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**CHARLOTTE STREET FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
2008 RECIPIENTS OF NEW CHARLOTTE STREET AWARDS
FOR GENERATIVE PERFORMING ARTISTS**

Choreographer/dancer **Deanna Hiett**; Producer/ director/ playwright/ actor **Ron Megee**;
& composer/musician/cross-disciplinary performer **Mark Southerland**
selected to receive unrestricted **Awards of \$5000** each

Charlotte Street Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to artists in Kansas City, is pleased to announce the launch of the Charlotte Street Awards for Generative Performing Artists, a new program designed to nurture and stoke the grassroots performing arts community in Kansas City. These Awards aim to support and recognize outstanding, innovative, original generative performing artists with unrestricted cash awards, as Charlotte Street Awards to Visual Artists have done for over a decade.

A multi-disciplinary panel of performing arts professionals recently selected three generative performing artists to receive unrestricted cash awards of \$5000 each this year. They are **DeAnna Hiett**, **Ron Megee**, and **Mark Southerland**.

DeAnna Hiett is a choreographer, dancer and teacher. As a company member of Wylliams/Henry Danse Theatre since 1994, she has choreographed works including "Bound to..." (2007), "The Passage" (2005), Yogini (2001) and Momfassa (1999.) Hiett has also choreographed works for Kansas City Ballet's "In the Wings" series, Cleveland Contemporary Dance Theater, the American College Dance Festival, and UMKC Conservatory. In addition to Wylliams/Henry, Hiett is a member of Deeply Rooted Production, a dance company based in Chicago, and formerly danced with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York. Currently a Guest Adjunct Professor at UMKC Conservatory, she has taught at companies and dance centers internationally.

"The quality, depth and intrigue of Deanna's work has the power to inspire Kansas City choreographers and audiences alike," said panelist Pat McDonald, currently director of community investment, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, and a former dancer with the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble as well as former executive assistant to Judith Jamison, artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance theater in New York. "DeAnna is an artist who could work anywhere in the world and we are fortunate she chooses to call Kansas City home."

Ron Megee is a playwright, producer, director, actor, and self-proclaimed dandy. As Artistic Director and Founder of Late Night Theatre company, Megee wrote, produced, and performed in such productions as *A Tribute to*



the Stepford Wives, Rosemarie's Baby, The Killings at Kamp Tittokaka, Valley of the Dolls and A Tribute to Alfred Hitchcock's The Birds. In addition, Megee has directed productions for the Coterie Theatre and acted in productions at the Coterie, Unicorn Theatre, American Heartland Theatre, and Starlight Theatre. Of his work, Megee writes, "My intent has always been to unite misfits, drag queens, performance artists, actors and theatre art professionals together to develop new works."

"Ron Megee has exerted tremendous influence on the arts community in Kansas City," said Lisa Cordes, Executive Director, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, educator, and artist. "His work honors a myriad of theatrical traditions and yet, with his deft weaving of popular culture, his wholly original vision and voice, and his inestimable talents as a performer, Ron has created not just new work, but a new form. Subversive without being offensive, his gender-bending performances bring audiences together to laugh and marvel at the cultural transgressions he seems compelled to commit."

Mark Southerland is a composer and jazz musician who has used the saxophone as a medium for exploring sound for over 26 years in addition to reinventing brass and woodwind instruments, creating circuit-bent toys, and developing means to "scratch" eight-track tapes. Trained at UMKC Conservatory, Southerland's ongoing musical projects include Snuff Jazz, Wee Snuff, Malachy Papers and T.J Dovebelly Ensemble. He has performed at venues including Brindge Art Fair, Miami; Jack the Pelican gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Telluride Jazz Festival; and the Knitting Factory, New York, in addition to numerous Kansas City museums, galleries, and performance and music venues.



"Mark Southerland's music reached out and grabbed me - it is beautiful and compelling," said panelist Paul Rudy, a composer, author, sound artist, and associate professor and coordinator of composition, UMKC Conservatory of Music. "Then the theatrical elements of his performances add a whole new layer of profound social commentary, which kept me thinking long after seeing and hearing the work. He's breaking boundaries where no-one knew they existed..."

Envisioned as an annual program, these Awards are intended to recognize outstanding, innovative, original performing artists in the fields of dance, theater, music, experimental music performance, theater/performance art, and hybrid/interdisciplinary versions thereof. As exemplified by this year's recipients, awarded Artists will be generative artists, meaning that they are actively creating new work in their fields – i.e. they are composers, playwrights, choreographers – in addition to very often being performers as well.

Charlotte Street Foundation's new initiative has been informed by KC Artist LINC (an initiative of Charlotte Street and the Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City to support artists as part of a national network of 14 creative communities) - whereby validation and financial support of artists through grant programs has been deemed of critical importance to artists.

For over a decade, Charlotte Street Foundation has been supporting and recognizing outstanding visual artists in Kansas City with unrestricted cash awards and an annual curated exhibition of their work. As with the Visual Arts Awards, these new Awards for Generative Performing Artists are unrestricted, seeking to support the continued creative and professional development of the selected artists, provide the means for

them to further focus on and develop their work, and increase exposure for their accomplishments. A public presentation of the work of this year's recipients and a printed brochure or alternative set of documentary materials are planned.

A rotating panel of Awards Advisors with expertise in each of the disciplines will select the Awards recipients each year. The 2008 panel included **David Ford**, interdisciplinary artist working experimentally in multiple mediums, and **Chuck Haddix**, director, Marr Sound Archives at UMKC, host of the "Fish Fry," on KCUR FM 89.3, and co-author with Frank Driggs of *Kansas City Jazz: From Ragtime to Bebop—A History*, published by Oxford University Press, as well as **Lisa Cordes**, **Pat MacDonald** and **Paul Rudy**.

Each panelist nominated several Kansas City area artists for consideration. In addition, nominations are solicited from a rotating pool of community nominators, which for the 2008 Awards included: **Jeff Church**, producing artistic director, the Coterie Theatre, board member of Theatre Communications Group, non-profit theatre's national service organization, and former panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council, and Creative Capital Professional Development Workshops in Kansas City; **Walter Coppage**, actor and founding member of Actors Theatre of Kansas City; **Betty Crow**, director of operations and boardmember, Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. and executive director of Historic Jazz Foundation, Inc.; **Michael Joy**, director of artistic and educational programs for Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, dancer with companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Elisa Monte, and Nanette Beardon's Contemporary Dance Theater, and original cast member in the tony award winning Broadway production of *The Lion King*; **Andrew Zender**, communications manager, American Jazz Museum.

Artists were judged based on the merits of their work in the eyes of the Awards Advisors. In order to be considered, artists must reside in the five-county metropolitan area, may not be full-time undergraduate students, and must have lived in the Kansas City area for at least one year. Like the Awards to Visual Artists, which have steadily evolved over the past decade, we expect this Awards program to evolve over time in order to make it most relevant and helpful to performing artists and the arts community. Charlotte Street Foundation Founder/Director David Hughes and Associate Director Kate Hackman coordinate and oversee the selection process but are not voting members of the committee.

Charlotte Street Foundation is most appreciative to the Founding Funders for this new initiative: Grand Arts, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, J. Scott Francis, Karen McCarthy, Louis and Elizabeth Nave Flarsheim Foundation (Bank of America, Trustee) and Theater League. Charlotte Street Foundation is still seeking other donors to complete the necessary funding.

Charlotte Street Foundation (CSF) supports and recognizes outstanding artists in Kansas City; presents, promotes, enhances, and encourages the visual and performing arts; and fosters economic development in the urban core of Kansas City, Mo. On all levels, CSF places artists at the center of its mission and has built an infrastructure that depends on and reflects their involvement. As a result, we are an organization that continually evolves in response to their input and in relation to the city's larger cultural ecosystem. For more about the Charlotte Street Foundation, visit www.charlottestreet.org and www.urbancultureproject.org.