

Strauss Artist Grants Recognize Three Outstanding Performing Artists Working in Dance, Music Composition, and Theatre



Fairfax County, VA – The Arts Council of Fairfax County announces three \$5,000 Strauss Artist Grant awards to Reston-based choreographer and dancer, Shu-Chen Cuff, Falls Church-based composer Stephen Gorbos, and Great Falls-based theater director Jeanne Harrison.

“We are pleased to recognize and support these outstanding Fairfax County artists. The Arts Council’s Strauss Artist Grants are selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants from all arts disciplines.”

— Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO, Arts Council of Fairfax County

Taiwanese-born choreographer and dancer **Shu-Chen Cuff** founded Reston-based Gin Dance Company in 2011 providing artists the opportunity to learn, grow, and express themselves through dance. Cuff serves as artistic director for Gin Dance and regularly performs with her dance company in Fairfax County and the Washington metropolitan area. She is known for blending both visual and performance art in her performances. In 2014, Cuff choreographed “The Teller” a story of a Chinese fortune teller who encourages viewers to take their destinies into their own hands by actively engaging in their lives. The theatrical dance performance was delivered through a combination of dance, music, and projections. According to Shu-Chen Cuff, **“Utilizing both visual art and movement is an impactful way to deliver narratives and reach audiences at a deeper level. I am thrilled about the recognition and delighted to be able to continue sharing my art with performing arts enthusiasts.”**

She has performed numerous classical and contemporary dance works while working with Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company, Miami Ballet, and Nevada Ballet Theatre and has toured in Asia, Central America, and Europe before relocating to the Washington, DC area in 2002. Cuff is currently on the faculty of BalletNOVA Center for Dance and the Metropolitan School of the Arts where she continues to share her passion for dance with young aspiring dancers. To find out more about Shu-Chen Cuff and Gin Dance Company, visit <http://gindance.org>.

Theatre artist **Jeanne Harrison** is Traveling Players Ensemble's producing artistic director and founder. The Ensemble, founded in 2003, is dedicated to bring classical theatre into the great outdoors through a thriving summer camp and year-round acting classes and workshops. During her 27-year teaching career, Harrison has taught for Catholic University, Chapin School, Folger Shakespeare Library, Loyola University (Maryland), University of Maryland-Baltimore County, and Interlochen Center for the Arts, where she directed the Shakespeare program. She is an expert on *Commedia dell'Arte*, a form of theatre which utilizes masks and stock characters to deliver improvised performances, as well as a physical trainer for actors, Harrison has presented workshops at the National Conference of the American Alliance for Theater and Education. **"I have been privileged to work with amazing talent over the years,"** said Jeanne Harrison of Traveling Players Ensemble. **"The core of our Ensemble is to work collaboratively, valuing the contributions of every ensemble member. It's an honor to be a part of a continuously evolving and expanding theatre community providing growth and artistic opportunities to future generations."** To find out more about Jeanne Harrison and Traveling Players Ensemble, visit <http://travelingplayers.org>.

Composer **Stephen Gorbos** creates concert music for a wide range of ensembles and soloists, as well as music for film, theatre, and dance productions. His music, described by *The Washington Post* as "lyrical...warm and richly drawn," and by *Chicago Music* as "pulsating with a sense of urban life," navigates a wide palette of genres and influences, creating a synthesis between styles as diverse as American rhythm & blues, Western classical music, and Javanese Gamelan (traditional Indonesian ensemble music). Gorbos teaches composition, theory, and music technology as an associate professor of music and head of the division of composition and theory at the Catholic University of America's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music and was a visiting assistant professor at Yale University's Department of Music. His works have been performed in concert halls across the United States and in Europe by musicians and orchestras, such as the Minnesota Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, the NOW Ensemble, Roomful of Teeth, and violist Wendy Richman. Recent projects include "*Vox Animarum*" commissioned by cellist Dan Shomper, and "*Aqua Vitae*," a percussion quartet commissioned by a consortium of 14 university percussion ensembles led by Colin Hill and Tennessee Tech University. **"I am thrilled about the award,"** said Stephen Gorbos. **"It affirms my passion for exploring and blending various musical styles. I hope it will help expose new audiences to my art and new ways of experiencing music."** To find out more about Stephen Gorbos, visit <http://stephengorbos.com>.

The Strauss Artist Grants program, funded by Fairfax County, is named after Bill Strauss (1947-2007), gifted writer and cofounder of the Capitol Steps and the Cappies. The grants program is an investment in the sustained growth and development of the arts in Fairfax County as well as a way to honor contemporary artists' commitment to an artistic discipline and their contributions to Fairfax County. For more information on the Arts Council's grant programs visit <http://artsfairfax.org/grants>. All Strauss Artist Grants recipients can be seen at <https://artsfairfax.org/grants/programs/strauss-artist-grants>.

NOTE: High resolution photos are available upon request.
Images: (From left to right): Shu-Chen Cuff, Jeanne Harrison, and Stephen Gorbos

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Arts Council of Fairfax County

MAPPING THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS IN FAIRFAX

About the Arts Council of Fairfax County

Founded in 1964, the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency. It is the only umbrella organization serving and representing all forms of art in Fairfax County. The Arts Council of Fairfax County is the voice of the arts, dedicated to fostering dynamic and diverse local arts, ensuring that arts thrive by providing vision, leadership, capacity building services, advocacy, funding, education, and information.

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