



## San Anselmo Musician Ali Akbar Khan Is Among First to Receive \$50,000 Fellowship from United States Artists

### The 2006 USA Fellowships, Announced Today, Support Living Artists Across the Country

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NEW YORK, NY, December 4, 2006 – Ali Akbar Khan, a musician based in San Anselmo, CA, is one of the first artists nationwide to win a **USA Fellowship** from **United States Artists (USA)**, it was announced today. As a USA Glover Fellow, Mr. Khan will receive an unrestricted grant of \$50,000 to support his creative work. In its inaugural year United States Artists will award 50 USA Fellowships to a total of 54 artists, with four fellowships recognizing artists' collaborations. The winners were selected by expert panels from among 300 applicants representing every artistic discipline and 43 states. USA is a new organization dedicated to providing direct support for living artists as an investment in the nation's creativity. Mr. Khan is one of only four musicians to be named a USA Fellow this year.

Ali Akbar Khan is a master of the *sarode* (a twenty-five-stringed Indian instrument) and is one of the most respected Indian classical musicians in the world. He came to the United States in 1955, and in 1967 he founded the Ali Akbar College of Music in Marin, California. Since then Khan has had a tremendous impact on music in the United States, through both his teaching and his performances. He was named a MacArthur Fellow in 1991 and was honored with a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1997.

"USA's goal is to fuel innovation in our culture by investing in creativity at its source: our nation's finest artists," said Susan V. Berresford, USA board chair and president of the Ford Foundation. "Our 2006 USA Fellows represent the full spectrum of artistic excellence and broad array of talent that abounds in all US communities. This is exactly what we hoped to achieve when we founded this program. It is what USA, with its multidisciplinary scope and national reach, is designed to recognize."

The 2006 USA Fellows will be honored this evening at a special event, hosted by arts leaders and philanthropists Eli Broad and Agnes Gund at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center. Jazz legend Wynton Marsalis and actor, director and philanthropist Leonard Nimoy are set to make special appearances. Target, Katherine Farley and Jerry I. Speyer, and American Airlines provided generous underwriting for the celebration.

Through a nomination process, the USA Fellowships are open to the more than 2 million artists living in the United States. The program supports artists in all career stages, including emerging artists and those at mid-career, as well as individuals who have achieved master status. Fellowships are given annually across a broad array of disciplines, including architecture and design; crafts and traditional arts; dance; literature (fiction, non-fiction, poetry); media (audio, film, radio, video); music; theater arts, and the visual arts.

USA's formation was prompted by the Urban Institute's breakthrough 2003 study, *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structures for U.S. Artists*. This research found that, while 96% of Americans appreciate the arts, only 27% believe that artists contribute to the good of society. In

addition, the study reported the median reported income for artists from their artistic work was only \$5,000 and that more than half of America's 2 million artists pay for their own health insurance. This data and other studies show that, despite these economic challenges, artists in fact contribute directly to advancements in the education of young people, the development of a competitive creative economy, and the revitalization of the nation's neighborhoods and urban centers.

In response to these findings, The Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Prudential Foundation, and the Rasmuson Foundation contributed a total of \$20 million to establish USA as a structure through which private philanthropists, corporate donors and other foundations can support individual artists. Due to seed funding from the four founding foundations, 100% of future donor contributions will directly support artists. In recent months an additional \$2.5 million has been raised to support USA. Arts patrons Agnes Gund of New York, Eli and Edythe Broad of Los Angeles, the Todd Simon Foundation of Nebraska, Ella Cisneros of Miami and Target of Minneapolis have already agreed to underwrite and name USA Fellowships this year and in years to come. The USA Fellowship program is envisioned as a program that would ultimately be endowed by donors to operate in perpetuity through income generated by a permanent endowment USA will establish.

**See attached for complete info on the 2006 USA Fellows.**

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