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2020 St. Louis Arts Awards entertainment announced

Local and national talent to be featured at Jan. 27 event for Arts and Education Council

ST. LOUIS – Dec. 12, 2019 – Local and national talent is set to take center stage at the 29th annual St. Louis Arts Awards on January 27 at the Chase Park Plaza Royal Sonesta Hotel. The Arts and Education Council has announced that entertainment for their signature fundraiser will include performances by the Ambassadors of Harmony, The 442s with special guest Brian Owens and Broadway stars Caitlin Kinnunen and Beth Leavel.

2020 Excellence in the Arts honoree **Ambassadors of Harmony** is St. Louis area's premier men's a cappella chorus of more than 130 voices. They are known for powerful and musically masterful performances. They will showcase songs from their wide repertoire that have earned them four international chorus championships of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

In the spirit of collaboration that 2020 Arts Collaborator honoree **Adam Maness** is known for, he will perform as part of genre defying quintet **The 442s** with special guest, soul singer **Brian Owens**. Brought together by the innovative and inspired compositions of Maness, who plays piano, guitar, accordion, melodica and glockenspiel in the group, The 442s features **Shawn Weil** on violin, **Michael Casimir** on viola, **Bjorn Ranheim** on cello and **Bob DeBoo** on bass.

The event will also feature the vocal talents of Tony Award winning star **Beth Leavel** and Tony Award nominated actress **Caitlin Kinnunen**, who both appeared in the critically acclaimed Broadway musical "The Prom," which was produced by honoree Jack Lane. In April, it was announced that filmmaker Ryan Murphy intended to adapt the musical to a film for Netflix with an expected release in fall 2020.

The St. Louis Arts Awards celebrates individuals and organizations that keep art happening throughout the bi-state region with their contributions as artists, teachers, philanthropists and advocates. The 2020 honorees are: **Jack Lane and Michael Hamilton**, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; **Solomon Thurman, Jr.**, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; **Ambassadors of Harmony**, Excellence in the Arts; **Pulitzer Arts Foundation**, Excellence in the Arts; **Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis**, Champion for the Arts; **Adam Maness**, Arts Collaborator; and **Dr. Nikki Spotts**, Shaw Visual and Performing Arts Elementary School, Art Educator of the Year. The 2020 event is co-chaired by Edward Jones Managing Partner **Penny Pennington** and her husband, **Mike Fidler**. Artist and arts administrator **Andrea Purnell** will emcee the event.

The event begins with a cocktail reception at 5:00 p.m. at the Chase Park Plaza Royal Sonesta Hotel. Dinner, awards and entertainment begin at 6:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$300 and are on sale now at KeepArtHappening.org/2020ArtsAwards. Proceeds benefit the Arts and Education Council. The 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards is presented by Centene Charitable Foundation. Edward Jones is the Gold Sponsor and Emerson is the Principal Sponsor.

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About the St. Louis Arts Awards - Since 1992, the Arts and Education Council's St. Louis Arts Awards has honored more than 180 artists, educators, philanthropists, corporate citizens and arts organizations that make the St. Louis region so vibrant. It is an elegant evening of cocktails and dinner, an awards presentation and awe-inspiring performances - all packed into just four hours. Proceeds benefit the Arts and Education Council, which offers programs and services that support more than 70 arts and arts education organizations impacting 1.6 million people throughout the 16-county, bi-state region. KeepArtHappening.org/2020ArtsAwards.

- **Event:** 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards
- **When:** Monday, January 27 at 5:00 p.m.
- **Where:** Chase Park Plaza Royal Sonesta Hotel | 212 N. Kingshighway Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63108
- **Tickets:** Tickets are on sale now, starting at \$300 at KeepArtHappening.org/2020ArtsAwards. Ticket includes cocktail reception, dinner, awards show and entertainment. Proceeds benefit the Arts and Education Council.

About The 442s – Combining three members of the world-class St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and two of the St. Louis' finest jazz musicians, The 442s are a genre-defying acoustic quintet named for the modern standard tuning of 442 Hz. Brought together by the innovative and inspired compositions of Adam Maness, who plays piano, guitar, accordion, melodica and glockenspiel in the group, The 442s features Shawn Weil on violin, Michael Casimir on viola, Bjorn Ranheim on cello and Bob DeBoo on bass. Formed in 2012, this unique ensemble blends virtuosic musicianship, group singing and inventive improvisation, all while breaking down barriers between jazz, classical, folk and pop music.

About Ambassadors of Harmony – Ambassadors of Harmony is the St. Louis area's premier men's a cappella chorus of more than 130 voices known for powerful and musically masterful performances. Its repertoire includes Broadway classics, barbershop, jazz, pop and a wide selection of holiday favorites. The chorus represents the St. Charles, Mo., chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. It was founded in 1963 in St. Charles as the Daniel Boone Chorus.

AOH earned its fourth gold medal at Barbershop Harmony Society's July 2016 international contest in Nashville. AOH has sung for audiences across the United States and has also performed in England, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

About Beth Leavel – Beth Leavel was nominated for a 2019 Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League and Outer Critics' Circle award for her performance in the critically acclaimed Broadway show "The Prom". She received Tony, Drama Desk, NY Outer Critics Circle and L.A. Drama Critics Awards for her performance as the title character in "The Drowsy Chaperone". Beth also received Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations for her role as Florence Greenberg in "Baby It's You". Other Broadway roles include Mrs. June Adams in "Bandstand", Emily in "Elf", Donna in

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“Mamma Mia!”, Frau Blucher in “Young Frankenstein”, Dorothy Brock in the revival of “42nd Street”, Tess in the original company of “Crazy For You”, Mrs. Bixby in “The Civil War”, Ellie in Hal Prince’s “Showboat”, and Anytime Annie (her Broadway debut) in “42nd Street”. She has also performed the roles of Rose in “Gypsy” at The Muny, Dolly in “Hello Dolly” at Cape Playhouse, Sally Adams in “Call Me Madam” at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and M’Lynn in “Steel Magnolias” at the North Carolina Theatre. Leavel was also seen in New York City Center Encores! Production of “No, No, Nanette” as Lucille. She has been seen in numerous Off-Broadway and regional theatre productions, commercials and TV, including the final episode of “ER”.

About Caitlin Kinnunen – Caitlin Kinnunen is a Tony nominated actress for her work in “The Prom” on Broadway. Other Broadway credits include “The Bridges of Madison County” (Carolyn) and “Spring Awakening” (Thea). She has performed in the national tour of “Next to Normal” (Natalie US) and in regional theatre performances at Alliance Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center, Weston Playhouse, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Village Theatre and Seattle Children’s Theatre. Her film and TV credits include “The Intern”, “Sweet Little Lies”, “It’s Kind of a Funny Story”, “We Need to Talk About Kevin”, “Younger”, “American Vandal”, “The Knick” and “Law & Order: SVU”.

About the Arts and Education Council: *Keep Art Happening.* – The Arts and Education Council ensures the 16-county, bi-state region is rich with arts and cultural experiences for all through programs and services that support more than 70 organizations each year, including: operating grants; arts incubation at the Centene Center for the Arts; PNC Program Grants; the Creative Impact Fund, with lead support from Bayer Fund; Creative Impact Fund for Diversifying the Arts; the Maritz Arts and Education Fund for Teachers; Bayer Fund Rural Community Arts Program grants; the Art Education Fund, underwritten by Wells Fargo Advisors; the Catalyst Innovation Lab; the Katherine Dunham Fellowship; the stARTup Creative Competition; Leadership Roundtables; Arts Marketers; the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association; the Keep Art Happening Scholarship; and the St. Louis Arts Awards.

The Arts and Education Council is entirely funded by individual donors, corporations and foundations in the St. Louis region. Since its inception in 1963 as the region’s only privately-supported united arts fund, the Arts and Education Council has raised and distributed more than \$100 million in private funding for the arts – a significant contribution that directly impacts the quality of life in our region. The Arts and Education Council meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards and has earned the Wise Giving Seal of Approval, a three-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Guidestar Exchange Gold Participant rating.

Connect with us – **Website:** KeepArtHappening.org **Phone:** 314.289.4000. **Facebook:** [ArtsandEducation](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsandEducation) **Twitter:** [@ArtEdSTL](https://twitter.com/ArtEdSTL) **Instagram:** [Arts Education Council](https://www.instagram.com/Arts_Education_Council)

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