



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Arts Council for Long Beach to honor
Distinguished Arts Award recipients
at new State of the Arts event**

In response to the current economic crisis, the Arts Council for Long Beach has restructured its annual State of the Arts event to save funds for other arts programs and make the event more accessible.

Slated for November 18 at 5:30 pm at the historic Art Theatre, located at 2025 E. 4th Street, the event is free and open to the public. The evening includes one hour of award presentations and video tributes, followed by a festive reception.

“This year, we wanted to break from the past and not ‘compete’ with our constituents for very limited funds,” said Craig Watson, Executive Director of the Arts Council for Long Beach. “We will raise money from the event, but do it without the ticket price. This will of course make it more accessible, and that is how it should be.”

The Arts Council’s Distinguished Arts Awards, originally started in the 1980’s, remain at the core of the State of the Arts event. The awards recognize individuals and organizations that foster the arts through exceptional arts leadership, patronage, philanthropy, and artistic accomplishment. Candidates were nominated by the public, and selected by a review panel earlier this month.

2009 Distinguished Arts Award winners are:

Port of Long Beach, James H. Ackerman Arts Philanthropy Award
Maestro Enrique Arturo Diemecke, Distinguished Artist of the Year
Andreas Mitisek, Distinguished Arts Leader
Antonio Ruiz, Distinguished Arts Patron and Volunteer

Admission is free, but due to limited seating, reservations are required. To RSVP, please call the Arts Council offices at 562-570-1930 or visit www.artslb.org.

The event is supported by the Evalyn M. Bauer Foundation. If you would like to show your support for the honorees by placing a congratulatory ad in the program book or joining a limited number of premier sponsors, please call Joanna Malfatti at (562) 570-1930 for more information.

(continued on next page)

About the 2009 Distinguished Arts Award Recipients:

Port of Long Beach, James H. Ackerman Arts Philanthropy Award

The Port of Long Beach has provided outstanding leadership to the Long Beach arts community. To further the Port's mission to support commerce and international trade, the Port has sponsored arts and cultural projects that promote the connection between the arts and business. Arts Council for Long Beach has welcomed the Port of Long Beach as a major sponsor of Smithsonian Week during its existence. Members of the Harbor Commission and staff of the Port of Long Beach have offered countless hours of service on our cultural boards, providing business expertise and other valuable counsel. Further, the Port of Long Beach has built the arts into its business model through the commissioning of harbor-related public art works installed at its headquarters. The Port of Long Beach has created a model for how business and the arts can work together to foster a better quality of life for Long Beach citizens.

Maestro Enrique Arturo Diemecke, Distinguished Artist

Enrique Arturo Diemecke brings passion and panache to conducting and composing classical music. Maestro Diemecke was named music director of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra (LBSO) in April 2001 and has since garnered rave reviews from audience members, LBSO musicians, the community and the press. *The Los Angeles Times* noted, "Diemecke brings an insider's savvy to music, revealing the inner heartbeat of a piece." In addition to his post in Long Beach, Diemecke has been music director and principal conductor of the Flint Symphony Orchestra (Michigan) since 1990. He's also principal guest conductor of the Orchestre National de Montpellier in France and in 2005 was named music director of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic.

Andreas Mitisek, Distinguished Arts Leader

Andreas Mitisek became Long Beach Opera (LBO)'s Principal Conductor in 1998 and Artistic & General Director in 2004. From 1990-1997 Mitisek served as Founding and Artistic Director of the *Wiener Operntheater* (WOT) in his hometown of Vienna, Austria. He shaped WOT's artistic profile of presenting 20th century and rare works, utilizing multiple venues within the city; all of which provided a clear alternative to the established opera houses there. During Mitisek's tenure as Artistic and General Director, LBO has more than doubled its budget, quadrupled its subscriber base and balanced its budgets. As noted in *The Los Angeles Times*, "LBO brings something new to opera at a time when you might think just about everything imaginable has already been done."

Antonio Ruiz, Distinguished Arts Patron and Volunteer

Antonio Pedro Ruiz has donated countless volunteer hours documenting, promoting, and raising awareness for artists, arts programs, and events in Long Beach through multiple mediums, including film and social networking tools. Over the past year, Ruiz also volunteered his time to help establish the Arts Council for Long Beach's Visions~Voices and GLOBAL programs. He produces Really Big Boom Productions and co-founded The Creativity Network through his mission to support the next generation of creatives with a cohesive network of media professionals, artists of diverse genres, government, business, arts institutions and community groups.

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