



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Strathmore Presents
Arts and the Brain**

Series convenes artists, academics and scientists to explore the neuroscience of creativity

NORTH BETHESDA, MD – As neuroscientists gradually illuminate the workings of the mind and emerging fields such as neuroaesthetics stir cross-disciplinary collaboration, Strathmore convenes artists, scholars and scientists to explore how the brain contemplates and creates art with its new *Arts and the Brain* series. Thursday lectures held throughout spring 2012 will investigate the intersection of arts and neuroscience, as experts demystify music cognition, how the brain processes and executes improvisation, creativity in the aging brain, how the brain perceives humor and other topics. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (301) 581-5100 or visit www.strathmore.org.

“We know that participation in the arts improves cognitive ability for people of all ages, from children to seniors,” says Campbell. “This series provides an opportunity to learn more about the mystery of our own minds, and to emphasize the vital importance of the arts in our lives.”

Arts and the Brain discussions include receptions with wine, light refreshments and the chance to speak informally with the presenters. Events in the series are:

The Mature Amateur: Creativity and the Aging Brain

Thursday, February 2, 2012; 7-8:30 p.m.; Mansion at Strathmore
Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

Dr. **Bruce L. Miller** of the University of California Memory and Aging Center and **Gay Hanna**, PhD, Executive Director of the National Center for Creative Aging, will explore if the creative function of the brain changes with age and if the brain benefits from creative activity. They will discuss case studies that reveal new understanding of the aging brain and research that shows degeneration in certain areas of the brain revealing previously unknown abilities; such patients suffering from Alzheimer’s or dementia can develop new gifts for drawing, painting or sculpture, even as they lose their capability for verbal communication.

The Theater of the Brain

Thursday, March 15, 2012; 7-8:30 p.m.; Mansion at Strathmore

Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

The brain is constantly processing multi-dimensional stimuli, whether it is music, painting or theater. Cognitive neuroscientist **Michael Posner** and his son **Aaron Posner**, a Helen Hayes Award winning theatre director, will explain how the cogs and synapses of the brain work to perceive, synthesize and make sense of art – and how that process differs when creating, rather than observing, art. They will also discuss if involvement or training in the arts improves brain function in other areas.

Your Brain on Music: Music Cognition, Perception, and Improvisation

Thursday, March 29, 2012; 7-8:30 p.m.; Mansion at Strathmore

Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

In addition to being one of today's most acclaimed young American jazz musicians, **Vijay Iyer** also has a Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley, where he did his dissertation research in music perception and cognition. In this lecture/performance he explores the link between musical cognition and physical action, and the central role of improvisation in daily life. Using musical examples and solo piano performance, Iyer connects musical improvisation to the ways in which people “improvise” their relation to the world every day. The program of solo piano works will draw from Iyer's acclaimed 2010 album, *Solo*, including his original compositions and creative approaches to pre-existing material.

Your Brain on Laughter

Thursday, April 5, 2012; 7-8:30 p.m.; Mansion at Strathmore

Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

Michael Patterson and members of Washington Improv Theater explore what they call the seventh sense: a sense of humor. They'll talk about and demonstrate why people laugh, the architecture of a joke and the element of surprise, physiological effects of laughter, humor in human socialization and why people inherently like the dark side of humor and tragedy. This program will combine lecture and performance.

Your Brain on Jazz: The Neuroscience of Improvisation

Thursday, April 26, 2012; 7-8:30 p.m.; Mansion at Strathmore

Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

Dr. **Charles Limb** of Johns Hopkins University, a hearing specialist and surgeon specializing in cochlear implantation, and a musician himself, shares results of his neuroimaging experiments to show how creativity takes place in the brain. Limb's findings will demystify how the brain creates music and, specifically, how it calls on all its resources to create music on the spot through improvisation.

About Strathmore

Strathmore is an arts presenter and cultural destination that nurtures art, artists and community through creative and diverse programming of the highest quality. The Mansion at Strathmore is located at 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, MD, one half-mile north of the Capital

Beltway and immediately adjacent to the Grosvenor-Strathmore station on Metro's Red Line. For further information or tickets, call (301) 581-5100 or visit www.strathmore.org.

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Strathmore is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. An agency of the Department of Business & Economic Development, MSAC provides financial support and technical assistance to non-profit organizations, units of government, colleges and universities for arts activities. Strathmore is also supported in part by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

Strathmore Presents

Arts and the Brain

Thursdays, February 2; March 15 and 29; April 5 and 26, 2012

7-8:30 p.m.

Tickets \$21 (Stars Price \$18.90)

Discussions include receptions with wine, light refreshments and informal conversation with the presenters.

Mansion at Strathmore
10701 Rockville Pike
North Bethesda, MD 20852

For additional information or to purchase tickets visit www.strathmore.org or call (301) 581-5100.