

Lincoln Center

Lynne and Richard Pasculano Donate \$20 Million to Lincoln Center to Kick Off ‘Comeback Fund’

Gift Supports Reopening of Resident Organizations
Jazz at Lincoln Center, Lincoln Center Theater,
Metropolitan Opera, and New York City Ballet

As New York’s Arts Industry Emerges from Pandemic,
‘Comeback Fund’ Will Help Attract Audiences Back
by Supporting New and Enterprising Programming

New York, NY (August 17, 2021) – Lynne and Richard Pasculano will generously donate \$20 million to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts to support the successful reopening of four of its constituent organizations – Jazz at Lincoln Center, Lincoln Center Theater, the Metropolitan Opera, and New York City Ballet – and kick off the ‘Comeback Fund’, Lincoln Center leadership and the Pasculano family announced today.

“Our city’s cultural institutions must be at the very heart of New York’s cultural and social resurgence, stretching to reach more New Yorkers than ever before, and putting on programming that reflects the diverse excellence of our remarkable city,” said **Lincoln Center Board Chair Katherine Farley**. “We are so grateful to Lynne and Richard Pasculano for helping us to support our constituent organizations to achieve that ambitious goal, and to celebrate our city’s rich artistic community.”

“We are deeply grateful for Lynne and Richard’s visionary leadership in founding the Comeback Fund to support the truly extraordinary institutions that make up Lincoln Center’s campus, and attract new audiences to take part in the arts post-pandemic,” said **Henry Timms, President & CEO of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “Thanks to their generosity, our constituent organizations will be able to reach further into communities, bringing live world class music, dance, and theater for a whole new generation of arts lovers in this crucial time for the economic and social health of our city, and providing an anchor for New York’s cultural revival.”

“Love of Lincoln Center is in our blood; my father Harry Lebensfeld was an original supporter of Lincoln Center, and I believe deeply in its enduring cultural power as our city comes back socially and economically from this generational crisis,” said **Lynne Pasculano**. “I hope that

this gift will inspire other families to contribute to the social revitalization of New York, which will spur tourism and job creation and help to equitably revitalize our city.”

The gift, which will be distributed over five years, will support the artists that make New York City a global hub of creativity and innovation. The first year will focus on attracting audiences back to campus, honing in on new and younger audiences and helping bring to scale Lincoln Center’s larger vision around elevating diverse excellence and ensuring broader access to the programming across campus.

In its first year, the gift will sponsor new and emerging works across the four organizations.

At **Jazz at Lincoln Center**, it will help launch a series of family-friendly accessible and engaging community concerts in the iconic Appel Room, to help audience members learn about music fundamentals like melody, rhythm, form, and texture, and demonstrate the fundamentals of jazz through performance. Tickets will be highly-subsidized to communities outside of JALC’s traditional subscriber base, including front-line workers and CUNY students, as well as its more than 200 partner schools.

“Throughout the pandemic, jazz musicians and fans of all generations have remained active in the streets, parks and online. They have repeatedly and definitively shown that our music is important to the cultural identity of New York City. 100 years ago, the Jazz Age followed the Influenza epidemic – get ready again! The spirit of individual creativity, meaningful collective action and die-hard optimism that defines jazz, will be central to our City’s return,” said **Wynton Marsalis, Managing & Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center**. “Jazz at Lincoln Center is eager to invite new audiences from across the five boroughs to the House of Swing. A deep and heartfelt thank you to the Pasculano family for this generous gift and their support of the entire Lincoln Center campus.”

The Pasculano gift will help **Lincoln Center Theater** re-open its Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater with an innovative initiative - its first-ever production of an opera. *Intimate Apparel* features a score by Ricky Ian Gordon, a first-time libretto by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Lynn Nottage based on her acclaimed play, and direction by Bartlett Sher. In previews when the pandemic hit, *Intimate Apparel* tells the story of Esther, a lonely African-American woman who makes her living sewing beautiful ladies’ undergarments, and who, seeking love and romance, embarks on a letter-writing relationship with a mysterious suitor in Panama. Ricky Ian Gordon’s score paints a portrait of life in 1905 New York City, employing a variety of musical styles including ragtime, cakewalk and the blues. *Intimate Apparel* will boast a cast of gifted, up-and-coming opera singers headed by Kearstin Piper Brown as Esther, with Chabrelle Williams singing the role at Wednesday and Saturday matinees.

“We are so grateful to the Pasculano family for this generous gift, an invaluable support to this unusual, daring project” said **André Bishop, Producing Artistic Director of Lincoln Center Theater**. “It comes at a time of great need when we are faced with unprecedented challenges

as we reopen our stages after a 19-month shutdown. This grant from the Pasculano family will ensure that that Ricky and Lynn’s beautiful work will have every chance to be seen by the broadest possible audience.”

Lincoln Center Theater is forging relationships with younger theater lovers through its LincTix program for ages 21-35. This free, online program makes \$30 tickets available for every performance of all LCT productions, including *Intimate Apparel*.

At the **Metropolitan Opera**, the gift will support the US premiere of composer Brett Dean’s *Hamlet*, a recent award-winning adaptation of Shakespeare’s most famous play. This riveting new opera is directed by Neil Armfield, who staged the world premiere at the Glyndebourne Festival in 2017. The cast includes Allan Clayton in the title role, Brenda Rae as Ophelia, Sarah Connolly as Gertrude and John Tomlinson as the ghost of Hamlet’s father.

“Since the Met’s post-pandemic path back to performing includes an even greater emphasis on new and recent work, we are particularly grateful to the Pasculano family for supporting our new production of Brett Dean’s *Hamlet* and for understanding the value of new work for the revitalization of the arts,” said **Peter Gelb, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera**.

At **New York City Ballet**, the gift will help re-launch its annual **NYCB Art Series** initiative, a collaboration between contemporary visual artists and New York City Ballet designed to expand access and attract new audiences. Building on the Company’s long history of artistic collaborations, each winter a visual artist is commissioned to create a site-specific work for the David H. Koch Theater Promenade. Through the use of non-traditional marketing, social media engagement, low-priced tickets and outreach to fans of the commissioned artists, Art Series has been extremely successful in helping the Company increase access and grow audiences, particularly in the younger demographic. Launched in 2013, the first eight installments of Art Series have featured acclaimed installations at the Koch Theater by artists FAILE (2013), JR (2014), Dustin Yellin (2015), Marcel Dzama (2016), Santtu Mustonen (2017), Jihan Zencirli (aka Geronimo) (2018), Shantell Martin (2019), and Lauren Redniss (2020).

“We are deeply grateful to the Pasculano family for their support of the arts as central to New York’s renewal,” said **Jonathan Stafford, Artistic Director of New York City Ballet**. “We are excited to be part of the City’s revitalization, and we are thrilled to have the support to continue this initiative. As our city returns, we have an obligation and opportunity to reach further and do more, and Art Series has been a very powerful vehicle in introducing thousands of new patrons to NYCB and helping to expand the demographic make-up of our audience base with the influx of a younger and more diverse community of first-time balletgoers. This is the kind of multi-disciplinary program that will help to reawaken New York as a cultural center of the globe, and we couldn’t do it without visionary gifts like these.”

The mission of **Jazz at Lincoln Center** is to entertain, enrich and expand a global community for jazz through performance, education, and advocacy. We believe jazz is a metaphor for Democracy. Because jazz is improvisational, it celebrates personal freedom and encourages individual expression. Because jazz is swinging, it dedicates that freedom to finding and maintaining common ground with others. Because jazz is rooted in the blues, it inspires us to face adversity with persistent optimism. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and guest artists spanning genres and generations, Jazz at Lincoln Center produces thousands of performance, education, and broadcast events each season in its home in New York City (Frederick P. Rose Hall, “The House of Swing”) and around the world, for people of all ages. Jazz at Lincoln Center is led by Chairman Clarence Otis, Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, and Executive Director Greg Scholl. Please visit us at jazz.org; follow us on Twitter @jazzdotorg and Facebook; watch our free, global webcasts at new.livestream.com/jazz; and enjoy concerts, education programs, behind-the-scenes footage, programs and more at youtube.com/jazzatlincolncenter.

Lincoln Center Theater is one of New York’s favorite not-for-profit theaters. Now in its 37th year, LCT has produced over 200 plays and musicals at the Vivian Beaumont, Mitzi E. Newhouse, and Claire Tow Theaters at Lincoln Center and other theaters on and off-Broadway, as well as touring productions nationally and around the world. Outstanding recent productions include its Tony Award-winning productions of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *The King and I* and *South Pacific*, *War Horse*, Tom Stoppard’s *The Coast of Utopia*, and J.T. Rogers’ *Oslo*; Lerner & Loewe’s *My Fair Lady*, Ayad Akhtar’s Pulitzer Prize -winning play *Disgraced*, and Dominique Morisseau’s *Pipeline*.

LCT3 is devoted to producing the work of new playwrights, directors, and designers. LCT also encourages emerging artists through play readings, workshops, and an annual Directors Lab. Open Stages, LCT’s education program, reaches thousands of public school students annually with curriculum-related projects, tickets to LCT productions, and a Shakespeare Program. The theater is also the publisher of the Lincoln Center Theater Review, which explores subjects related to its productions.

Lincoln Center Theater will reopen this fall beginning on November 4 with the new James Lapine-Tom Kitt-Michael Korie musical *Flying Over Sunset* at the Vivian Beaumont Theater, followed by Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s opera *Intimate Apparel*, directed by Bartlett Sher, beginning January 13 in the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, as well as a full season of productions, to be announced. LCT is also a co-producer of the upcoming Broadway transfer of its LCT3 production of Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu’s *Pass Over*, directed by Danya Taymor, beginning performances August 4 at the August Wilson Theatre.

About The Metropolitan Opera: Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, The Metropolitan Opera is one of America’s leading performing arts organizations and a vibrant home for the world’s most creative and talented artists, including singers, conductors, composers, orchestra musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers. The company presents more than 200 performances each season of a wide variety of operas, ranging from early masterpieces to contemporary works. In recent years, the Met has launched many initiatives designed to make

opera more accessible, most prominently the Live in HD series of cinema transmissions, which dramatically expands the Met audience by allowing select performances to be seen in more than 2,200 theaters in more than 70 countries around the world.

New York City Ballet, one of the foremost ballet companies in the world, was founded in 1948 by the legendary choreographer George Balanchine and arts patron Lincoln Kirstein, and quickly became world-renowned for its athletic and contemporary style. Jerome Robbins joined NYCB the following year and, with Balanchine, helped to build its extraordinary repertory. Today NYCB continues to be inspired by its founders who envisioned an authentically American expression of ballet with a company that reflects the rich cultural diversity of our city and nation. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Jonathan Stafford, Associate Artistic Director Wendy Whelan, and Executive Director Katherine Brown, NYCB is deeply committed to creating and sustaining an organizational culture that values diversity, inclusion, and equity, promoting creative excellence, and nurturing a new generation of dancers and choreographers.

###

For more information, please contact:

Desiree Naranjo

dnaranjo@lincolncenter.org

212-875-5078

Madeline Kaye

madeline.kaye@berlinrosen.com

646-369-8226