

# MINDS WIDE OPEN

November 2008

## VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS

### Steering Committee Announces Leadership Funding

#### Development Efforts Halfway Toward Funding Goal

The Altria Group, Dominion and the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) are the first major organizations to provide leadership gifts in generous support of MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*. Altria and Dominion have each granted \$75,000 to the project and VCA allocated \$25,000 in startup funds. With additional support from a handful of major arts organizations, the development effort is now halfway toward its \$375,000 fund-raising goal to promote the project. Additional in-kind support has been received from BCF (branding and logo design) and InRich.com, a subsidiary of Media General (website design). As was announced previously, the Virginians for the Arts Foundation is serving as fiscal agent.

"This early funding is a 'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval' that provides credibility and momentum to this unprecedented collaboration," said Richmond Ballet Managing Director Keith Martin, Chair of the Steering Committee. "The level of support is indicative of how broadly the concept of MINDS WIDE OPEN has been embraced by the corporate community, the government and the non-profit sector."

For more information contact Melinda Scott, our Statewide Project Coordinator via email at [melindajscott99@gmail.com](mailto:melindajscott99@gmail.com).

The website is up and running at  
[www.vamindswideopen.com](http://www.vamindswideopen.com)

MINDS WIDE OPEN IS THE OVERARCHING BRAND THAT WILL PROMOTE ARTS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA. THE 2010 THEME IS ENTITLED "VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS." THIS EFFORT IS BEING LED BY THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS, THE VIRGINIANS FOR THE ARTS AND 22 MAJOR CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH.

### A Sampling of Events Being Planned As *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*

An exciting line-up of programs and activities has already been announced for MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*. The following are examples from the Virginia Consortium of Quilters, Sisters of the Circle, the authors of *The Sacred Purse*, Latin Ballet of Virginia, Theatre IV, Barksdale Theatre, and Richmond Symphony.

#### VIRGINIA CONSORTIUM OF QUILTERS

One of our statewide organizations is the Virginia Consortium of Quilters (VCQ). The board determined that of all the arts agencies in the Commonwealth, no one is better suited to participate than quilters, most of whom are women. VCQ has created the parameters of a judged challenge, the entries for which will be due in November 2009. Quilters will create quilts to be entered that 1) must be predominately blue in color and 2) must be based on one of the nine muses: epic or heroic poetry, history, love or erotic poetry, music or lyric poetry, tragedy, hymns or sacred songs, choral song and dance, comedy and bucolic poetry or astronomy. Winning entries will be chosen between March and June 2010.

#### SISTERS OF THE CIRCLE

Roanoke's Sisters of the Circle is an after-school performing arts program for young women ages 14 to 18 that is produced by the Jefferson Center in partnership with Roanoke City Schools and the Roanoke Refugee and Immigration Services. The program provides underserved young women with a sustained experience of arts mentorship, developing creativity and community along with performance skills.

Guest artists planned for 2010 include spoken word and hip-hop ambassador Toni Blackman, the Kusun Ensemble from Ghana, West Africa and dance/movement artist Celeste Miller. There will also be a culminating performance by Sisters of the Circle in May of 2010 at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke.

### THE SACRED PURSE

*The Sacred Purse* is a literary celebration about the perfection of women and the perfection of each woman. Written by, for and about women, this book is a collaborative fusion of short stories, poetry and free-flow writing. A look inward, the work focuses on the many dimensions of a woman: daughter, mother, partner, artist, provider, survivor and friend.

The Virginia Beach-based authors of *The Sacred Purse* are pleased to conduct a "visual reading" of the book's collections. Humorous, deeply moving and even tearful at times, this event is certain to inspire all women. There will be seven readings (one from each chapter of the book). Each poem or short story will be accompanied by instrumental music and a slide show. At the end of the presentation, attendees will be encouraged to write their own "purse story."

### RICHMOND SYMPHONY

The Richmond Symphony's seventh concert in its 2009-2010 Masterworks series will soar under the baton of Associate Conductor Erin R. Freeman.

The program features music by turn of the century composer Lili Boulanger, as well as Jennifer Higdon, one of America's most performed living composers of symphonic works. Rising star Tai Murray takes center stage as soloist in Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*.

### LATIN BALLET OF VIRGINIA

The Latin Ballet of Virginia will present *Mujeres*. This production pays homage to extraordinary women who made a difference in Spanish and Latin American history. Women included in the homage are Evita Peron, Manuelita Saenz, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Dulcinea del Toboso, La Carmen, Adelita "la Soldadera" and La Llorona.

### THEATRE IV

In association with its community partners, Theatre IV, the Children's Theatre of Virginia, will launch a state-wide initiative for elementary school students in August and September 2009.

Students in grades two through five will be invited to submit a one-page nomination for an Extraordinary Virginia Woman in the Arts. She may be a working artist in any discipline, an arts teacher, arts patron or arts administrator. She may be living or deceased. The women selected by the students must have made a significant impact in the arts and a significant presence in Virginia. A panel of educators will review submissions and choose 122 Extraordinary Virginia Women in the Arts. These women will be celebrated in a printed publication, and one honoree will be recognized over broadcast media each day during the MINDS WIDE OPEN celebration between March through June 2010.

### BARKSDALE THEATRE

In association with Theatre IV, Barksdale Theatre will present its 9th Annual Women's Theatre Project production, *Having Our Say – The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years*, written by Emily Mann, and based on the real lives of two extraordinary African American sisters. Sadie Delany, the older of the two sisters, was born in Virginia in 1889. The production is to be staged in the historic Empire Theatre in Richmond.

Also during the months of April, May and June 2010 Barksdale Theatre will make available free-of-charge eight performance slots on its Willow Lawn lobby stage to smaller companies and/or independent artists who are searching for a performance venue for their own MINDS WIDE OPEN projects.

### MILL MOUNTAIN THEATRE

Roanoke's Mill Mountain Theatre is proud to join the Virginia Commission for the Arts in celebrating MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*. The inaugural MINDS WIDE OPEN events in 2010 coincides with the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mill Mountain Theatre's nationally recognized Festival of New Works. The 2010 Festival of New Works will be dedicated to "Women in Theatre," and will present two fully-produced new plays written by women and directed by women, April 29 through May 9, 2010.

### MINDS WIDE OPEN

*Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*

March – June 2010

[www.vamindswideopen.com](http://www.vamindswideopen.com)