



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Brianna Taylor / 215-568-2525
btaylor@devineandpartners.com

**THE MANN NAMES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
FOR ORIGINAL FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING**

Expands Partnership with Nolan Williams' NEWorks Productions

PHILADELPHIA (Sept. 15, 2014) – Building from the tremendous success of its 2014 *Philadelphia Freedom Festival*, the Mann has announced that Nolan Williams, Jr., will continue as its Festival Artistic Director through 2016. In this capacity, Williams was instrumental to the *Philadelphia Freedom Festival*, which was a six-month, city-wide celebration honoring 19th-century freedom fighter Octavius Catto and the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Amendment. The festival, which linked the arts with civil rights history through a series of Mann-produced programming, culminated in a main stage concert with the award-winning gospel artist Dr. Marvin Sapp and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

“Expanding Nolan’s role at the Mann is a reflection of our strong commitment to producing original programming and outreach that educates, inspires and is relevant to Philadelphia’s diverse community,” said Catherine M. Cahill, president and CEO of the Mann. “Nolan is an extremely talented and thoughtful professional. We are fortunate to have him. His work will contribute to our highly regarded Education and Community Engagement efforts, a program that we are very proud of and that has served more than 400,000 urban children and families under the direction of the Mann’s Rhoda Blount.”

Since 2003, Williams has served as CEO of NEWorks Productions, a Washington, D.C.-based firm that produces diverse concert and artistic programming. In this capacity, he has successfully forged strategic partnerships with major humanitarian, arts and educational institutions to develop an impressive resume of projects, including: *Joyful Sounds: Gospel Across America*, a nine-day festival presented by the John F. Kennedy Center; the *Partnering for Life* American Cancer Society Health and Wellness Tour; *A Mighty Stream*, a concert production with the National Symphony Orchestra commemorating the American freedom movement; *Reflections of Peace: from Gandhi to King*, a global concert of peace commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington; and, *Christmas Gift!*, a new holiday musical written by Williams and presented jointly with the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland.

"At NEWorks, we believe in the power of music and the arts as forces for social change and uplift. We are excited to establish this partnership with the Mann to develop innovative festival projects for the wonderful city of Philadelphia that will have national and global resonance," said Williams. He added, "The relevance of this partnership is reflected in the events of our times. There is vital need for greater

social discourse in this country. NEWorks and the Mann believe the arts are a primary and productive way to bring people together, to facilitate dialogue, to tackle tough issues, and, in all, to build community.”

With the *Philadelphia Freedom Festival*, Williams and the Mann successfully engaged the wider community in a range of projects, including free concert events, arts-in-schools programming and a community forum on race relations in partnership with Temple University's Charles Blockson Collection and WURD 900 AM.

About NEWorks Productions

As one of the country’s premiere producers of inspirational artistic programming, NEWorks Productions partners with leading humanitarian, educational and arts institutions to present signature concert events, festivals and projects that leverage the power of music and the arts for community engagement and social good. Their projects have reached a combined audience of multiple thousands on three continents. Past and present partners include: the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the American Cancer Society, the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, Georgetown University, Oberlin College, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, the Embassy of India, the Amalfi Coast Music and Arts Festival, The Philadelphia Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra.

About the Mann

As one of the most important outdoor music centers in the country, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts presents top artists in a world-class, entertainment destination in association with AEG Live. Each summer season, renowned symphony orchestras, iconic rock stars and the latest touring artists in indie rock, hip hop, R&B and pop take the stage here, and today’s success is a nod to the venue’s storied history. The Mann has been the summer home of The Philadelphia Orchestra since the 1930s and presented critically acclaimed performers in every decade since then. Located in the heart of Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park, the Mann hosts more than 170,000 visitors annually. Signature concert experiences are surrounded by Philadelphia’s stunning nighttime skyline and include seats beneath the Mann’s magnificent shed; picnics, blankets and music under the stars on its famous lawn; and dining in Crescendo, the venue’s spectacular tented restaurant.

The Mann’s Education & Community Engagement Program is the region’s largest free education program, impacting more than 50,000 young people annually and more than 400,000 since 1997. The Mann’s Connecting Arts-N-Schools program offers city-wide schools a wide array of multicultural performances in music, theater and dance. This gives thousands of students the opportunity to experience the sights, sounds and rhythms of live performances – often for the very first time.

For more information, visit www.manncenter.org.

###