



Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts
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Art Stars Shine at Awards Gala

Laguna Beach – In true academy award style, the best and brightest of Laguna’s diverse artistic community enjoyed a star-studded evening on Sunday, as The Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts (LBaa) recognized its stars and paid tribute to renowned Pacific Symphony Music Director Carl St.Clair at the 8th Annual Art Star Awards held at [seven-degrees]. Attendees included over 260 community and cultural leaders whose efforts allow Laguna Beach to enjoy worldwide recognition as a hub of artistic energy.

Guests enjoyed a red carpet reception with champagne and hors d’oeuvres set to the music of Laguna Concert Band’s ensemble, Swing Set. Later in the evening entertainment included the classical jazz stylings of musical group Trio Dinicu. Wayne Baglin, Art Stars Event Chairman, emceed the award gala and Carl St.Clair delivered a compelling keynote address.

The evening’s first honoree was the winner of the \$5,000 [seven-degrees] of inspiration grant, awarded to Cheryl Ekstrom for her proposal Broken/Unbroken/Broken. The finished project will be a series of sculptures created from a variety of materials, depicting journeys and adventures in life, broken and unbroken, for growth in spirit, intellect, perspective and humanness. The body of work will be unveiled at the 2015 Art Star Awards.

Last year’s recipient of the [seven-degrees] of inspiration grant, Ed Peterson, was on hand to debut his creation of the original musical score that was performed by Laguna Concert Band for the animated film “The Sock Thief” produced by the Laguna College of Art & Design Animation Master Class last summer.

The 2014 Art Star winners were announced:

- ★ **Best New Arts Program:** Live! Music & Kids (Laguna Beach Live!)
- ★ **Individual Arts Patron of the Year:** Joe Hanauer
- ★ **Corporate Arts Patron of the Year:** The PIMCO Foundation
- ★ **Outstanding Arts Collaboration:** Art & Nature (Laguna Art Museum and Community Organizations)
- ★ **Arts Leadership:** Rosemary Swimm (Laguna Plein Air Painters Association)
- ★ **Artist of the Year:** Jodie Gates

For his outstanding and significant contributions to the performing arts in Laguna Beach, **Mark Dressler** was honored with a **Lifetime Achievement in the Arts** award. Dressler has served as Performing Arts Director at Thurston Middle School and Laguna Beach High School during a career in theater arts that spans over 30 years. He brings an unusual passion to all his work that is quite apparent to his students, many of whom are amazed at his energy and devotion. As a teacher who believes in teenager's abilities, he keeps standards and expectations high and his students consistently astound audiences with performing excellence. "No one is more deserving of this award than Mark," said Art Stars Chair Wayne Baglin. He continued, "His exceptional accomplishments and contributions will continue to influence and inspire generations to come."

The winners were presented with an original one-of-a-kind sculpture created by local artist Louis Longi. The sculptures are created specifically for the Art Star Awards with no molds or editions. Bronze sculptor Louis Longi has been creating sculptures for over 26 years encompassing over 12 public art commissions and countless exhibitions, some of which have been sponsored by MGM Mirage, Cirque du Soleil and General Motors. His works captures the essence of human emotion with forms that encourage the viewer to transcend the limits of vision and experience the works.

The Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts was established in 2002 as the result of an exciting partnership among more than 20 Laguna Beach organizations. The mission is to serve as an advocate for the arts, promote collaboration and networking among the arts organizations of Laguna Beach, and to serve as a united voice for the arts in the city. Members of the Alliance for the Arts include Art-A-Fair Festival, Laguna Dance Festival, Blue Water Green Earth, City of Laguna Beach Arts Commission, Community Art Project, Festival of Arts, First Thursdays Art Walk, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach Chorale, Laguna Beach Craft Guild, Laguna Beach Film Society, Laguna Beach Live!, Laguna Beach Sister Cities Association, Visit Laguna Beach, Laguna College of Art & Design, Laguna Concert Band, Laguna Outreach Community Arts, Laguna Playhouse, Laguna Plein Air Painters Association, Lagunatunes Community Chorus, No Square Theatre, Sawdust Art Festival, and [seven-degrees].

ABOUT THE WINNERS:

★ Best New Arts Program: Live! Music & Kids

Laguna Beach Live!

The mission of Laguna Beach Live! is to bring professional musicians to perform in Laguna, to enrich the lives of residents and visitors. Now, they are bringing those talented artists to the children of Laguna at the Boys & Girls Club and local schools. The arts inspire children's creative thinking; promote teamwork; and, decrease school dropout rates and absenteeism - all important elements to success in school, the workplace and life in general. The program was so well received that it was expanded to weekly programs with a dedicated music instructor.

★ Individual Arts Patron of the Year: Joe Hanauer

Joe has had a profound impact on the arts in Laguna Beach, not only with his enduring financial support, but with his time and expertise. Well known in the community, Joe is a long-time supporter of The Laguna Playhouse, the Laguna College of Art & Design, and the Laguna Art Museum. In addition, Joe is a Trustee of Laguna Beach Live!, an organization which brings professional musicians up close and personal to the community of Laguna Beach. In his role as Chairman of the Board of The Laguna Playhouse, Joe has provided leadership and direction to this historic theatre.

★ **Corporate Arts Patron of the Year: The PIMCO Foundation**

The Festival of Arts Junior Art Exhibit was established in 1947, but it was in 2009 that Mark Porterfield and The PIMCO Foundation took notice of it and lent their support and partnership. With their help, a special awards ceremony was created to further recognize the talented young artists in Orange County. The PIMCO Foundation continued their support year after year – amounting to over \$120,000 in funding. Enabling the Festival to relocate the Junior Art Exhibit to a more prominent location, help fund the printing of a Junior Art catalog and create a video about the importance of creative thought. But more importantly, THE PIMCO Foundation and Mark Porterfield touched the lives and inspired over 15,000 students, their families, their art teachers and the community..

★ **Outstanding Arts Collaboration: Art & Nature**

Laguna Art Museum and Community Organizations

Art and Nature brought California artists of all kinds together with art historians, cultural historians, scientists, environmentalists, geographers, and other thinkers to share ideas and information about art in its engagement with nature. This event served to provide a festival of art and ideas for the community; to inspire artists; to offer scientists a sense of what their work means in the wider culture; to find and develop connections between art and science; to raise awareness of environmental issues; and to celebrate Laguna Beach as a center for the appreciation of art and nature.

★ **Arts Leadership: Rosemary Swimm**

Laguna Plein Air Painters Association

Rosemary worked tirelessly to assemble and guide the team that put on the Plein Air Invitational in a new venue in 2013, gathering support and funding, while maintaining a positive attitude throughout the endeavor. Thanks to Rosemary's efforts, the event was a shining success for LPAPA. In addition to her work with LPAPA, Rosemary has served for more than a dozen years on Board of the Artist Fund, which provides financial aid to artists suffering economic hardship due to medical necessity or debilitating circumstances. Rosemary's leadership resonates with the mission statement of the Artist Fund -- Without Artists There Can Be No Art.

★ **Artist of the Year: Jodie Gates**

Jodie is a thirty-year veteran in the professional dance field with a remarkably wide-ranging career as an innovative choreographer, director, educator, producer, dancer and principal ballerina. She is internationally recognized as a leader in the dance world with her choreographic work for professional companies, the creation of the California-based non-profit organization Laguna Dance Festival and directing educational programs at the university level.

Professor Jodie Gates is Vice Dean and Director of the new University of Southern California Gloya Kaufman School of Dance. In this role she hopes to shape the next generation of extraordinary artists and curious thinkers in the dance field.

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