



MEDIA RELEASE

## **Arts Orange County's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Orange County Arts Awards**

**Wednesday, September 22, 2010**

**Orange County Performing Arts Center's Samueli Theater, Costa Mesa**

**Event Honors Artists, Arts Patrons, an Education Program & Cultural Center**

**for Achievements Accomplished in 2009**

July 12, 2010, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA – Arts Orange County has announced the Annual Achievement Award recipients for 2010. They are arts patrons Roberta and Howard Ahmanson; Todd Miller, Principal Timpanist, Pacific Symphony; Kurt Weston, Photographer; The Mukenthaler Cultural Center; and The Wooden Floor (formerly known as Saint Joseph Ballet). Annual Awards are determined by a panel of judges made up of community and business leaders, and arts educators in the categories of artist, arts organizations, arts education, and arts patrons.

Longtime Orange County residents Roberta and Howard Ahmanson are being recognized for their extraordinary support for *Class Act*, a Pacific Symphony music education program that reached more than 17,000 K-8 students in Orange County last year with the excitement of great music. *Class Act* partners a Symphony musician with a school for an extended period of time and has been selected as

one of the nine most exemplary music education programs in the United States by the League of American Orchestras and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Honoree Todd Miller, Principal Timpanist, Pacific Symphony, has been with the orchestra from its 1978 inception, one of only three remaining founding Symphony musicians. Miller is also a member of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, and frequently plays with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Miller can be heard on many television and movie soundtracks, including several Academy Award winning films. A graduate of the University of Southern California, Miller is also committed to training the next generation of musicians by teaching horn and percussion at California State University, Fullerton where he has been on the faculty since 1971. Miller has served as one of Pacific Symphony's anchors as it has matured into a world-class performing ensemble.

Once the private home of one of Fullerton's prominent families, The Muckenthaler Cultural Center now houses a gallery, performance spaces and an arts workshop surrounded by gardens and an expansive lawn. "The Muck," as it is affectionately known around town, hosts summer and holiday festivals, jazz, classical, and world music concerts, poetry and storytelling programs, gallery exhibits, and an annual car show. The Muck broke all previous records in 2009 with more than 25,000 visitors attending 80 events in North Orange County's oldest cultural center.

Photographer Kurt Weston is an artist with an unusual view of the world, being legally blind. Weston's show, *Seasons in the Prayer Garden*, is a collection of botanical and landscape photographs that at first glance appear to be impressionist paintings. Colors are saturated giving the photos a sense of movement. Weston uses technology to magnify his work permitting him to manipulate images to approximate what he sees with his limited vision.

In the category of arts education, The Wooden Floor (formerly known as Saint Joseph Ballet) is an after school program that uses dance to train, mentor, and inspire inner-city youth. It takes drive and discipline to become a skillful dancer, the same skills required to be successful in life. 400 low-income youth, ages 8-19, receive 20 hours per week of dance training and tutoring to see them through high school and on to college. Every 2009 graduate is currently enrolled in college or university.

At the awards ceremony the honorees will receive the *Spark of Imagination* bronze sculpted by Christopher Schulz.

The Orange County Arts Awards will be presented Wednesday evening, September 22, 2010 at the Samueli Theater, Segerstrom Center of the Arts in Costa Mesa. The Arts Awards are open to the public. Tickets will be available later in the summer.

Arts Orange County is the county's official arts council and local partner for the California Arts Council. For additional information, contact Richard Stein, Executive Director, Arts Orange County, (714) 556-5160, ext. 17 or via email: [rstein@artsoc.org](mailto:rstein@artsoc.org).