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THEATRE RENOVATION IN SUMMER 2014 IS NEXT PHASE OF MARYLAND HALL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

ANNAPOLIS—The Board of Directors of Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts (MHCA) voted this month to approve the first phase of an \$18 million renovation project to modernize and improve the performing arts wing at Maryland Hall. The first phase of the project will take place between June 1 and September 15, 2014 and will include the renovation of the theatre’s orchestra level seating and the addition of several elements to the stage that will significantly enhance the patron and performer experience.

This summer’s \$2 million first phase will encompass the following: new rake (the slope of the floor in the orchestra section); addition of parterres on the right and left side of the orchestra section; new seats and seating arrangement in the orchestra section; construction of an orchestra pit recess; installation of pipe lighting systems and controls; fabrication of a stage extension; fabrication of an orchestra shell; fabrication of new stage risers; fabrication and installation of window shutters; improvements to the proscenium; and cosmetic improvements.

The entire \$18 million multi-phase facility modernization includes the overall renovation of the main theatre, construction of two theatre wings, the creation of a new 150-seat community theatre and the addition of several flexible gathering spaces. The first phase of construction in June follows last summer’s restoration of the eight majestic theater windows of the 1932-era building. Nearly \$4 million has already been committed to the \$18 million capital campaign to date.

“Maryland Hall is a unique treasure in the community,” says Sean Looney, Chair of MHCA Board of Directors, “and the Board looks forward to the community coming forward to further support this project.”

“As we celebrate our 35th anniversary this year,” says MHCA President Linnell Bowen, “it only seems fitting that we embark on a milestone project that will enhance and expand creative opportunities for everyone in our community for generations to come. This first phase vastly improves the experience for both patrons and performers.”

The main theatre at Maryland Hall hosts more than 125 concerts and events each year including performances sponsored by Maryland Hall, four Resident Companies and numerous community organizations. Returning and new Maryland Hall patrons will encounter a transformed hall when the 2014-15 performing arts season premieres in the fall. The theatre renovations will result in improved acoustics, lighting and sight lines to the stage as well as new comfortable seats with more leg room. The addition of the parterres will improve ADA accessibility for both patrons and performers. The construction of an orchestra recess lowers musicians in front of the stage for better viewing of performances such as opera and dance. An orchestra shell, stage risers and a stage extension complete the concert hall experience. Operable acoustic shutters on the restored windows will make sunlight possible in the theatre for the first time in decades.

The multi-phase renovation and this summer’s first phase improvements have been endorsed by several Maryland Hall Resident Companies and many long-time community groups.

"We look forward to performances in the newly renovated auditorium and to an enhanced concert experience for the entire community," says Harley Flack, Annapolis Symphony Orchestra Board Chair.

Lee Finney, Annapolis Opera President, comments, "The Annapolis Opera is very excited that Maryland Hall has decided to move forward...Most important to the Opera is the addition of an orchestra recess, or pit, which will make the sight lines to the stage excellent from all seats and no one will need to look over the orchestra any longer.”

“The Annapolis Chorale believes that the proposed renovations to the Maryland Hall theatre will help us achieve our mission of presenting the best live performances in the region! And it will undoubtedly bring Maryland Hall to a new level as a first rate arts center,” says J. Ernest Green, Artistic Director of the Annapolis Chorale.

Dianne Cuatto, Artistic Director of the Ballet Theatre of Maryland, says, “...The possibility of additional lighting and improvements to the seating for the auditorium are all things that will benefit the Resident Companies and Maryland Hall in our quest to make our

theatre something that we can all be proud of...The improvements will send a message to our community that we are serious about raising the money necessary to make a theatrical experience at Maryland Hall a memorable one.”

“The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) is excited to hear that the Maryland Hall Board has decided to make major renovations to the auditorium as their first step in the long-term improvements. We look forward to the improved performance support this renovation will provide,” adds Linda Foss, Executive Director of CYSO.

Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts is Annapolis’ comprehensive community arts center with a 35-year history of providing classes, workshops, performances, and exhibits to promote lifelong participation in arts education, the visual arts, and performing arts. Each year MHCA serves 100,000 people of all ages, backgrounds, and socio-economic levels through a broad range of arts-related programs.

For more information, go to www.marylandhall.org or call 410-263-5544, ext. 10.

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