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**San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom Presents  
2nd Annual Mayor's Art Award to choreographer Alonzo King**



**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—September 15, 2008—The 2nd Annual Mayor's Art Award will be presented by Mayor Gavin Newsom to renowned local choreographer Alonzo King on October 1, 2008, at a private event in the Green Room at the War Memorial Veterans Building hosted by the San Francisco Arts Commission.

"Alonzo King is a San Francisco treasure, embodying the best of San Francisco, the creative excellence and diverse culture of this city," said Mayor Newsom. "He has given equally to the dance community internationally and the community at-large here in San Francisco, and I am honored to bestow the 2nd Annual Mayor's Art Award in his name."

"We are inspired by the Mayor's ongoing commitment to the arts in San Francisco — including his singling out an awardee of such high caliber as Alonzo," said Arts Commission President P.J. Johnston. "The Mayor's Office and the Commission conceived of this award, and each year we work together to select an individual whose achievements and standard of excellence in the arts and civic life is an inspiration. Alonzo truly is a San Francisco treasure and he was the obvious choice for this year's award."

"I am truly honored to receive this prestigious award from San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and the city of San Francisco," said LINES Ballet's Artistic Director and Choreographer Alonzo King. "This award is a wonderful gift to me, and all of us at LINES Ballet."

Alonzo King is a visionary and award-winning choreographer who has works in the repertoires of companies throughout the world. Twenty-six years ago King founded LINES Ballet, the San Francisco-based international touring company that performs unique contemporary ballets created by King. When not on tour—performing in venues from the Venice Biennale to the Movimentos Festival in Germany to Montpellier Danse—the Company also appears onstage during spring and fall home seasons in San Francisco at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. King is also the founder of the San Francisco Dance Center, which offers dance classes to thousands of students each year; the LINES Ballet School, a training program that nurtures and develops the talents of young dancers; and the LINES Ballet/Dominican University BFA, the West Coast's first Joint BFA program in Dance.

This award reflects Alonzo's lifetime of achievement as a visionary choreographer and a cultivator of young dancers and new works. He is the embodiment of many of the values

promoted by the Arts Commission programs. For more than 75 years, the Arts Commission has funded, installed, advocated for, and celebrated the arts in all of San Francisco's neighborhoods. From innovative after-school arts programs in underserved communities to high-energy public art along the Embarcadero and in Civic Center, SFAC programs keep San Francisco a world-class creative city.

“Alonzo King's work exemplifies the Arts Commission's own commitment to art that is accessible to all and of the highest quality—from the gallery exhibitions we curate to the grants we give out to individual artists and organizations—all the things that together give San Francisco its unique character as a city,” said Johnston.

Over 300 invitees are expected at the event, many of whom are artists who have received grants, commissions, and awards from the San Francisco Arts Commission and/or exhibited work at the SFAC Gallery in the past fiscal year (2007-08), along with arts community leaders, prominent arts patrons, and city department officials.

**LINES Ballet** celebrates its fall home season this October 17-26 with a world premiere collaboration with jazz legend Pharoah Sanders. More information follows.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about LINES Ballet, please visit [www.linesballet.org](http://www.linesballet.org).

**ALONZO KING** (Choreographer, Artistic Director) is a visionary choreographer who has works in the repertoires of companies throughout the world including the Swedish Royal Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Dance Theater of Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Hong Kong Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre, and Washington Ballet. He has worked extensively in opera, television, and film, and has choreographed works for prima ballerina Natalia Makarova and film star Patrick Swayze. Mr. King has also collaborated with artists such as actor Danny Glover, legendary jazz saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, and tabla master Zakir Hussain. Renowned for his skill as a teacher, Mr. King has been the guest ballet master for National Ballet of Canada, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet Rambert, Ballet West and others.

In 1982, Mr. King founded Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, which has developed into an international touring company. Seven years later, he inaugurated the San Francisco Dance Center, which has grown into one of the largest dance facilities on the West Coast. In 2001, Alonzo King started the LINES Ballet School to nurture and develop the talents of young dancers. Expanding the scope of his educational visions to the college level in 2006, Alonzo King and LINES Ballet embarked on a partnership with the Dominican University of California, creating the West Coast's first Joint BFA program in Dance. It is the only Joint BFA program in the country to be led by a living master choreographer.

In June 2008, Alonzo King was honored with the Jacob's Pillow Creativity Award, in recognition of his contribution to “moving ballet in a very 21<sup>st</sup>-century direction,” in the words of Ella Baff, Executive Director of Jacob's Pillow. The Creativity Award is the second major national award Alonzo King has received in the past three years—in 2006, he was recognized as one of the fifty outstanding artists in America by the United States Artists organization, and in 2005, received the Bessie Award for Choreographer/ Creator—and one of many such honors he has received over the course of his career. He is also the recipient of the NEA Choreographer's Fellowship, Irvine Fellowship in Dance, National Dance Project and the National Dance Residency Program, as well as five Isadora Duncan Awards. He has also received the Hero Award from Union Bank, the Lehman Award, and the Excellence Award from KGO, and was chosen as the recipient of the San Francisco Foundation's 2007 Community Leadership Award.

Alonzo King has served on panels for the National Endowment of the Arts, California Arts Council, City of Columbus Arts Council and Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Arts Partners Program. In 2005 he was named a Master of African-American Choreography by the Kennedy Center. He is a former commissioner for the city and county of San Francisco, and a writer and lecturer on the art of dance; his contributions appear in the books *Masters of Movement: Portraits of American Choreographers* and in *Dance Masters: Interviews with Legends of Dance*. In 2005 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate by Dominican University of California, and the following year was given the Green Honors Chair Professorship from Texas Christian University. Last spring, he received a second honorary Doctorate from his alma mater, CalArts (California Institute of the Arts) in Los Angeles.

**LINES BALLET FALL SEASON: SAVE THE DATE**

LINES Ballet in collaboration with jazz legend Pharoah Sanders  
October 17 - 26, 2008

Novellus Theater at YBCA  
700 Howard Street at 3rd Street, San Francisco

Tickets: \$15-\$65  
415.978.2787, [www.linesballet.org](http://www.linesballet.org)

Visit [www.linesballet.org](http://www.linesballet.org) for more information.