



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## The Palladium Theater Announces Seven Recipients for 2024 Creative Fellowship Grants

### *Tampa Bay's Diverse Artistic Talent Takes Center Stage at The Palladium, Empowered by Creative Fellowship Program*

**May 7, 2024 (St. Petersburg, FL)** - The Palladium Theater proudly announces the seven Tampa Bay artists selected for the theater's 2024 Creative Fellowship grants. The Palladium Creative Fellowship aims to nurture and champion culturally and artistically diverse performing artists, providing them with a platform to showcase their talents and creativity within the vibrant Tampa Bay artistic community. For more information about the Creative Fellowship and The Palladium Theater's upcoming shows and events, please visit [palladium.org](http://palladium.org).

"Through our Creative Fellowship grants, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering a dynamic cultural landscape here in Tampa Bay. Through initiatives like this, we're not just investing in individual artists; we're investing in the very heartbeat of our community's artistic future," **said Paul Wilborn, Executive Director for The Palladium Theater.** "These fellowships empower emerging talents, ensuring that the next generation of performing artists has the support and platform they need to flourish."

Each of the seven Creative Fellowship recipients resides and works in the Tampa Bay area. In addition to receiving financial support of up to \$2,500 to develop a new project in collaboration with The Palladium, these artists will have the opportunity to present their work on the mainstage of Hough Concert Hall and the Side Door Cabaret during The Palladium's 2024-2025 season.

### **The 2024 Creative Fellowship grant recipients are:**

#### **Alejandro Arenas**

Alejandro Arenas is a versatile composer, arranger, performer, and producer originally from Medellin, Colombia. Immigrating to the United States in 2001, he has become a prominent figure in the music scene. Arenas holds an M.M. in Jazz Performance from the University of South Florida and currently serves as faculty at the St. Petersburg College Music Industry and Recording Arts program. Co-leading bands like La Lucha and Orilla, he is also in demand as a freelance musician, showcasing his talents across multiple genres.

Through the Palladium Creative Fellowship, Alejandro Arenas embarks on a musical journey reflecting his immigrant experience in the United States. Celebrating two decades in Colombia and over two decades in the U.S., Arenas aims to encapsulate his diverse cultural and personal influences in new original compositions. His project will feature a varied repertoire encompassing vocal, instrumental, and unique instrumentation and percussion. Arenas plans to assemble an all-star band consisting of fellow U.S. immigrants, each with their own distinctive backgrounds and experiences. Vocalists and instrumentalists from Spain, Japan, Cuba, England, Mexico, and beyond will contribute to a performance aimed at exposing audiences to diverse perspectives, cultures, and emotions. Through his multicultural journey, Arenas believes music serves as a universal language, fostering understanding and communication between performers and audiences alike, enriching society as a whole.

## **Pablo Arencibia**

Pablo Arencibia, an acclaimed pianist, has graced stages across the globe, from Venezuela and Spain to the USA and beyond. Graduating in Caracas, Venezuela, Arencibia furthered his studies and earned a Master of Music degree in Jazz Piano Performance from the University of South Florida. Renowned for his performances alongside internationally acclaimed orchestras and soloists, he currently imparts his expertise as a Jazz Piano instructor at the University of South Florida, University of Tampa, and Hillsborough Community College.

Arencibia's Creative Fellowship project, "Lecuona Reimagined," blends classical and jazz traditions to craft innovative piano and double bass arrangements, paying tribute to Ernesto Lecuona's timeless compositions. By infusing their own artistic vision as classically trained jazz musicians, Arencibia and his collaborator aim to transcend genres, offering fresh interpretations that immerse listeners in a rich and emotive journey. They plan to introduce "Lecuona Reimagined" through a series of concerts, gradually integrating new arrangements into their repertoire, with The Palladium as an ideal venue for showcasing their work. Additionally, they seek to collaborate with guest artists further to enrich the auditory and visual experience for audiences.

## **Ella M. Fredrickson**

Ella Fredrickson, Music Concierge of Tropical Zone Music, LLC, is a visionary in the realm of music and art integration. With a belief in the power of "connecting all the dots" in music, she fosters creativity among local artists and musicians, to bring innovative ideas and projects to fruition.

Fredrickson's Creative Fellowship project aims to push the boundaries of multimedia art in a live performance setting. She plans to present the captivating multimedia art film (creative team of Geff Strik (artist), Joey Clay (visuals), and Ken Park (video editor) was premiered in 2018 in with The Florida Orchestra and *Siècles des Lumières Entertainment, LLC*. For her Creative Fellowship show entitled "Starry Night" (in honor of the 150th birth year of composer Arnold Schönberg). The featured work is the string sextet version Arnold Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night), Op.4 which was inspired by Richard Dehmel's poem of 1896. The art film reveals a story in a series of 18 seamless images painted on a large canvas by local French artist Geff Strik. Strik's unique technique involves painting over previous image layers (*pentimento*), symbolizing layers of memories. Each scene builds upon the last, with the final scene concluding the storyline. Fredrickson's project promises to be a groundbreaking exploration of the intersection between music and visual art, offering the audience an intimate, unforgettable experience.

## **Jason Hackenwerth**

Jason Hackenwerth is a renowned multidisciplinary artist based in St. Petersburg, known for his captivating work in painting, sculpture, and installation. His pieces have been showcased in galleries and museums worldwide, earning praise from notable publications such as The New York Times, Art In America, and Sculpture Magazine. As a recipient of prestigious grants, including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Inc. grant and the Creative Pinellas Professional Artist Grant, Hackenwerth continues to push artistic boundaries with his innovative creations.

In his Creative Fellowship endeavor, Jason Hackenwerth embarks on a bold exploration of storytelling through live performance, music, and sculpture, with the aim of deeply engaging audiences. Combining opera, choreography, and visual art in a cross-disciplinary approach, Hackenwerth will craft fantastical wearable sculptures using vividly colored latex balloons with elaborate designs. These sculptures will be worn by exceptionally talented opera singers, who will breathe life into the creations through song and movement. The performance will feature seven arias of public domain, organized to build upon each other, generating forward momentum while maintaining a loose and allegorical narrative. This poetic and abstract fusion of genres aims to stimulate audiences' intellect through interpretation and fascination. Hackenwerth's transition from visual to theatrical art marks an exciting journey of exploration, offering him the opportunity to collaborate with remarkable talents within the community and create a beautiful and powerful expression that is both captivating and wholly new.

## **Sadie Lehmker**

Sadie Lehmker, a multifaceted choreographer, holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Michigan and a B.A. in Dance Studies from the University of South Florida. Her creative journey has taken her from performances and exhibitions across Florida, New York City, Michigan, California, Paris, to Vietnam. Commissioned for choreographic work throughout central Florida, Lehmker currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Instruction at the University of South Florida while passionately continuing her creative endeavors and teachings in the region.

In her exploration of the intricate intersections of memory, perception, locale, and identity through dance, Sadie Lehmker's Creative Fellowship project employs a practice-based research approach. She poses probing questions about human identity and spatial occupation, delving into the connections between memory, place, and female identity. Lehmker's choreographic aesthetic focuses on physicality, repetition, retrograde, and stillness, allowing each dancer to interpret movement individually. Investigating perceived, constructed, and false self-narratives, she navigates the dialogue between self-described and externally imposed identities, probing moments of precedence and questioning the negation of perceived truths. Through dance, Lehmker aims to embody the contradictions and clashes inherent in identity, disseminating her research through choreographic performances, dance films, conference submissions, lectures, and artist talks to engage audiences with the evolving nature of identity.

## **Kyle Schroeder**

Kyle Schroeder, a graduate of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music with a Bachelor of Music, has emerged as a compelling force in contemporary jazz. His debut album, "Get With It," released in 2022, has garnered national attention, earning airtime on Sirius XM Radio. Whether captivating audiences live or in the studio, Schroeder channels his diverse influences and prioritizes creative improvisation to leave a lasting impact.

With a passion to resonate deeply with audiences worldwide through music, Kyle Schroeder's Creative Fellowship project embodies a commitment to drawing from diverse influences and prioritizing creative improvisation and human connection. Informed by his collaborations with renowned artists like Rick Braun, Peter White, and Ben Tankard, Kyle emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships in the music industry. Operating as a performer, composer, and producer, he endeavors to foster effective communication and genuine connections, ensuring that his actions align with his intentions to convey authenticity through music. At the Palladium, Kyle aims to craft an emotionally resonant performance of original music dedicated to engaging audiences with sincere expression and meaningful connections.

## **Project Fusion Saxophone Quartet**

Project Fusion is a dynamic ensemble committed to connecting and inspiring audiences through their kinetic performances, adventurous programming, and artistic kinship. With a track record of success in prestigious chamber music competitions like the Fischhoff, Coleman, and Music Teachers National Association, Project Fusion comprises passionate, witty, and daring musicians dedicated to sharing the excitement and intimacy of chamber music with audiences worldwide.

Project Fusion's Creative Fellowship project is a multifaceted endeavor aimed at championing living composers, particularly in the realm of video game music, through dynamic performances and recordings. Their mission involves developing relationships with diverse composers, commissioning new works, and reviving overlooked gems to bring them to life in their distinctive performance style. As they navigate their current season, Project Fusion maintains a forward-looking approach, focusing on maximizing performance opportunities to achieve their programming goals. With a dedicated emphasis on their ambitious initiatives and raising awareness of their mission, Project Fusion is poised to impact the world of chamber music significantly.

The Creative Fellowship program at The Palladium Theater serves as a beacon of opportunity for Tampa Bay's artistic community, fostering innovation and collaboration across various genres. Focusing on jazz, blues, dance, opera and classical/chamber music, these fellowships aim to support the creation of new works while enriching the

region's cultural landscape. The Palladium remains committed to nurturing, celebrating and elevating the diverse talents that call Tampa Bay home.

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**The Palladium** is proud to operate as a department of St. Petersburg College. With its two venues, the 815-seat main concert hall Hough Hall, as well as its intimate award-winning 175-seat candlelit listening room The Side Door, and now event streaming, **The Palladium** fosters artistically and culturally diverse performing arts, educational and film programs that bring artists and audiences together in a first-class professional, affordable setting.



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The Palladium is a community-based performing arts center and cultural hub for the Tampa Bay area. It is proud to operate as a department of St. Petersburg College.

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