

**Lower  
Manhattan  
Cultural  
Council**

125 Maiden Lane Fl 2  
New York, NY 10038  
P 212.219.9401  
F 212.219.2058  
www.lmcc.net

CONTACT:  
Patrick Kowalczyk,  
patrick@pkpr.com  
Jason Gordon, jason@pkpr.com  
PKPR, (212) 627-8098

**LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL TO HONOR AMERICAN EXPRESS,  
KENNETH I. CHENAULT, AND THE JOYCE THEATER  
AT THE 2011 DOWNTOWN DINNER**

***Presenters and Performers Include Host Bill Irwin, Whoopi Goldberg, Laurie Anderson, Commissioner Kate D. Levin, Branford Marsalis, Joshua Bell, Bill T. Jones, Tom Otterness, Monica Bill Barnes, and Special Guests***

[www.lmcc.net/downtowndinner](http://www.lmcc.net/downtowndinner)

**(New York, New York – March 29, 2011)** In recognition of their leadership in making Lower Manhattan a thriving center of art, tourism and business, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) today announces that it will present American Express, Kenneth I. Chenault, Chairman and CEO of American Express, and The Joyce Theater with its Liberty Award at its annual gala, The Downtown Dinner, on April 27, 2011.

The Downtown Dinner 2011, which will take place at Cipriani Wall Street, will be emceed by Tony Award-winning actor Bill Irwin and will feature appearances by Laurie Anderson, dancers and choreographers Bill T. Jones and Monica Bill Barnes, Whoopi Goldberg, musicians Branford Marsalis and Joshua Bell, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin, visual artist Tom Otterness, and many other special guests.

The Downtown Dinner is the LMCC's most significant fundraising event, raising upwards of \$750,000 for the organization's free arts programs and services, which annually support thousands of artists and arts groups. The centerpiece of the evening is the presentation of LMCC's annual Liberty Award, a pink Statue of Lady Liberty, to revered members of the community whose work has made a significant impact on the neighborhood.

"The Downtown Dinner is an opportunity to celebrate leaders who have done so much to promote culture, tourism and development in Lower Manhattan, particularly in the aftermath and 10 years following 9/11," said Sam Miller, President of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. "We are proud to salute Kenneth I. Chenault, American Express and The Joyce Theater for their commitment to enriching our community and engaging residents, workers and visitors in all the cultural activities Downtown has to offer."

American Express, headquartered in Lower Manhattan for more than 160 years, has a long tradition of supporting the development and cultural revitalization of its neighborhood. In the 1880s, American Express undertook its first major initiative when it helped to raise funds to build the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. In 1983, American Express again led efforts to help restore the Statue of Liberty that included a \$1.7 million contribution and just recently made a grant to Save Ellis Island, an organization aimed at restoring all of the buildings on historic Ellis Island.

Under the leadership of Chenault, American Express was at the forefront of efforts to revitalize Lower Manhattan following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The company returned its headquarters back to the World Financial Center and became the Founding Title Sponsor of both the River To River Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival, two events founded in the wake of 9/11 that have since become cultural institutions, drawing hundreds of thousands of people to Lower Manhattan each year. Reflecting its continued commitment to Lower Manhattan, American Express recently renewed its pledge to keep its headquarters at the American Express Tower at Three World Financial Center.

LMCC's Liberty Award will be presented to The Joyce Theater, which has proudly served the dance community and its audiences since 1982. A longtime partner of the River To River Festival, The Joyce Theater has brought many of the world's leading dance companies, including the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and The Joffrey Ballet, to Downtown audiences as part of the Festival's *Evening Stars* program. The Joyce Theater Foundation also operates Joyce SoHo, offering artists highly subsidized rehearsal and performance space, and Dance Art New York (DANY) Studios, which provides artists with affordable studio, rehearsal, and workshop space. The Joyce Theater will be the sole occupant of the Performing Arts Center at the new World Trade Center.

To purchase tickets or tables for the 2011 Downtown Dinner, please contact Maureen McMahon at 212.219.9401 x101 or [mmcmahon@lmcc.net](mailto:mmcmahon@lmcc.net).

###

### **About Lower Manhattan Cultural Council**

For nearly 40 years, LMCC has been the leading voice for arts and culture in downtown New York City, producing cultural events and promoting the arts through grants, services, advocacy and cultural development programs. LMCC offers a range of funding opportunities and support services for artists working in all artistic disciplines across Manhattan, and a broad range of free programs in the visual, performing and media arts that help cultivate new arts audiences and improve the quality of urban life. LMCC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by a range of foundations, corporations, individuals and government entities. For more information visit [LMCC.net](http://LMCC.net).