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## **NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE ARTS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2006 ALUMNI ASTRAL GRANTS**

***Theater Artistic Director and Jazz Musician  
Each Receive \$2,500 to Support New Projects***

**MIAMI, FL (August 28, 2006)** – The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA), an organization that identifies and rewards exceptional student artists across the U.S., today announced that two talented alumni of the organization's renowned NFAA Arts Recognition and Talent Search® (ARTS) program will receive 2006 Alumni Astral Grants. Andrew Hovelson, Artistic Director of Twin Cities Theater Company, and jazz musician Brandon Lee each will receive a \$2,500 grant to support new artistic projects.

Alumni Astral Grants provide financial assistance for a specific initiative that will enhance professional and artistic growth. It is open to NFAA alumni four or five years after their original NFAA ARTS award.

Hovelson, 2001 NFAA ARTS Winner in Theater, founded the Minneapolis-based, not-for-profit Twin Cities Theater Company (TCTC) in 2005 with 2002 NFAA ARTS alumni Stanton Nash and Sid Soloman. TCTC was organized to create compelling, affordable theater for young professionals and students. Hovelson will use his grant to offset the cost of an equity stage manager, equity actor, the equity stage fee and a non-equity actor for TCTC's upcoming production of Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*.

Hovelson is a graduate of Lewiston-Altura High School in Lewiston, Minnesota, and is a 2006 graduate of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre's BFA Actor Training Program.

Lee, 2001 NFAA ARTS Winner in Jazz, has performed with and been recognized by several of the industry's most recognized stars for his talent on the trumpet. In 2001, as a freshman at The Juilliard School in New York, Lee joined 17 other students in launching a Jazz Studies program at the school, and has since performed at some of the most prestigious jazz events and venues. Highlights of his educational and professional experience include a scholarship from Wynton Marsalis to attend the University Achievement Summit in Dublin, Ireland; several performances with the Lincoln Jazz Center Orchestra, including a recording with the group for an NBA pre-game show; and the opportunity to play with jazz musicians Benny Golson, Frank Wess, Clark Terry, Joe Wilder, Wynton Marsalis, Wycliffe Gordon, Tom Harrell, Hank Jones, Ray Brown, Eddie Henderson, Bob Anderson and

Lewis Nash. In September, Lee will enter his second year in the Jazz Masters Program at Juilliard. He will use his grant to record his first CD.

Lee, of Missouri City, Texas, is a graduate of the High School for Performing and Visual Arts in Houston.

"As an organization that strives to nurture budding artists, NFAA is gratified to see our alumni continue to pursue their artistic passions," said NFAA President Dr. William Banchs. "NFAA has watched these two extraordinary artists grow professionally and artistically and is proud to honor and support endeavors that we believe will make a lasting impact."

NFAA identifies and rewards exceptional students from across the U.S. in nine art disciplines: dance, film and video, classical, pop and jazz music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice and writing. Each year, the not-for-profit invites up to 135 artists to participate in NFAA ARTS Week, a once-in-a-lifetime experience consisting of performances, master classes, workshops, readings, exhibits and enrichment activities with renowned artists and arts educators. Individual awards range from \$500 to \$10,000. In addition, at the exclusive request of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, NFAA nominates up to 50 ARTS Week Finalists for the Commission's consideration to be named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts.

Applications for the 2007 cycle of Alumni Astral Grants will be due August 1, 2007.

For more information about Alumni Astral Grants and NFAA ARTS Awards, please call (800) 970-ARTS (2787) or visit [www.NFAA.ARTSawards.org](http://www.NFAA.ARTSawards.org).

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**ABOUT NFAA:**

Dedicated to empowering the arts for America's future, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1981 by businessman and visionary Ted Arison. NFAA's mission is to identify emerging artists and assist them at critical junctures with their educational and professional development; and to raise the appreciation for, and support of, the arts in American society.

Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS) is a program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). The NFAA ARTS program is sponsored, in part, by: Carnival Cruise Lines; The Coca-Cola Company; Gibson Guitar Corporation; Baldwin Piano; Gibson Baldwin Music Education; The Gibson Foundation; The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Trust; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; and SunTrust.

ARTS Week 2007 is being sponsored, in part, by: American Airlines, The National Endowment for the Arts, the State of Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council; and the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs; the Cultural Affairs Council; the Tourist Development Council; and the Mayor and the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners.

For more information about NFAA and ARTS, visit the website [www.NFAA.ARTSawards.org](http://www.NFAA.ARTSawards.org).

**Editor's Note:** Andrew Hovelson is a high school graduate of Lewiston-Altura High School in Lewiston, MN and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2006 from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre's Actor Training Program

Brandon Lee, is a high school graduate of the High School for Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, TX and currently attends The Juilliard School.