

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH TERRENCE D. JONES

SUBJECT: TERRENCE D. JONES, PRESIDENT AND CEO, WOLF TRAP FOUNDATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, WILL PRESENT "A CASE FOR AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS THROUGH THE ARTIST'S LENS". MR. JONES WILL BE JOINED BY SPECIAL GUEST, JUDY COLLINS.

MODERATOR: DONNA LEINWAND, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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**DONNA LEINWAND:** (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Donna Leinwand. I'm a reporter for *USA Today* and I'm president of the National Press Club.

We're the world's leading professional organization for journalists. And on behalf of our 3,600 members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and our guests in the audience today. I'd also like to welcome those of you who are watching on C-Span.

We're celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and we've rededicated ourselves to a commitment to a future of journalism through informative programming, journalism education, and fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the Press Club, please visit our website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org).

We're looking forward to today's speech, and afterwards, I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so we have time for as many questions as possible.

For our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general public who attend our luncheon, and not necessarily from the working press.

I'd now like to introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. From you're right, Jonathan Salant, reporter for Bloomberg News and former president of the National Press Club; Amy McKeever, staff researcher, Mainichi Shimbun; John Lockwood, a park ranger for the National Park Service, National Park historian, and a new member of the National Press Club; Gerry Kohlenberg, chairman of the board, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, and a guest of our speaker; Bob Madigan, WTOP's Man About Town; Polly Nell Jones, a writer and wife of our speaker.

Skipping over the podium, we have Melissa Charbonneau, independent producer for News Hook media and vice chair of the Speakers Committee. Skipping over our speaker for just a moment, we have Marilou Donahue, producer and editor for *Artistically Speaking*, and the organizer of today's lunch; Jim Allison, program director for classical WETA; Alan Schlaifer, president of the Wharton School's club of D.C. and longtime member of the National Press Club; and finally, Jamilla Bey, freelance journalist and editor. (Applause.)

In a sour economy, will the arts starve? Throughout the country, non-profit, art, theatre, and music organizations have reported record losses in their endowment as their stock market investments tank. Sponsorships are drying up as large companies, especially the banks who once underwrote the arts cut back. Some arts groups say attendance is dangerously down. The 2009 Miami International Film Festival, for instance, drew 60,000 people, down from 74,000 the year before. In Hartford, the Connecticut Opera closed abruptly amid its 67<sup>th</sup> season. The Las Vegas Art Museum shut down last month and the Nevada Ballet laid off a third of its dancers.

Arts groups argue that culture is critical to the economy, contributing six million jobs, \$30 billion dollars in tax revenue, and \$166 billion in annual economic impact. That argument won out last month when Congress included as part of the Federal stimulus a \$50 million dollar funding bump for the National Endowment of the Arts. The presidents of the Americans for the Arts called it a huge victory for the arts in America, and said, "It signaled the creativity is valued."

Our guest today knows a little something about the business of an innovation in the arts. As president and CEO of the Wolf Trap Foundation since August, 1996, Terrence Jones has managed the Foundation's \$28 million dollar budget, 80 full-time employees, 270 plus performances each year at America's National Park for the Performing Arts. He is committed to fostering new works,

commissioning more than 30 such pieces from world renowned artists including composer Philip Glass and choreographers Elizabeth Streb and Donald Byrd.

Mr. Jones speaks out frequently on challenges for arts organizations, the nature of creativity in modern society, and the new fundraising landscape for the performing arts. In fact, he's been here nine-- This is his ninth time. So you may have heard me mention a few moments ago that Wolf Trap is a America's National Park for the performing arts. In 2007, Mr. Jones created Wolf Trap's National Council on the Arts and Environment to develop ways for the arts community to address environmental concerns.

He recently returned from a research sabbatical during which he drove 18,500 miles across 32 states to visit 86 National Parks. Please join me in giving a National Press Club welcome to Wolf Trap's CEO, Terry Jones. (Applause.)

**TERRENCE JONES:** Thanks, Donna. It's good to be standing after driving all those 18,000 miles. And, you know, they talk about March madness. It may come up that, you having me back nine consecutive times may be the new March madness. I don't know.

But thank you for that introduction. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to join you and members of the National Press Club once again. It is sort of a rite of spring here at the Press Club. So thanks so very much.

I'd also like to welcome members of the Wolf Trap Foundation board and our partners, the National Park Service, for joining us today. And I offer special thanks to our friends from PNC which returns as the premiere sponsor for Wolf Trap's summer season.

I'm indeed sorry that Judy Collins could not be with us today due to illness. And she's very sorry as well. She called me over the weekend. She is with us in spirit. And a little bit later in the program, I'll read a letter that Judy has asked me to share with you.

I begin with a quote from the iconic photographer and conservationist Ansel Adams. He said this: "No man has the right to dictate what other men should perceive, create, or produce. But all should be encouraged to reveal themselves, their emotions, their perceptions, and build confidence in the creative spirit."

Upon hearing Adams' name, how many of us can resist seeing in our mind's eye his breathtaking photographs of the majestic Western landscapes of Yellowstone or the moon rising at Yosemite, masterful works of art that both document and celebrate the grace and magnificence of America's National Parks?

Today, I want to speak with you about the inextricable link between our National Parks and the arts, and share some lessons that I've learned during a recent extended journey through our parks that should inform how we address and successfully manage our resources, natural, cultural, and artistic, in these times of significant challenge and change.

As a proud member of the arts community here in the nation's capital, and as a grateful servant to the arts during a 40-year professional career, and as an avid photographer myself, I returned to Adams' words because they speak so eloquently to the collective and pluralistic power of the arts and our creative world. Once again, he said, "All should be encouraged to reveal themselves and to build confidence in the creative spirit."

Adams found this creative spirit in the natural settings of our National Parks. So let me ask – how many in the audience here today have been to one of America's 391 National Park sites? Raise your hand. Wow, almost unanimous. Well, I venture to say that it was a positive experience or a memorable experience, perhaps even a life-changing experience.

So try to imagine life without our National Parks. Imagine a row of condos on the south rim of the Grand Canyon or a high-rise business complex in the Tetons. Or closer to home, there would be no Rock Creek Park for family picnics, no National Mall on which to revel in the spirit of this nation. Oh yes, no Wolf Trap. It's unthinkable. The parks are part of our national psyche. They are America. Or, as Wallace Stegner once said, "National parks are the best idea we've ever had."

Now, try to imagine your life without the arts – no National Symphony, no community theatre, no favorite movies or Broadway shows, no dance classes for the kids, no pop music, not even *American Idol*. Now, I know some of you could probably do without that one. But you get my point. Our lives and the arts are inseparable, even if we're not aware of it. Open any magazine, turn on the radio or your TV or your iPod, open any website and the arts are there.

But why the connection between the arts and the parks? Well, in part because our National Parks began as a preservation of spirit. After all, it was the painter and writer, George Catlin, who, in 1832, first called for protection of Western lands as part of a national park system. And the works ... (inaudible) Carleton Watkins led President Lincoln to sign legislation preserving Yosemite Valley. And the glorious paintings by Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt and others of the Hudson River School influenced Congress to pass legislation creating Yellowstone as the first national park in 1872 and President Wilson to establish the National Park Service itself in 1916.

These artists recognized the power of our nation's grandiose geography and its impact. Or, as Albert Einstein put it, "Look at nature and you will understand everything better." It is not particularly surprising that the arts played a major role in advancing the cause of the National Parks as the arts at the time were part and parcel of our educational system; music, literature, and visual arts were an integral part of any education. Even in the most rural communities, nurturing artistic talent was a given. It was a social skill that was valued and contributed to enriching the community.

So what's happened? Well, over the years, somehow the arts became the political capital that meant elitist, or perhaps worse, a simple nicety, easily dismissed, despite the fact that the arts remained an important adhesive in communities across the country, both urban and in rural settings. For example, in the No Child Left Behind legislation, the arts were established as a core subject. Yet a recent study identified the trend toward decreased instruction time for art and music. At a time when our economy demands the most competent, creative, and innovative workforce on Earth, misperceptions about the arts are causing us to miss the opportunity to properly educate our children to meet the demands of the future.

Just as our environment is in peril through consequences of human activity, so too are the arts imperiled. As you heard, daily reports announce yet another museum, symphony orchestra, or performing arts center pulling back on programs or even closing. From large national presenters to community theatres, to preschool, elementary, and high school arts and music programs, our industry is down. But I also know we're not out.

When the National Parks were created, they were intended to preserve the land, the spirit, and culture that make us American. Now as our socioeconomic system seems in disarray, to preserve and support the artistic spirit of creativity is imperative, not only to foster that mentality among individuals, but also to give the population a sense of confidence in the intrinsic power of the arts.

We as Americans need to preserve the creative spirit, much as we preserve the natural world with our National Parks. And in some cases, this is actually happening within the National Parks themselves as a result of forward thinking superintendents and their talented interpretative staffs. I observed examples of this firsthand when, as part of my research trip last fall, I had the distinct pleasure of witnessing our National Parks through a lens perhaps not as monumental as Ansel Adams', but in a way that underscored and deepened my core belief in the important role that our National Parks play.

Now to the surprise of some, our National Parks are a very diverse set of places in this country. They celebrate and reflect both the natural beauty and the

cultural and creative landscapes. We can easily see the splendor of the parks when we visit, but we often fail to look at the inside, the human side, which truly tells us who we are as a nation. On this most recent journey, a three-month solo trek covering, as you heard, more than 85 National Parks, national monuments, historic sites, national rivers and trails, I was deeply moved by the way our National Parks reflect the story of our nation's history and relate them to the modern world and how interpretation through the arts of these collective experiences can bring those multi-layered stories to life. Let me share a couple of examples with you.

In September, I visited Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historical Park. It is an example of early environmentalism and conservation, offering a balance of forestry and farming in Vermont. It serves as a current example of sustainability and environmental education with far reaching impact. They have developed an innovative project utilizing poetry to connect the visitors to the forest.

Later in the trip, I stopped at Brown Vs. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka, Kansas. It is an emotionally stirring example of triumph, hope, and courage, and uses new video art and technology to engage visitors and enhance outreach as it transports us to the tumultuous times of the Civil Rights movement.

And on a clear, brisk day in October, I was welcomed to Mount Rushmore National Memorial, where superintendent Gerard Baker, a member of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes, has helped encourage greater understanding between the millions of visitors and the Native American population of the region by utilizing performance and cultural offerings as part of their outreach program.

It is the sum of these and many other stories that give us insight into America, of what our country is, physically, culturally, and even spiritually. While I represented Wolf Trap throughout this journey, I also found that as an individual, as an artist, and as an ordinary citizen, the parallels between the arts and the Parks are unmistakable. Americans relate deeply to their natural surroundings and the artistic aspects found there. Naturalist John Muir reflected on the tremendous impact of nature on our souls. And his insightful words still ring true today. He said this: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountain is going home, that wildness is necessity, that mountain parks and reservations are useful, not only as foundations of timber and irrigating rivers, but as foundations of life."

I submit that the similar roles played by our National Parks and the arts, particularly at this critical junction in our nation's history, means that our support for and commitment to both is now more important than ever. Both the arts and

our parks offer opportunities for reflection, respite, and insight, and historical perspective, all very much needed in these challenging times. They nurture and help us sustain the confidence and spirit required to apply creative thinking to achieve solutions, to persevere, and even to thrive during life's greatest challenges.

I find it inspiring that the Museum of Modern Art opened its doors for the very first time just ten days after October 29th, 1929, yes, that Black Monday signaling the Great Depression. So rather than delay or cancel their plans, the leaders of that great institution pressed on. And a *New York Times* reporter wrote that within weeks, the Museum had established itself as, "A multidisciplinary cultural hub in a time of economic woe."

I'm certain those leaders realized the risk of their endeavor, just as the artists who explored and documented the awesome natural landscapes of what would become our earliest National Parks knew of the perils they would face. Yet today, our lives are made better because of the vision and the unyielding commitment of those early pioneers. Just as our National Parks offer accessible ways to engage with the natural beauty and cultural context of our environs, the wide range of arts available to us today, from musicals mounted on high school stages, to community art installations, to university performances, and online, on-demand entertainment, means there truly is something for everyone.

So in developing a plan to move forward, the arts need to be an important part of, not only providing pleasure, but also giving input into the corporate system as a creative component that speaks to the unconventional in these challenging times. As described in Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, there is an ongoing sea-change in people's choices and attitudes, asserting that creativity is at the heart of the new economic model.

Nationally, the non-profit arts industry, just the non-profit sector generates those dollars that Donna told you about. Let me repeat them again — \$166 billion in economic activity every year. That's six million full-time jobs, and, as she said, nearly \$30 billion dollars in local, state, and Federal tax revenue. That certainly makes the arts more than just a nicety.

So how do we move forward? Well, first and foremost, I suggest we remain optimistic, something artists are known for. And through the leadership of good friends like Bill Ivy and Bob Lynch, and many others, the arts have been at the table as this new Administration has faced the most difficult economic situation in generations, while tackling other vexing issues, both here and abroad. And the conversation in our field has been lively. Some have called for an arts industry bailout. Others have fought for more funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. And again, as Donna mentioned, I was too pleased to

see how in the recently approved stimulus package, there were included resources for that critical agency.

Still others like Quincy Jones have argued for an arts czar, a Cabinet level position to coordinate arts policy. And while all of these concepts have merit at some level, I suggest a slightly different framework for our thinking. First, we do need to improve coordination of arts policy at the national level, and if not through a Cabinet level position, then through a presidentially-appointed, cross-functional working group of experts. And we have many examples of these working. And there may already be some good news on this front as reports indicate the President will establish a White House staff position to oversee arts and culture issues. And that's a good start.

Secondly, the Obama Administration has issued a challenge by calling for arts education for all children, and by emphasizing the critical role of early childhood education, something we know a great deal about at the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts.

But if this is to succeed, it must be acted upon locally. Supporting the arts in this country should include deliberate measures and strategic decisions to ensure that every child has access to excellent arts education, taught by highly qualified arts specialists in our local schools, which is then reinforced by arts institutions and artists.

And finally, at the most basic level, we must support the arts. Buy a ticket. Go to a show. Volunteer at your community theatre. Join the choir. Involve yourself and your family in the arts. The arts and our National Parks heal us. They bring us together. They teach us and instill a love for inquiry and learning. They help us imagine, innovate, and succeed in creating leaders and in creating economies. If our world is shaped and sculpted by individual ingenuity, painted by brushstrokes of infinite thought, and scored by human harmony, why then has it taken us so long to see that the arts provide a natural opportunity to take that chance to look at things differently? Just as our National Parks challenge and change our understanding of who we are and where we live, the arts allow us to endure and triumph in different times.

So this afternoon, I invite you to consider the role and relevance of the arts and our National Parks in your lives, including at Wolf Trap, which of course is your National Park for the performing arts. And I hope you'll journey with us this summer as we look through a new lens to explore the wondrous and very nature of all that the arts on our stages have to offer.

And I could think of no better place to embark on this journey than with our signature artistic adventure series, Wolf Trap's Face of America. This year,



we celebrate Glacier National Park in Montana with a commission created by renowned choreographer Trey McIntyre. The world premier of McIntyre's new work, *The Sun Road*, will allow patrons to experience Glacier National Park through the dancers' lens with live performance at the Filene Center, backed by high definition video of the dancers captured onsite in the National Park.

The summer dance offerings continue with an eclectic mix from the explosive Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance, the popular and sophisticated Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, and icons of modern dance, the Merce Cunningham Dance Theatre. And, by the way, all three of those companies are making their Wolf Trap debuts. As is our tradition, Wolf Traps partners with the National Symphony Orchestra to present an array of inspired performances throughout the summer. With NSO at Wolf Trap festival conductor, Emil de Cou, once again at the helm, the Symphony will take a country music journey with LeAnn Rimes, present Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and share the stage with renowned violinist, Sarah Chang.

The NSO also provides live music for several nights of high definition, big screen magic including *The Wizard of Oz* and the Discovery Channel/BBC production of *Blue Planet*. And it would not be summer at Wolf Trap without the man who's garnered just about every prestigious achievement award under the sun, the legendary Marvin Hamlisch. Patrons can catch Marvin in his singular offering of *Hamlisch Conducts Hamlisch*, as he heads the NSO in music from *A Chorus Line*, *The Sting*, *The Way We Were*, and of course the many, many others.

The Wolf Trap Opera Company proudly presents two new full-scale productions at the Barns this summer, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and the Barn's debut of Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*, while at the Filene Center, the company will present a multimedia concert version of Puccini's *La Bohème*. And once again, we feature several legendary artists in their Wolf Trap debuts. To kick that list off, we welcome rock and roll Hall of Famer, Jackson Browne for the first time. And among other major debuts, are the country pop duo, Loggins & Messina, pop rock icon, Pat Benatar, and the complete high definition, large screen version of *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, part two, accompaniment given by a live orchestra and chorus.

We're also thrilled to welcome the Wolf Trap theatrical debut of Disney's smash hit *High School Musical* and the Tony Award winning *42nd Street*. We'll also offer the popular *Pirates of Penzance* and *Riverdance* in its record breaking 12th season at the Filene Center. Wolf Trap's celebration of live performance continues with the *Three Girls and Their Buddy* tour, featuring a collaborative evening of Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin, Shawn Colvin, and Buddy Miller. You'll also hear Talking Heads front man, David Byrne, an evening of eclectic

world music with Pink Martini, the constantly evolving sound of Elvis Costello, the sultry jazz of Diana Krall, and those pioneers of new wave pop, the B-52s.

Several extended evenings devoted to some of music's most exciting genres are on the summer lineup, including Wolf Trap's 20th annual Louisiana Swamp Romp, the Ultimate Doo-Wop Show, our immensely popular Hippie Fest, and the 80s Regeneration Tour. Additionally, we welcome back America's voice, Garrison Keillor in *A Prairie Home Companion*, along with that philosopher/comedian, Bill Cosby, as well as Bonnie Raitt, the Steve Miller Band, the Beach Boys, John Prine, B.B. King, Hall & Oates, Tom Jones, Tony Bennett, Smoky Robinson, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and the Gypsy Kings. And all of this is just a brief glimpse of what lies ahead for the summer of 2009 at America's National Park for the Performing Arts.

So join us for a little summer respite and reflection through the arts in your National Park. Oh, and offer a bit of economic stimulation on your own. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

And now as I promised earlier, a few words from Judy Collins. As many of you know, Judy's been a friend of Wolf Trap's since its earliest days. And she felt very badly that she wasn't able to make this down. She captured me (and some of you others may remember this, that are of my generation) but she captured me as a forever fan with her *Wildflower* album. And she still captivates me and millions of other fans today as she continues to create music of hope and love and healing.

So here we are. Let me share some words from Judy that she sent down to me yesterday. She says, "Dear member of the press, distinguished guests, Terry Jones and all my friends from the museums, concert stages, performing arts centers here in Washington, D.C. and around the country, and to all other friends of the arts, of beauty, of music, of dance, painting, and other forms inspired by our muses of the past and the present, I am so sorry not to be able to join you today in person. But I would not want to inflict my coughing, hacking person on man nor beast, both of whom I am sure are amidst this illustrious gathering.

We have gone to the moon, challenged the moguls of industry, and are going to get the vote for Washington, D.C. But we still can't cure the common cold. As Gay Talese said of Frank Sinatra, "Mr. Sinatra has a cold. I may not be able to sing, but I can write." I'm delighted to have been asked to be here and to share some of my thoughts on art and music. At this point, when I speak, I usually break into a few bars of 'Both Sides Now'."

Parenthetically, she says to me here, "This is where you sing, Terry, and invite everyone to join you." You'll be pleased to know that I'm not going to do

that. If you all want to hum out there, you go right ahead, but-- She then said, "Or perhaps you could ask everyone to turn on their iPods, their iPhones, their palm pilots or whatever for a moment."

She goes on to say, "I've been making music since I was a child, trained to play the piano, then inspired to learn the guitar and move from Mozart to Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and Stephen Sondheim. The arts for me have always been there. I have been fortunate to be able to make my living, find my fiercest joy, create solace in other people's lives because of my training, my instincts, and because of places like Wolf Trap.

Although there is no place, no other place like Wolf Trap, believe me; in these 50 years, exactly this month since I've been making my living making music, I have seen most of the performing arts centers in this continent, and many other parts of the world. I have been singing at Wolf Trap nearly every year since it opened, first with the National Symphony, conducted by Christian Vadye(?), and then with my own musical directors and a host of talented musicians, singers, and performers. Wolf Trap is one of the treasures in my own life. I have been privileged to be able to sing there among the birds and flowers, rain or shine, even in the temporary shed after the fire, among the eager, devoted fans of the arts who flock to hear the music that heals them.

Now, as always during difficult times, as well as triumphant ones, we need the arts, the music, the thrill of being in the night air and hearing the sounds of voices and the instruments that inspire us, that convince us that we have another round in us, that make all our struggles and fears and challenges worth the effort.

Sadly, in recent times, we have fallen from the path. We have taken art and music and recess even out of the schools. When our children are disturbed and show signs of obesity, depression, dysfunction and sorrow, we send them for art therapy, music therapy, exercise therapy, and recess. The cart has definitely swung way out in front of the horse.

My vision for the future of the arts is that the Obama Administration, with all of your help, will bring the emphasis back to the arts, particularly in our schools and in the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities, to encourage individuals and the youth of America to explore their possibilities. I would hope that private industry as well as the government, will recharge their efforts in this direction, putting their energy and enthusiasm back into the arts where it belongs, where we inspire quality of thought and action, of ethics and imagination, of individuality and conviction.

Wolf Trap's concerts, its workshops and spaces for creativity at the Barns and the wonderful open-air uplifting theatre that is Wolf Trap welcomes the

visitors to an experience of joy and music and art and dance. And today, we need all the joy we can get. A recital in a high school, a dance at home, a poem read to kids over breakfast can so easily help heal a troubled moment or a troubled time.

My thanks to everyone who makes the arts possible, who provide the spaces and the advertising and the environment where we can be lifted to the stars. May that endeavor, so essential to the soul, continue in the years to come. My thanks to Terry Jones, to Ann McKee, and Peter Zimmerman at Wolf Trap, and especially to Mrs. Shouse, who knew we need the nurturing of the arts and gave her Wolf Trap farm to the country as a National Park, as a national treasure. Thank you all for being here to carry us on this great surge of the arts into the 21st Century. Here's to artistic freedom and artistic healing and support for the arts in every city, in every small town in U.S.A. The arts are what make us tick and make us know who we are, in the broad daylight, in the soul searching midnight. Thank you for listening, Judy Collins." (Applause.)

**MS. LEINWAND:** So one of your signatures at Wolf Trap has been commissioning new works of art. This year it's the Glacier. What's the outlook in this economic climate for commissioning new works of art? And do you think it's going to suffer? And what's Wolf Trap going to be able to do next year?

**MR. JONES:** Well, it's a good question, and I think an important one. It's never easy to commission new work, even in good economic times, but even more of a challenge, as you suggest, in these times. I think it's very important that we continue to create new work. It is the continued reflection of who we are as humans, as individuals. And to be able to express that and show that to an audience is vital. It's important. Art never stops, not because of a bad economy.

What it does is sometimes slow down. And so what we're trying to do at Wolf Trap is continue to make that happen. I guess what we look at toward the future, you're right, we've got the commission with dance and music coming up with the film. This is, of course, a film created in the park as well, that will be part of this presentation at Wolf Trap this summer, a part of that series.

The next major thing (and we commission a number of works throughout the year)-- In fact, I think just Friday, we had the world premier of a new chamber music piece for violin and piano that we debuted at the Barns at Wolf Trap, a beautiful piece. But the next major work we're looking at is another opera. Some of you may remember a few years ago, we commissioned a new opera, a new comic opera, much needed as well, called *Volpone*. And we have that same creative team in the early stages of working on that.

And so the answer is, we double our efforts to make sure that we don't stop the creation of new work — not that we could stop it, but that we continue to encourage the creation of new work.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What economic indicators are you watching? How are ticket sales tracking compared with last year?

**MR. JONES:** Well, it's a little early to get a real good fix on that, because the tickets to the general public go on-sale this weekend. So you can do your part, the economic stimulus. But at this point, tickets have been on-sale. We announced the musical theatre productions early and some of the symphony productions, the dance productions that were booked early before the end of the year. And a few others have been added and the donor base is able to advise.

So the early indications are, we're holding our own, that we are about where we were at this time last year. And I guess the good news to that is, last year was our best season ever in terms of ticket sales. So we're optimistic. As I said, we should be.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What are your contingency plans if this summer, families decrease their entertainment spending as they pull in their discretionary spending?

**MR. JONES:** Well again, a good question. We believe very much in strategic planning at Wolf Trap and have gone through strategic plans and business plans every year since I've been here. So we do have plans in terms of what we do, in terms of cutting back. What we will try not to do is cut back programs, because that's the heart of what we are. And so we'll do our very best. We try to find ways to conserve without reducing the programs, thus the services to the people who are out there needing and wanting those programs.

The other thing that we do have at Wolf Trap is an endowment that has been created, not by Mrs. Shouse, interestingly enough. A lot of people think that Mrs. Shouse may have left a large legacy. She earnestly believed that her legacy was the giving of the land and the building of the center, and that after that, it was up to-- kind of like kicking the kids out of the nest, right? You know, you're on your own, so get out there and do it.

And so since her passing in 1994, we really have begun building that endowment. And so we are in a good position to weather a storm. What we're trying to do is increase that endowment so that if storms happen with more frequency or if there's greater need than what we think might happen, we're able to do that. But certainly for this summer, we feel very confident that we can manage with the reserves that we have.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Have you seen some sponsorships dropping off? And what steps are you taking to keep new sponsors-- get new sponsors to come on?

**MR. JONES:** Well, we have seen some drop-off, as you can imagine. I won't name any, but you could probably guess some of them. Again, I tip my hat to PNC Financial Services. And I think we have some people here today from PNC. They did step up and are serving as the major sponsor once again for the summer season. So it's critical we have that. As with other fundraising or issues, what we've done is try to redouble our efforts in finding sponsors. And it's interesting. I mean, even though we are in a down economy, not everybody is suffering. And there are people who understand the value of connecting themselves to a brand like Wolf Trap. And we are a brand. I know we're a National Park for the Performing Arts, but we're also a brand.

And to have that connection is very positive. And so we do have people who are coming in, who are new to us. Again, what we generally find is, they're not coming in at the higher levels. So it means we have to find more. So we may have lost one sponsor, we may need to replace that by two more. And so again, just trying to redouble the efforts to do that.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Speaking of folks coming in at reduced levels, is there any thought about reducing ticket prices to make Wolf Trap more affordable?

**MR. JONES:** Well, Wolf Trap is pretty darn affordable. In fact, it's part of our mission to keep ticket prices affordable. We believe that being a National Park for the Performing Arts, we really need to make it accessible to as many people as possible. So you may not realize, you can actually, for-- I think it's *Pirates of Penzance*, you can get a lawn seat for eight dollars. I believe that's cheaper than a movie these days. For many other shows, in fact, this weekend, if you buy the symphony, any of the symphony programs this weekend, lawn tickets will be ten dollars. So you can actually see any of those extraordinary symphony programs, including the ones with film or the guest artists or whatever, for ten dollars.

But even the standard prices are at a low rate, on the lawn, or even in-house. You know, we think it's pretty much of a bargain. The issue of reducing or making prices lower is also an artist contract issue. In other words, you know, people say, "Well, you've got all those seats out there. Why don't you just give them away or sell them for five dollars a piece?" Well, what people don't realize, that we have an obligation to the artist, that for every seat that goes out, every ticket that goes out, we must pay the artist for that ticket.

So we do work with artists. And actually, there was an article I think just recently in *USA Today*, as I recall, about artists who are working with presenters to offer at least a segment of those tickets at a lower price. And obviously we'll do that as need be as well.

**MS. LEINWAND:** In addition to artists cutting their prices, what are the artists themselves doing to increase support for the arts?

**MR. JONES:** Well, you know, I think there's a fair amount of public service going on by artists, by some-- You know, our industry is like many industry (sic). You know? There are people who get it, who understand how difficult things are for you as consumers and patrons, and for those of us who are trying to present these, and they really do cooperate and step forward. And so what I've seen are a number of performing artists advocating, and some of them do it right here in Washington, D.C. and lobby on behalf of support for the arts, some of the ideas that have been tossed around in terms of what we can do to bolster the arts industry to get through this.

I think that's what they're doing most. And there are some that literally take that step of reducing their fee. But I have to say that I don't think that's happening nearly as often as one might think. There's something-- I heard an interview, I guess the interview with the President, President Obama, talking about living in the bubble of The White House. And, you know, I think we have artists. We have performing artists, especially those in the pop genres, who really do sort of live in a bubble. And the idea that, you know, it might be hard for somebody to pay \$60 or \$70 dollars for a ticket just doesn't occur to them.

But I think there are some. And I think it's through that public service effort is where we're getting most of that.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What arguments for support for the arts do you think are most effective — the jobs argument, the economic argument, helping kids argument? Or is there an argument that you think ought to be added?

**MR. JONES:** Well I think first and foremost (and I mentioned in the speech) is the intrinsic value of the arts. And there's lots of ways you can define that. But the arts are valuable because they are the arts, and what they do to and for us as human beings. That's the number one argument for why we should do and why we should support the arts.

Beyond that, I think you can go into any number of areas. I think the education argument is a very compelling argument. And if we don't address education at the earliest levels, I think we will continue to see a decline and problems in this country that we can't even imagine at this point.

The economic argument, I think it's important for those of us in the arts industry and this part of the business to make that argument, not that it's such an overwhelming number in terms of total figures of economic development or impact, but that it is significant. It is important. And so I think to me, that's-- You know, that just sort of bolsters the rest of the arguments on why we should support these. But to me, we should support the arts because they're important to us as humans.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Okay. Well enough about money. Do you see public tastes in the arts changing? And how do you react to those at Wolf Trap?

**MR. JONES:** Yeah, I think public taste is constantly evolving. It is sometimes a challenge, I think, to make changes, perhaps as quickly as some might like you to make changes. Wolf Trap, the summer Filene Center venue, for example, is about 7,000 seats. That's a lot of seats to fill. And while we work very hard to do work, including the commissioning of new work, and we work very hard to bring in younger and new performers, to attract younger and newer audiences, you still have to make the budget. We're still talking about money here.

You still have to make that bottom line. And so what you try to do, what we try to do in places like Wolf Trap is balance it. You try to do enough of what's new to continue to grow the audience as the tastes and the art forms themselves (sic) change. I mean, we could spend all day talking about how art has changed and what's different in terms of performance today than it was 20 or 30 or 50 or 100 years ago. But the trick is to, I think, make that transition in a peaceful manner, in a way that flows, rather than saying, "All right, we're going to do everything that looks like this now, because that's the hottest, newest thing."

Because, to be honest, sometimes the hottest, newest thing doesn't last. And sometimes things like a Bill Cosby, whose humor is timeless, does last. So again, I think we just try to balance that.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What are the most popular acts?

**MR. JONES:** You have to understand, we're on C-SPAN. We're on national TV. So the obvious answer to that is-- Yeah, the question that usually comes to me is, "What's your favorite act?" And my canned answer is, they're like my children. I love them all. You know? It varies from year to year. Obviously we believe *High School Musical* will be very popular. I know some of you parents out there have seen it three or four or however many times. But we know there are a lot of people who want to see this, who want to see it live onstage at Wolf Trap. So we expect that.



Obviously popular acts like Jackson Browne and Loggins & Messina and even the classics that are coming back and some of the-- You know, we think the Doo-Wop show, which was broadcast on PBS I believe, and-- We think all of those will be very popular as well.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Yes. I've been told to buy my ticket now to Jackson Browne. So I'll get right on that. In planning your season, do you make the final decision on which artists will be appearing? Or is it done by a committee?

**MR. JONES:** Absolutely. Me and only me — I'm the only one. No. We actually have-- We don't have a committee. We do have a staff of professionals who work very hard in staying abreast of the trends, the changes, what's happening, when an artist is up, when they're down, what we can expect to reasonably pay, when we're being overcharged. And so I have a very, very good professional staff who does that.

I work with them. I talk to them about what we're doing. I think one of the things we sit down very early on in the season, or in the planning of the season, which happens almost perpetually, by the way-- Again, some people think, you know, two or three weeks before we announce this, we just sort of go out and, you know, pick one of those and pick one of those. It's a continuous process.

But I think we sit down early on and talk about, what are the kinds of things we'd like to do? Would we like to take a little different direction this year? Or were there things that we've done in the past year or two or several years that, you know, aren't quite as fresh? And maybe we should give those a rest. So it's really done that way, but not by committee.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Trisha Yearwood, Tommy and Dick Smothers, Marvin Hamlisch, Tony Bennett are all members of your board. Do they attend meetings? And how do they contribute?

**MR. JONES:** They're always invited to the meetings. Actually, Dick Smothers has been there. It's quite entertaining to have Dick at your board meeting. Tommy couldn't make it that day, as-- I think as Yo Yo was stuck somewhere in California. But they are invited. They contribute in a couple of ways, one obviously by name recognition, which helps us to have that name recognition. But more than that, they contribute their ideas. We talk to them. Marvin, many of you may remember, was here with me last year. That's part of what a board member does in terms of making an appearance at different places with me. Marvin has also done a number of fundraising dinners for us to help us support the arts at Wolf Trap.

So we're talking to them in a variety of ways and involving them. And yes, it would be fun if they actually all showed up at the same meeting, the same time. We could have quite a show for the board.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Why did you select Glacier as the selected site for this summer's Face of America? And what parks are you considering for future?

**MR. JONES:** Well, one of the reasons-- First of all, Glacier National Park in Montana is a beautiful park. How many have been to that? All right. Good, a number of you. But it's a beautiful park. And so it really does speak, that whole concept of nature and humans relating to nature through the art and through what they see in those parks, I think is very well exemplified in Glacier National Park.

The other reason we did that-- And you mentioned in the introduction that we kicked off a couple of years ago an initiative dealing with sustainability and the environment. And for those who've been to Glacier, if you've been recently, you know that it is endangered. It is in peril of losing its glaciers due to global warming. So one of the messages, as we talked to Trey McIntyre, the artist who's creating the new work around it, was to talk about the sense of loss, which obviously has a much broader meaning, metaphor, and convey that to people in part through what's happening at Glacier National Park. So that's really how we arrived at Glacier.

The other thing we do for that entire project is that we try to move them around the country. This will be the sixth project that we've done. We began with Yosemite. We went from there to the Virgin Islands and the Coral Reef National Monuments, and have been at various places around the country. So we try to move them geographically so we're not just talking about one area of the country.

As far as next up, I don't have any specifics, although the trip that I took, the research trip that I took, took me from one corner, Acadia in Maine, all the way to Death Valley and Joshua Tree in California, and obviously lots of parks in-between. And I found several that I think would make good subject matter, including Acadia National Park in Maine, including Joshua Tree in California, and some that I had been to before, like the Tetons, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Grand Canyon obviously, one that we are excited about. So we're looking at-- What we try to do is narrow those down in terms of what seems to be a logical next step in that series. And then of course we have to back up and raise some money and talk to artists about creating a new work in that environment.

**MS. LEINWAND:** So when you embarked on this trip, what was your specific purpose? And how did things evolve as you made your way across the country?

**MR. JONES:** Well, I didn't get lost too often. The purpose was really twofold. One was to give-- The board offered this trip as a way to give me some time to do some thinking away from the artists office for three months. I was gone for about three months after the summer season. I was not gone during the summer season. But so it was to kind of do some exploration on my own. That's where the photography comes in. I am a photographer and enjoyed taking over 7,000 photographs, I believe it was, on the trip.

The other was really to research parks, to look at how we could include those for future projects. There are 391 National Parks, as I mentioned in my speech. And I don't anticipate that I will be around long enough to do all of those. But it would be nice to get as many of those as we could in a project describing them. Because again, the whole project of Face of America is really talking about us knowing our National Parks, understanding them better, the human side. When I first created this project back in 2000, it was a tribute, a celebration as part of the Millennium Celebration that we kicked off at Wolf Trap.

And I went to the then director of the National Park Service then, Bob Stanton, and told him what the idea was and what we wanted to do with artists in the park and filming there in high definition and all this, and telling the stories of the park. He said, "That's so great." "Because," he said, "that's exactly what our National Parks should do. They should reflect the face of America." Well, guess where the name came for the title of the series.

But that really is, you know, what we're trying to do. And it's what I was trying to do on the trip, was to understand myself better what the National Parks are about. I'd already been to 140 National Parks before I started this journey. I went to about 60 or so new ones. So I've now been over 200 of the National Parks. But doing it in sequence, being able to see park after park, and talk to the people of the park and the visitors of the park, I mean, you get an amazing sense of what this country is, how important the parks are to them, and, as I said in the speech, how they relate to the performing arts. So that's what I did. Little long maybe, but that's what I did on the trip.

**MS. LEINWAND:** So what's going to happen to those 7,000 photographs? Will we be seeing a book anytime soon? Our book fair is in November.

**MR. JONES:** Little book fair plug. Well, we hope so. There's a publisher who's interested in the books. I've talked with them. They're in New York City.

They publish books of photography and other art books. So we hope perhaps by the end of the year. When did you say your book fair was?

**MS. LEINWAND:** November.

**MR. JONES:** November. Well, who knows? Maybe we'll get lucky and have it. So we are hoping for that.

**MS. LEINWAND:** We'll take you next November. Do you support the extension of the Metro to Dulles? What would having a Wolf Trap station mean for attendance?

**MR. JONES:** Well, I absolutely support extension of rail to Dulles. I only wish they'd done it back in the 1960s so that it'd be there now. Yeah, I think it's very important for this community, for, you know, the traffic situation, all that happens here. It is critical. And it's great that they finally approved it and that the work is finally underway. It will mean some inconvenience for those of us who work and live along the Dulles toll road.

The immediate effect-- And I want to emphasize this again, because I know a lot of people-- I've mentioned it before when I've been here. But a lot of people don't realize, you can take Metro to Wolf Trap now during the summer. We have arranged that you stop at West Falls Church. There is a designated shuttle bus that picks you up at the West Falls Church Station, takes you directly to the front door, the front gate at Wolf Trap. It is, I'm told, the easiest possible way to get in and out of Wolf Trap, so. And we will continue that this year and for the foreseeable future.

The question I guess said, what would it do if we had a stop there? I'd love to have a stop there. As some of you may know, in the original planning for the rail to Dulles, there was a stop in that original planning. As funding was cut for that project and reduced, we were one of those that was reduced out of that. I don't know. I think at one point, they were still planning to put the infrastructure in so that funding ever came along later, they could add it. And it wouldn't be as much of a problem. Some people think, "Wouldn't you have a problem with all those cars parked there?"

Actually none of the stops in the Tyson area will actually have parking at those stops. And we would be the same way at Wolf Trap. And it would be very beneficial, I think, to have a stop there in terms of our attendance.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Okay. We are almost out of time. But before asking the last question, I have a couple of important matters to take care of. First of all, let me remind our members of future speakers. On April 1st, Alma Powell, chair

of the board of directors of America's Promise, on April 7th, the Honorable Martii Ahtisaari, former president of Finland and a 2008 Nobel Peace Prize winner will address a luncheon. On April 13th, right, a couple days before tax day, we'll have Douglas Shulman, commissioner for the Internal Revenue Service.

And second, I would like to present our guest with a traditional NPC mug. He now has a set of nine. (Applause.) And we have a very journalistic question for you from clearly a serious journalist who wants to know, is Bugs Bunny coming back this year?

**MR. JONES:** I think this may have come from one of your past presidents, if I'm not mistaken, sitting just down at the very end there. No. Bugs is not coming back. You remember, I said we tried to balance things. So Bugs will definitely be back, but not this summer.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Thank you. I'd like to thank you all for coming today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members, Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, JoAnn Booz and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also thanks to the NPC Library for its research.

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Thank you and we are adjourned. (Gavel sounds.)

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