



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UMS Selected for Wallace Foundation Audience-Building Initiative

Wallace Foundation Supports Cutting-Edge UMS Performance Series with a four-year funding commitment

Ann Arbor, April 15, 2015 – The University Musical Society (UMS) has been selected for the New York-based Wallace Foundation’s **Building Audiences for Sustainability** effort – a new, six-year, \$52-million initiative aimed at developing practical insights into how exemplary performing arts organizations can successfully expand their audiences.

In an effort to deepen and measure community connection with the UMS Renegade Series, the Wallace Foundation will provide substantive funding for related UMS programs for four years, starting with the 2015-2016 season’s initial funding amount of \$380,000. Utilizing a combination of UMS performances, pre- and post-show discussions, and other enriching opportunities to provide further insight into UMS’s Renegade artists, this program will provide multiple points of access to artists who are celebrated world-wide for pushing boundaries of their artistic practice, making game-changing impacts on their contemporaries, their cultures, and society at large.

“We are thrilled that the Wallace Foundation has selected UMS to be a recipient of Building Audiences for Sustainability funding,” said Ken Fischer, UMS President. “Southeast Michigan has a long history of incubating the thought-leaders of tomorrow. By exploring new ways to engage our regional community with the Renegade Series — a program made possible by the initial investment of Maxine and Stuart Frankel through the Renegade Venture Fund — we hope to spark imaginations, encourage new ways of thinking about the world, and foster meaningful community connections. These eye-opening experiences are what innovators of all ages — from kindergartners to centenarians — need to thrive and make lasting changes of their own in the world.”

UMS was one of 26 arts organizations from around the country that were selected to be a part of the **Building Audiences for Sustainability** initiative. Each organization will design and implement programs to build audiences, measuring whether and how this contributes to the organization’s overall financial sustainability. In addition to performing arts presenters, the selected organizations represent a spectrum of artistic disciplines, from dance and opera companies to orchestras, theaters, and multidisciplinary arts institutions. The selected partners

will receive financial and technical support from the foundation to develop, implement, analyze, and learn from their audience-building work. The evidence gathered from this work will be documented and analyzed by a Wallace-commissioned independent team of researchers, providing valuable insights, ideas, and information for the entire field.

“The arts are essential on both a personal level, providing us with experiences that open us to new perspectives, and on a community level, helping us to find common ground,” said Will Miller, president of The Wallace Foundation. “However, attracting and engaging new audiences is challenging for arts organizations because, even as the number of arts groups has grown, national rates of participation in the arts have declined, arts education has waned, and competition for ways to spend leisure time has increased. We are confident that the 26 organizations selected from a pool of more than 300 identified by leaders in the arts nationwide will provide new insights that will benefit the field at large, helping to bring the arts to a broader and more diverse group of people.”

UMS will receive grant support from Wallace to fund at least two “continuous learning cycles” of work. Over the course of four years, UMS will receive funds to develop and implement a new audience-building program, study the results, and then use the findings to implement a second cycle of programs. The first round of funding for the 2015-2016 season and preliminary audience research is \$380,000; next phases of work will be funded through subsequent grants.

About UMS

One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS (also known as the University Musical Society) contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. UMS is an independent non-profit affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 100 free educational activities. UMS is part of the University of Michigan’s “Victors for Michigan” campaign, reinforcing its commitment to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness.

About The Wallace Foundation

Based in New York City, The Wallace Foundation is an independent national philanthropy dedicated to fostering improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and the vitality of the arts for everyone. It seeks to catalyze broad impact by supporting the development, testing, and sharing of new solutions and effective practices.

At www.wallacefoundation.org, the Foundation maintains an online library about what it has learned, including knowledge from its current efforts aimed at: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement, helping selected cities make good afterschool programs available to more children, expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens, providing high-quality summer learning programs to disadvantaged children and enriching and expanding the school day in ways that benefit students, and helping arts organizations build their audiences.

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The Wallace Foundation

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