

City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

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CITY OF PHILADELPHIA MURAL ARTS PROGRAM ANNOUNCES NEW MURAL CELEBRATING SOUTH PHILADELPHIA MUSICIANS

PHILADELPHIA – June 9, 2016 – The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program announces *South Philly Musicians Remix*, by Eric Okdeh, a new mural to commemorate South Philadelphia's music legacy and the Bandstand-era of musicians who brought rich cultural influence to the city of Philadelphia. This new project replaces a mural celebrating many of the same South Philadelphia music icons that fell into disrepair. To commemorate the lost mural, recreate the beloved and iconic presence it cast over South Philadelphia, and memorialize the Bandstand era of music and Philadelphia's legendary hometown musicians, mural artist Eric Okdeh is creating a new mural, *South Philly Musicians Remix*, and the details were announced today.



South Philly Musicians Remix rendering by Eric Okdeh, subject to change

Musicians featured in the original mural, *South Philly Musicians*, included Frankie Avalon, Chubby Checker, Fabian Forte, Al Martino, Bobby Rydell, and Jerry Blavat. Eric Okdeh's rendition, located at Broad & Tasker St (1532 S. Broad St), will also include musicians Charlie Gracie and James Darren to the list of those honored. The new mural will be installed on a highly visible wall (next to Valley Green Bank) where it will have the same iconic power as before.

"We know the American Bandstand era of music is so important to South Philadelphia and to our entire region. The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program is excited to create a new version of a mural commemorating these musicians and their legacy, and to honor this iconic period of Philadelphia's rich cultural history," said **Jane Golden, Executive Director of the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.**

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Lead artist Eric Okdeh is a Philadelphia-based muralist, who has been creating public art since 1998. After receiving his BFA in painting from Tyler School of Art, Eric chose to focus on public art exclusively. Since 2002, in addition to his commissioned work, Eric has taught mural making classes to children and teens throughout the city as well as inmates at SCI Graterford Prison. Eric has over 80 public art commissions throughout the Philadelphia as well as murals in Wailuku, Hawaii; Seville, Spain; and Amman, Jordan. He has participated in mural projects in Tucson, Arizona and Los Angeles.

Jerry Blavat, South Philadelphia native and radio icon stated, “These artists that are on the mural represent young people who at a very early age were able to follow their dreams. They represent truly what America was about where you were able to follow your dreams and your passion.”

In 2004, Mural Arts and artist Peter Pagast partnered with WXPB to create the original *South Philly Musicians* mural as part of the “Sounds of Philadelphia” mural series. Over time the mural, located at 1231 East Passyunk Avenue, fell into a state of deterioration caused by the heavy amount of building repairs in the area. Unfortunately, the mural was unable to be restored.

South Philly Musicians Remix is sponsored by Kathy and Ted Fernberger, the City of Philadelphia, Jerry Blavat and Celebrity Showcase, Frankie Avalon, Judith Martino, Congressman Bob Brady, Larry Magid, Frank Oliveri, Valley Green Bank, The Charlie Gracie Family, Geno Vento, Gerrie Blavat, Peter Ciarrocchi, Philadelphia Energy Solutions, Alan Rubens, Bobby Rydell, Univest, Ron Donatucci, Greg Gentile, Sonny Leuzzi, Kerry Pacifico, and the Philadelphia Music Alliance.

The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program is the nation’s largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts engages communities in 50-100 public art projects each year, and maintains its growing collection through a restoration initiative. Core Mural Arts programs such as Art Education, Restorative Justice, and Porch Light yield unique, project-based learning opportunities for thousands of youth and adults. Each year, over 12,000 residents and visitors tour Mural Arts’ outdoor art gallery, which has become part of the city’s civic landscape and a source of pride and inspiration, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the “City of Murals.” Follow along on social media: @muralarts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), phillymuralarts on [YouTube](#), and MuralArtsPhiladelphia on [Facebook](#).

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