

**For Immediate Release**

**Two more Strategic Art designs,  
Merriweather Horns and Merriground,  
for Merriweather Park**

February 19, 2014



Inner Arbor Trust will formally unveil the Merriweather Horns experiential gateways & wayfinding, and the Merriground family playscape, in conjunction with Step #10 of the Howard County development process for Downtown Columbia, Maryland. The Trust's team of "Designers of Delight" – including Merriweather Horns' and Merriground's artists, William Cochran and Martha Schwartz, respectively – will present to the Howard County Design Advisory Panel on Wednesday, February 26th, at 7:00 P.M. at the George Howard Building, in Ellicott City, Maryland.

Merriweather Horns are gateway experiences at the four entrances to the Park as well as 13 wayfinding elements, which are as dynamically acoustic as they are visually stunning. Each encounter provides an extraordinary audio-visual experience as guests transition into the realm of Merriweather Park. Designed by nationally acclaimed artist William Cochran (best known locally for his Community Bridge in Frederick, Maryland), the Merriweather Horns tangibly fuse the essence of the legendary Merriweather Post Pavilion, and the immersive environment of Symphony Woods. "I grew up in Clarksville [Maryland]. I always saw Columbia as a bold attempt to build a city around human values. I worked at Merriweather as a teenager and loved how people gathered to hear those incredible sounds in that beautiful setting," says Cochran. "I designed the Merriweather Horns to honor that sense of place and create new ways to connect with sound, beauty and nature."

Merriground is a playground like no other, designed by world-renowned landscape artist, Martha Schwartz. Located at the nexus of three paths and the vortex of two streams, Merriground is literally built into the forest. Schwartz, the artist of Merriweather Park's previously announced 870-foot-long Caterpillar and the "floating" 300-foot-long Picnic Table, thinks her final design literally rounds out her contribution to Howard County. "The circle is the unifying form across my work for Merriweather Park," says Schwartz. "Its generous geometry symbolizes bringing people together, the circle of multigenerational life and of carefree play in the heart of the community."

In 2010, Howard County mandated that the Merriweather-Symphony Woods Neighborhood be, "a new kind of cultural park where the landscape becomes a setting for arts, culture and civic uses." Last December, the Inner Arbor Trust introduced the plan for Merriweather Park, which infuses the forest with Strategic Art, critical components that bring us together in the wondrous, sensuous park of comfortable culture.

Michael McCall, President and CEO of the Inner Arbor Trust said, "Just as the Caterpillar is the Art of Bounds between Merriweather and Symphony Woods, so are Merriweather Horns the Art of Arrival, the welcoming embrace of a very special place. Just as the Picnic Table is the Art of Seating, Merriground is the Art of Play. Both William and Martha have designed wonderful art of strategic import to our purpose." Merriweather Horns and Merriground have been designed under contracts that both artists have with the Trust's landscape architect, Mahan Rykiel Associates, and their work has been funded by a grant from Columbia Association.

The Inner Arbor Trust, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization formed in May of last year, for the purpose of manifesting Merriweather Park. For more information please go to [inARTrust.org](http://inARTrust.org), or contact the Inner Arbor Trust's Director of Communications, Nina Basu, at [nina.basu@gmail.com](mailto:nina.basu@gmail.com).

## Backgrounder

### The Merriweather Horns

by William Cochran

Cochran Studio

February 19, 2014



The Merriweather Horns are a family of sculptural horn speakers that produce music and soundscapes of high audio quality. Four different types of Merriweather Horns – Skyhorns, Land Horns, Song Cycles and Tone Reeds – inhabit Merriweather Park and engage visitors at each of four main entryways. A fifth type – paired, upright intertwining horns called Pathfinders– provides wayfinding guidance at key pathway intersections throughout the park.

Each sculptural grouping produces a quiet signature soundscape unique to its park entrance. The horns are synchronized to work in unison, creating a large-scale musical instrument that produces a brief, daily, park-wide Evening Song. Visiting artists may occasionally compose music for this unusual instrument for special cultural events.

As botanically-inspired sculptural forms, the Merriweather Horns are acoustical devices with the flaring, bell shape often seen in musical instruments, antique sound reproduction devices and contemporary high-end speakers. Horns and wave guides are the visible part of most conventional concert amplification equipment. Throughout history horns have been the fundamental human technology for sharing music when people gather.

#### **East Entry: Skyhorns, Signature soundscape – The human voice**

A tight cluster of twelve straight horns is suspended in a clearing in the densely wooded east corner of the park. The three largest horns produce extremely accurate, smooth, dynamic, full range sound far exceeding the quality of most audio systems, creating an unforgettable listening experience. The horns beam tightly focused sound into a listening area on an elevated boardwalk near the northeast corner of the park. The signature soundscape of the Skyhorns is a quiet humming, sometimes a solo voice, and sometimes multiple voices in harmony.

A concealed rigid steel framework within and bridging across the horn array provides strength and reduces the number of suspension cables. Horn casings are made of translucent structural fiberglass with a translucent pearlescent white painted finish and are evenly illuminated from within at night. Horns range from eight to twenty-eight feet in length.

#### **Central Entry: Song Cycles, Signature soundscape – Melodic percussion**

Two spiral-shaped "riding horns" in stainless steel and structural fiberglass invite visitors to sit in dedicated molded seats and activate the horns by working pull-down pedal mechanisms, causing the horns to produce sound and light via drivers in each horn and integrated lighting fixtures within the horns' elevated tails, which hold rotors of dichroic glass vanes in an axial configuration. These rotors are driven by electric motors within the fan hubs. Two standing horns on columns on the opposite side of the small plaza complete the acoustical array.

As the pedaling on both horns becomes sustained and vigorous, the sound they produce becomes increasingly robust, deepening into full range music that encourages movement or dance in the plaza and culminating in a climatic lighting display of a few seconds' duration that flashes across the vertical wall surfaces, through the landscaping, and within the mouths of all four horns in the plaza.

**West Entry: Land Horns**, Signature soundscape – Very low frequency melodic harmony

An array of tall, sinuous horns fires vertically into shallow subsurface cavities to create a very low-frequency, low distortion 18-300 Hz rumbling melody that can be felt as vibrations in the pathway pavers through the soles of the feet. A contralto harmony line is produced by the reclining horn. The subsurface chambers are covered by grates under the vertical horns and allow the sound to be audible to passing pedestrians. Two of the largest horns (28' tall) fire into deeper underground chambers shaped for maximum low-frequency effect. The other three vertical horns fire into shallow chambers.

The horn bodies are made of translucent fiberglass with translucent pearlescent white paint and are evenly illuminated from within at night. The lower segments of each standing horn and the entire horizontal horn is fabricated of perforated stainless steel. The exposed interior surface of the horizontal horn is crimson.

**Southwest Entry: Tone Reeds**, Signature sound – Harmonic and inharmonic chiming

Two hundred and fifty reed-like forms from twelve to sixteen feet in height are made of stainless steel and resin housing LED strings, data and power cables. Translucent resin heads hold compact transducers. The array produces a chiming sound, similar to dozens of tuned, high-quality wind chimes or bells except with an occasional underlying melody structure. Tone Reeds self-illuminate through perforated steel sleeves and cores and through the translucent resin stalks and heads, with very slow color-changing effects that move vertically through the reeds.

**Wayfinding: Pathfinders**

Signature soundscape: Sounds of forest wildlife on the micro and macro scale.

Sinuous upright stainless steel forms intertwine and provide directional information to pedestrians in two directions via a laser-cut metal grill recessed into the mouth of each horn, backlit by gilded interior surfaces that are illuminated from within the sculptures.

Evening Song: For twenty minutes every evening at 5:30 pm, all features in unison produce a single song calling residents to the end of the workday and the beginning of evening hours, which are customarily reserved for family, recreation, exercise, culture and community.

Unified instrument: All features are designed to work together as a single musical instrument. Composers or artists-in-residence can be invited to write music that takes advantage of the special qualities of this large-scale instrument. Certain locations within the woods can be designed for special cultural events or productions that draw on this capacity. In the event of an emergency, these features can serve a site-wide emergency public address system. However, this multi-part artistic installation is sculpture, not a public sound system. It will not be used for utilitarian or quotidian purposes inconsistent with its artistic purpose.

## **William Cochran**

William Cochran creates public art installations in architectural art glass, masonry, steel, stone and light. These works are often interactive or engage the community in the creative process, sometimes on a large scale. They explore the history and meaning of place in ways that illuminate common ground. He works closely with his partner, studio manager and project facilitator Teresa Cochran and with leading architects, engineers, fabricators and other professionals to realize these works.

He has completed numerous large-scale public commissions including:

- *Kardia*, permanently installed at the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission
- *Pillar of Fire*, a sinuous column of illuminated glass in Washington, D.C.
- *A Handful of Keys*, exterior wall of the Great Neck Arts Center, Long Island, NY
- *Community Builder* at the new Hershey Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania
- *Oak Wisdom*, main entry sculpture for Druid Hill Park in Baltimore, Maryland
- *Torris*, a grouping of tall brands in glass and salvaged steel in Alexandria, Virginia.
- *Two Roads*, an open air architectural art glass room in a park in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Upcoming works include a series of 16' tall sculptural paintings for a paseo in Bethesda, a 30' glass tower titled *Wingspire* in Silver Spring, and a colorful elevated work of architectural art glass running through two blocks of a distressed West Baltimore neighborhood called *The Shining Dark*, which has involved hundreds of West Baltimore residents and will be installed in 2014.

William and Teresa recently completed a public art speaking tour of Kosovo for the US State Department.

In Rochester, New York, William served as public art consultant and design team artist for an interactive urban art trail that connects museums and educational institutions. In collaboration with landscape architect Mark Bayer, William helped develop the conceptual master plan for the grounds of the University of Rochester Memorial Art Gallery and the design for Centennial Sculpture Park.

In 1998, the Cochran's award-winning Community Bridge mural project transformed a plain concrete bridge in Frederick, Maryland into a catalyst for revitalization. The meaning and message of the artwork was shaped by creative ideas from thousands of community members and participants around the world. The project is often cited as an exemplar for art-based community development.

William Cochran is listed as one of a half dozen notable contemporary artists in the art timelines of a recent college-level art history textbook. He teaches professional development workshops in painting in many cities and is a popular speaker at universities, museums and conferences. He has won many awards for design, public participation and collaborative public works.

William and Teresa Cochran are also public art consultants who have managed many processes and projects. They recently completed a public art master plan for the city of Havre de Grace in Maryland. Teresa is a trained public participation facilitator who had led many large-scale participatory events and processes. She recently served on a Sustainable Design Assessment Team for the American Institute of Architects for a city in Washington state.

William grew up in Clarksville, Maryland, and witnessed Columbia's birth and development from its earliest days. In his summers through high school and college, he worked at the Columbia Lakefront and Merriweather Post Pavilion.