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ARTSFUND APPOINTS MICHAEL GREER AS NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO



Michael Greer, photo by Michael Slobodian

SEATTLE, WA—ArtsFund announced today that Michael Greer has been selected as ArtsFund’s new President and CEO following an extensive national search. Mr. Greer has been Executive Director of Oregon Ballet Theatre since 2017. As a former professional dancer and experienced executive, Greer’s leadership experience spans both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. He will assume his position on June 8, 2020.

In his role at ArtsFund, Greer will lead the Seattle-based nonprofit through a dynamic and changing cultural environment. ArtsFund has been strengthening the arts and cultural sector in the Central Puget Sound region for 50 years and is one of the nation’s leading United Arts Funds. ArtsFund’s diverse network of 120 cultural partners includes organizations ArtsFund has been supporting since 1969 — such as ACT Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Art Museum, and the Seattle Symphony — as well as newer partners including Arts Corps, Path with Art, Red Eagle Soaring, and Youth in Focus. Over 50 years, ArtsFund has supported nearly 240 arts nonprofits with more than \$84 million in grants, and by providing valuable leadership, capacity building, and advocacy.

ArtsFund Board Chair Anthony R. Miles said, “We are excited to welcome Michael to help shape a future for the arts in our region. At a time when our cultural nonprofits are facing unprecedented challenges, Michael’s dynamic personality and thoughtful and energetic approach to management and stakeholder engagement make him the right individual to lead ArtsFund into our next half-century of supporting the health and vitality of this community by advancing the interests of arts and cultural organizations and the individuals they serve.”

Greer will assume leadership of ArtsFund from Interim CEO Susan M. Coliton, a long time arts executive and consultant who was asked by the board to serve in this role. Coliton is leading ArtsFund’s response and relief efforts related to the COVID-19 public health crisis and will oversee distribution of ArtsFund’s COVID-19 Arts Emergency Relief grants as well as the 2020 allocation of ArtsFund’s keystone operating support grants.

“It is an honor to be able to guide ArtsFund into future,” said Greer. “Now, more than ever, our sector needs the type of leadership that ArtsFund offers. I look forward to making sure that our arts and culture community is not only positioned for a strong recovery internally, but also positioned to be part of the broader recovery of our

region. Arts and culture play a significant role in strengthening our communities, and I look forward to supporting that role as our world recovers from this unprecedented event.”

Greer was selected from a national pool by an eight-member search committee comprised of ArtsFund Trustees and external cultural and civic partners including Michael Brown (Seattle Foundation), Bernie Griffin (The 5th Avenue Theatre) and Beth Takekawa (Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience). “As a candidate, Michael stood out with his unique combination of the passion and creativity of the artist and the business acumen and political sensitivity of an executive,” said Bernie Griffin, Managing Director of The 5th Avenue Theatre. “As a dynamic new leader in the Puget Sound arts community, Michael’s deep understanding of the value organizations large and small contribute to a healthy arts ecosystem will be vital to crafting innovative partnerships and strategies to help our sector, and our community at large, recover and rebuild,” Griffin continued. Michael Brown, Civic Architect, Civic Commons at Seattle Foundation noted “Given Michael’s lived experience of diversifying workplaces and managing cross-cultural teams I am confident that, under his leadership, ArtsFund will continue to be a standard bearer for inclusion and racial equity in arts programming, production and leadership.”

Since August of 2017, Michael has served as the Executive Director of the Oregon Ballet Theatre, an \$8 Million professional ballet company with over 200 employees and the largest professional dance company in Oregon. Prior to that he served as the Executive Director of the Portland Ballet in Maine. Michael started his arts career as a dancer with Ballet West in Salt Lake City. He was the first black dancer in company history. Michael danced professionally for six years before retiring at 24 to pursue higher education.

After earning a degree in economics, Michael spent nearly a decade in leadership and executive roles in manufacturing, financial services, and commodities in India and Mainland China for several multinational firms.

Having served as a Trustee on the Oregon Arts Commission, Cultural Advocacy Coalition, and the United Way of Greater Portland, Michael brings an understanding of the importance of advocacy and the relationship between public, private, and nonprofit voices in successfully accomplishing the mission of an arts and cultural organization.

Michael holds a BA in Economics from Hampshire College and a Master’s in Education Policy, Organization & Leadership from University of Illinois. He is an MBA candidate with The Wharton School with an expected completion date of May 2021.

A husband and father of two, Michael and his family will be relocating to Seattle, and are proud to call the Pacific Northwest their home.

Greer continued, “King County, and the Pacific Northwest more broadly, is at the forefront of the next generation of global leadership. The industries represented in this community have an amplified voice on the world stage and will be instrumental in shaping our future. I want to ensure that arts and culture are part of that conversation. The institutions that ArtsFund supports represent a diverse, inclusive, and truly world-class cross-section of what King County has to offer. I want to be a part of supporting those institutions as they share those values with the world.”

PRESS PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD [here](#)

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About ArtsFund:

ArtsFund strengthens the community by supporting the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grant making. Founded in October 1969, the Seattle-based nonprofit has been building community through the arts for 50 years and is one of the nation's leading United Arts Funds. ArtsFund was originally founded as the United Arts Council of Puget Sound to bring corporate and civic leaders together to help establish and sustain our region's arts and cultural institutions. 50 years later, ArtsFund has supported nearly 240 arts nonprofits with more than \$84 million in grants, and by providing valuable leadership and advocacy. For more on ArtsFund visit www.artsfund.org.