

**The NEA is the federal agency that supports and funds the arts to give all Americans the opportunity to experience creativity and participate in the arts.**

### **National Heritage Fellowships & NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships**

- Both established in 1982
- \$25,000 award for each artist
- Nominations come from the public, are reviewed by a panel, then by the National Council on the Arts with final decision by the NEA Chairman
- Awards are not given posthumously
- Both fellowships have one award for an advocate—the Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellowship and the A. B. Spellman NEA Jazz Master award

The National Heritage Fellowships program honors individual artists or a distinct group of artists (such as a band) who have made major contributions to the excellence, vitality, and public appreciation of the folk and traditional arts. Fellowship nominations are reviewed on the basis of their continuing artistic accomplishments and contributions as practitioners and teachers.

Artists honored include bluesman B.B. King, Cajun fiddler and composer Michael Doucet, sweetgrass basketweaver Mary Jackson, cowboy poet Wally McRae, Kathak dancer and choreographer Chitresh Das, and gospel and soul singer Mavis Staples.

The NEA Jazz Masters program honors those who have devoted their lives and careers to jazz, an art form uniquely rooted in American history and culture. Recipients represent a wide variety of musical distinction, from singers and percussionists, to vibraphonists and saxophonists—all of whom have shaped and grown the jazz art form through their lifelong commitment.

Musicians honored include George Benson, Art Blakey, Dave Brubeck, Ornette Coleman, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Abbey Lincoln, Sonny Rollins, Cecil Taylor, Sarah Vaughan, and the Marsalis Family.

### **National Medal of Arts**

- Established in 1984
- NEA manages the nomination process on behalf of the White House
- Nominations come from the public, are reviewed by the National Council on the Arts, and the list is forwarded to the White House for consideration by the president along with candidates of his choosing.

The National Medal of Arts is the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government. These individuals, through their creativity, inspiration, and hard work, have significantly enriched the cultural life of our nation.

Artists honored include writers such as Ray Bradbury and Rita Dove; visual artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Frank Stella; musicians such as Jessye Norman and Mel Tillis; and actors such as Rita Moreno and Al Pacino.