



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2016

**Strategic Leisure President, Michael McCall,
leads strategic design and development of the Chrysalis,
the first phase of Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods**

Growing Architecture for a Wondrous, Sensuous Park

Early in 2013, Michael McCall, President of Strategic Leisure, was asked by the 100,000 resident homeowners association, Columbia Association in Columbia, Maryland, to form the 501(c)(3) Inner Arbor Trust, to be responsible for the design, development, stewardship and operation of the 50-acre Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods, as President and CEO of the Trust, under contract with Strategic Leisure.

In 2014, Michael led the design of the Park's masterplan and the community engagement process, which resulted in unanimous approval by both Howard County's Design Advisory Panel and Planning Board. From 2013 through 2015, Michael also led the negotiation of critical and complex legal agreements, including a Perpetual Easement Agreement of the Park property with Columbia Association, a Reciprocal Easement Agreement and Trademark Licensing Agreement with neighboring landowner Howard Hughes Corporation, a License and Operating Agreement with neighboring event production manager It's My Amphitheater, Inc., a Chrysalis Use Agreement with Howard County, and various Grant Agreements totaling \$8 Million with Columbia Association, State of Maryland and Howard County. From 2014 through the present, Michael has led the design and development of the Park's first phase, the iconic Chrysalis, opening in April of 2017.

Mandated by Howard County in 2010 to be a, "...new kind of cultural park where the landscape becomes the setting for arts, cultural and civic uses;" Michael's design strategy for the land is to accentuate the sense of escape that the woods inherently provide, by gently building amongst the trees a Wondrous, Sensuous Park, where functional art and seemingly growing architecture are set in an enhanced natural environment; infusing wonderment into the cherished urban forest and, hence, everyday life.

As the Park surrounds the legendary Merriweather Post Pavilion amphitheater, home to concerts and festivals, the Park itself is surrounded by both the legacy and future of the 50-year old New Town of Columbia, Maryland; including the 1.4 million sq. ft. The Mall in Columbia, attracting 22 million in annual attendance and owned by General Growth Properties; and, 13 million sq. ft. of active and planned mixed-use development by The Howard Hughes Corporation. (Both companies' Columbia properties originate from the national portfolio of The Rouse Company, the late founder of which, James W. Rouse, was Michael's mentor.) The Park's first phase Chrysalis functions alternately as a capable performance stage or as a one-of-a-kind pavilion, and at all times it is an organic, dramatic sculpture defined by parametric architecture. Having first secured a total of \$8 Million in funding from Howard County, Maryland, and Columbia Association, the 6,500 sq. ft. Chrysalis has been designed and developed under Michael's leadership.

With the Inner Arbor Trust Board's unanimous approval throughout the professional casting of the project, for the design of the Chrysalis, Michael selected Marc Fornes, the French born, New York-based and award winning vanguard of parametric (i.e. algorithmic) art and architecture, to give artful, nature-based form to the stage and pavilion structure. A TED Fellow and past resident of the Atelier Alexander Calder, Marc has taught at Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, USC and Michigan; and his installations can be found throughout North America and floating on the Royal Caribbean's Harmony of the Seas. Around the "theatrical box" within which performance occurs, Marc Fornes and his studio, THEVERYMANY (theverymany.com), "inflated" the building design, forming asymmetric arches with seemingly flowing shingled pleats.

To support Marc and his studio, Michael paired him with the enlightened global engineering firm, Arup (arup.com), which has been dedicated to "Total Architecture" since its founding in London in 1946. Of the 12,000 employees in 92 offices around the world, Michael asked Arup's New York Theatrical group, led by Arup's Global Theatre Consulting leader and Americas Region Board Member, Raj Patel, and the Washington DC engineering office, led by Arup principal Gregory Giammalvo, to creatively contribute to the Chrysalis cause. Founded by Sir Ove Arup, the engineer who famously unlocked the structural feasibility of the Sydney Opera House, Arup's structural engineers, led by Matt Larson and Jordan Woodson, defined the Chrysalis structure designed to meet both the rigorous performance specification of supporting 40,000 lbs. of theatrical gear in the ceiling, as well as significant uplift forces of its parachute-like form.

Arup's engineering work was done under contract to Living Design Lab (LDL) (livingdesignlab.com), the firm selected by Michael to be the Maryland-based Architect of Record for the Chrysalis, under the watchful and aesthetic direction of LDL principals, Davin Hong and Kevin Day. LDL led the detailing of the challenging non-orthogonal structure, bringing design excellence to every detail of the building.

To fabricate and build the one-of-a-kind Chrysalis canopy, Michael turned to the 120-year-old, Kansas City-based A. Zahner Company (azahner.com). Led by owner, artist and structural engineer, Bill Zahner, A. Zahner Company is uniquely qualified for the Chrysalis, having worked to manifest the designs of most of the leading contemporary design architects in the world – starting with Frank Gehry – and is by far the best team to design, fabricate and install the Chrysalis' 12,000 sq. ft. steel and aluminum pleated skin with 7,700 shingles.

All other construction is the responsibility of the highly respected national builder, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company (whiting-turner.com), headquartered in Maryland. Playing instrumental roles are the Park's landscape architect, Mahan Rykiel Associates (mahanrykiel.com), civil engineer, Gutschick, Little & Weber (glwpa.com), and the former Rouse Company construction executive, Brian Spencer, of Development Management Group (dmgroup.net).

Michael McCall said of his exceptional design and development team, *"Each member of the Chrysalis team defines the phrase, necessary but not sufficient; as every firm and every individual is absolutely necessary, but none are wholly sufficient. Only together do we coalesce the creativity, experience and commitment to bring the Chrysalis to life in Columbia, Maryland."*

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