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MEDIA CONTACT  
Andrew Wallmeyer  
651-271-9805

[andrew.wallmeyer@whitepinefestival.org](mailto:andrew.wallmeyer@whitepinefestival.org)

## 2008 WHITE PINE FESTIVAL LINEUP ANNOUNCED

*MIRÓ QUARTET, MARIE HOWE JOIN PAST FAVORITES FOR AMBITIOUS PROGRAM*

STILLWATER, Minn. & HUDSON, Wis. — The artistic lineup is set for the 2008 White Pine Festival, which will bring nationally known classical musicians and poets to the St. Croix Valley for four days of artistic collaboration and public events June 19-22.

This year's festival will build on last year's success by combining a new group of world-class performers with a handful of returning fan favorites for an even more ambitious artistic program.

Visiting musicians include the accomplished and dynamic Miró Quartet, internationally renowned organist Lynne Davis and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Principal Keyboardist Layton "Skip" James, who will be making his second festival appearance.

Award-winning poet Marie Howe will lead a cadre of talented writers that also includes Roger Bonair-Agard and Cynthia Gustavson, both of whom were warmly received by festival attendees last year.

Other artists will be added to the lineup as the festival schedule is finalized in coming weeks.

White Pine Festival Vice President and Artistic Committee Chair James Hainlen said he believes this year's lineup is even stronger than last year's.

"Not only were we able to assemble a new group of truly amazing artists, but our previous success has allowed us to bring more of them this time around," he said. "I didn't think I would ever be as excited as I was for the first festival, but looking at our 2008 lineup, I can't wait for June."

White Pine Festival President Matt Thueson agreed.

"We are gradually expanding the depth and breadth of the festival, and that starts with the artistic lineup," he said. "We went out of our way to find artists who are not only top-notch writers and performers, but who foster the kind of collaborative, creative and relaxed environment we want to establish."

Thueson said that will be apparent in throughout the festival schedule. Some events will bring several artists together for collaborative performances and others will give festival participants the chance to interact with visiting artists in unique and informal settings.

“The idea is to bring the arts together in meaningful, fun and stimulating ways — to stretch the boundaries a little bit,” he said. “And these artists will definitely do that.”

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

*[High-resolution photographs and extended biographies are available at [www.whitepinefestival.org](http://www.whitepinefestival.org).]*

The MIRÓ QUARTET has quickly earned a reputation as one of the nation’s top string quartets, known both for their interpretations of the classical string repertoire and their enthusiastic support of contemporary composers. Founded at the Oberlin Conservatory in 1995, the group has won numerous international awards and taught in a variety of academic settings around the world. In 1998, the quartet took first place at the Banff International String Quartet Competition. In 2005, the group became the first ensemble to receive the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. For the last three years, they have lived and taught in Austin, Texas, where they are the faculty string quartet-in-residence at the University of Texas.

MARIE HOWE is one of the nation’s most respected poets, known for writing that is simultaneously intense, accessible, and breathtakingly beautiful. Her work explores everyday life, elevating the mundane to the sublime, and it is full of unexpected turns and surprising observations. Howe has received numerous awards, including the American Academy of Poets’ Lavan Younger Poets Prize, and she was the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Howe lives in New York City and teaches creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College, Columbia University, and New York University. She is currently a poet-in-residence at University of Texas-Austin.

LAYTON “SKIP” JAMES has been the principal keyboardist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra since 1969, and has in that time earned an international reputation for his technical proficiency and impressive knowledge of the classical repertoire. He is best known for his skill with the harpsichord: not only is he a renowned performer, but he is also a harpsichord builder and a composer of exceptional Baroque and Classical concerto cadenzas. James lives in Hudson, Wis., and this year will be his second as a featured artist at the White Pine Festival.

ROGER BONAIR-AGARD is a national champion slam poet, admired both for his captivating stage presence and evocative writing. A New Yorker originally from Trinidad & Tobago, much of his work deals with politics, cultural identity, and the

notion of home. Though he is a talented poet in any context, Bonair-Agard truly comes to life before an audience, and his charisma made him one of the most popular performers at the 2007 White Pine Festival. This year, he will expand his role with the festival by leading a series of late-night events that will give audience members ample reason to extend their festival experience well into the evening.

LYNNE DAVIS is an organist of the highest order, recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as an outstanding performer and educator. She has won — and more recently judged — the St. Albans International Organ Competition in England, and the American Guild of Organists invited her to be a featured performer at multiple national conventions. She is currently an associate professor at Wichita State University, and before that taught at the French National Regional Conservatory in Caen and the Conservatory of Music in Clamart, near Paris.

CYNTHIA GUSTAVSON is an acclaimed poet and author whose work explores natural themes and poetry's role in personal healing and self-expression. She is the author of five poetry collections, several poetry workbooks for therapists, and has been published in numerous journals. Gustavson received a New Millennium Writings Award in 2002 and she was a finalist for the Rita Dove Poetry Award from the Salem College Center for Women Writers in 2004. She was a featured artist at the 2007 White Pine Festival, where several festival participants said she inspired them to start writing poetry of their own. A St. Croix Valley native, Gustavson now lives and works in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

## ABOUT THE WHITE PINE FESTIVAL

The White Pine Festival is an annual series of world-class artistic and intellectual events set amid the natural beauty of the St. Croix River Valley. The second annual festival will take place from June 19-22, 2008.

The White Pine Festival explores challenging ideas from a wide range of artistic and intellectual perspectives, including music, literature, visual art, history, poetry, nature, science and philosophy. Festival participants are encouraged to view art and the world in new ways, and to approach the task with the vitality, humor and candor one finds in conversations among close friends.

The inaugural festival was held in June 2007 at several venues in and around Stillwater and Hudson. Its events centered around classical music and the literary arts.

The inaugural White Pine Festival would not have been possible without the support of the numerous individuals, businesses and foundations who believed in its vision, and the partner organizations that helped to realize it: Arcola Mills, ArtReach Alliance, Boutwells Landing, the Hudson School District, Stillwater Area Public Schools, the Phipps Center for the Arts, the Stillwater Public Library and the St. Croix Concert Series.

The White Pine Festival has been supported by grants from the Fred C. & Katherine B. Andersen Foundation, the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation, the Hardenbergh Foundation, the Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation, the Margaret Rivers Fund, the St. Croix Valley Community Foundation, and the Tozer Foundation.

For more information visit *[www.whitepinefestival.org](http://www.whitepinefestival.org)*.

#### MEDIA CONTACT

Andrew Wallmeyer  
Communications Director, White Pine Festival  
[andrew.wallmeyer@whitepinefestival.org](mailto:andrew.wallmeyer@whitepinefestival.org)  
651-271-9805 (mobile)

White Pine Festival  
P.O. Box 928  
Stillwater, Minn., 55082  
651-439-6777