral Arts Society

Baltimore Folk Music Society

Baltimore Museum of Art

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

Candlelight Concerts

Carroll County Arts Council

CenterStage

Chesapeake Arts Center

Church Hill Theatre

Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts

Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts

Columbia Pro Cantare

Cosmic Symphony

Fredericktowne Players

Garrett County Arts Council

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts & Culture

Harford Ballet Company

Hippodrome Theatre

Hopkins Symphony Orchestra

Imagination Stage

Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts

Maryland Symphony Orchestra

National Philharmonic

Pyramid Atlantic Arts Center

Round House Theatre

Somerset County Arts Council

Strathmore

The Writer's Center

Walters Art Museum

Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts

Waterfowl Festival

World Arts Focus/Joe's Movement Emporium

MARYLAND CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS

Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) is a statewide arts advocacy organization, founded in 1977 to represent all Maryland artists and arts organizations of every discipline. Its principal mission is to promote adequate funding for the Maryland State Arts Council and to advocate for the arts at the state and federal levels. MCA implements effective strategies to enhance the arts in Maryland by building partnerships, advocating for funding stability, and promoting the visibility of the arts in our state.

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