



Arts Midwest  
2908 Hennepin Avenue, Ste 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

March 30, 2007

Dear Friends:

As Arts Midwest looks towards warmer days, we realize how busy we've been over the past few months and how much wonderful programming we have to look forward to! From continuing to tour our visual arts exhibitions around the country to gearing up to begin another two-year cycle of Midwest World Fest, we continue to connect the arts to audiences across our region and beyond. Please allow me to update you on our progress so far in 2007 and apprise you of our exciting upcoming programming.

#### **New look for Arts Midwest**

First, as you may have noticed, we're sporting an updated look! Arts Midwest recently underwent a design overhaul. We updated our logo and print materials and created a new pocket-sized brochure. We are also in the midst of redesigning our web site. As an arts organization, we believe it is important to utilize good design while providing informational and functional materials to our constituents. We have included our brochure for your review.

#### **Arts Midwest goes green**

Additionally, as an organization, we are committed to lessening our impact on the Earth. Currently, Arts Midwest makes the following green efforts:

- Our letterhead, envelopes folders, brochures, and general copying paper are made from 100% post-consumer processed chlorine-free recycled paper.
- We use 37% agra-based inks on our letterhead and other mailings.
- We recycle paper, cardboard, aluminum, glass, plastic, and "tech trash" such as CDs, VHS tapes, computer discs, etc.
- We use energy-saving light bulbs in our desk lamps.
- Approximately 20% of our electric power is provided by a wind source.
- We use non-toxic, environmentally friendly office cleaning products.

*We are also switching many of our mailings to e-mailings.* If you are not receiving this update via email but would like to, please contact Ashleigh Penrod at [ashleigh@artsmidwest.org](mailto:ashleigh@artsmidwest.org). Please use "newsletter" as the subject and include your full name in the body of the email

#### **Midwest World Fest concludes 2005-2007 cycle**

In February, Arts Midwest welcomed Bamboo Orchestra of Japan back to the United States for their last Midwest World Fest tour. This extraordinary music ensemble conducted intensive residencies in Rock



*Bamboo Orchestra conducting an interactive school workshop in New Ulm, MN.*

Island, IL; Columbus, IN; Newark, OH and Flint, MI this spring.

Throughout their four years with Arts Midwest, Bamboo Orchestra has reached nearly 100,000 Midwest residents, enhancing community cultural life and communication in twenty rural communities. According to Connie Hawk, Assistant Director at the Midland Theatre in Columbus, Indiana, “Bamboo Orchestra's week at The Midland was truly inspiring. With a skilled mix of performance, information, fun and humor, their workshops easily engaged folks of all ages and backgrounds....[their public concert] received two immediate standing ovations; and many patrons expressed their enthusiasm for the show on their way out of the theatre. Our community will not forget Bamboo Orchestra's week in Licking County.”

In April, Israeli group Esta will begin residencies in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin; Waterloo, Iowa; New Ulm, Minnesota; Brookings, South Dakota; and Minot, North Dakota. May 12, 2007 marks the end of the Esta's spring tour and the 2005-2007 Midwest World Fest cycle. Esta will join Arts Midwest again for the 2007-2009 cycle, plans for which are well underway.

For that cycle, Arts Midwest will be presenting Esta from Israel, Mauvais Sort from Quebec, Canada; An Da Union from Inner Mongolia, a semi-autonomous region in China; and Los Utrera from Veracruz, Mexico. The following communities will participate: Spearfish, SD; Bismarck, ND; Hutchinson, MN; Ames, IA; Menomonie, WI; Elgin, IL; Jasper, IN; Nelsonville, OH; and Traverse City, MI. Please see our next quarterly update for more information on our new global ensembles.

### **Somali Documentary Project concludes Minnesota residency**

Documentary photographer Abdi Roble and writer Doug Rutledge concluded their four month Minnesota residency in January. During their time in Minnesota, they spent one month as artists-in-residence at Ubah Medical Academy, located within the International Education Center in Minneapolis. The students worked on form, composition, and the content of documentary photography. As the mostly-East African students were highly impacted by this course, Roble and Rutledge were blown away by the student's innovative ideas in creating their own work. As a result, Arts Midwest created *As I See It: Documentary Images by Students at Ubah Medical Academy*, which will highlight the students' work during Ordway Center for the Performing Arts' ArtWalk, a component of the Flint Hills International Children's Festival. Sponsored by Travelers, the exhibition will run from May 7 – June 3, 2007 at their headquarters in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to the school residency, Roble took more than 10,000 photographs, ranging from documentation of the Somali residents in the Twin Cities to Somali employees at the Jennie-O Turkey Plant in Wilmar, Minnesota. Arts Midwest, in partnership with the Columbus Museum of Art, is preparing a national tour of The Somali Documentary Project, which will include photographs from Minneapolis, MN; Columbus, OH; and the Dadaab refugee camp. The exhibition will be on view at the Columbus Museum of Art from September 9 – November 25, 2007. Our other confirmed venue is Bates College in Maine, from March 24 – June 21, 2008. We are in discussion with other venues throughout the Midwest and the nation.



*Ismahan plays the saxophone for her younger brother, Fouad, in Minneapolis, MN. By Abdi Roble.*

### **Visual Arts Exhibitions open in new venues**

Russel Wright: Living with Good Design opened at the Newcomb Gallery at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana on February 8, 2007. Thanks to Target, the exhibition's national sponsor, Arts

Midwest was able to bring Living with Good Design to New Orleans with no exhibition fee, adding to the city's amazing efforts to reinvigorate the post-Katrina arts and culture scene. The exhibition, which traces the development of one of America's most influential home designers and the Midwest's "favorite son," will close on April 8, 2007 and reopen at the Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Springs, California on May 4, 2007.

Symphonic Poem; the Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson began its final exhibition on February 23 at the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio. This exhibition, which consists of more than 90 paintings, drawings, sculptures, and fabric constructions that survey the prolific career of Aminah Robinson, will close its tour on May 20, 2007.

### **The Big Read deadline approaches**

In an overall effort to restore reading to the center of American culture, 72 communities across the U.S. are currently conducting programming as part of this National Endowment for the Arts initiative. Within the upcoming months, communities will continue to explore the novel they've chosen through a myriad of activities. At the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum in St. Louis, Missouri an exhibition titled Reality Bites: Making Avant-Garde Art in Post-Wall Germany will explore the theme of technology in modern life as a contrast to technology depicted in Fahrenheit 451, by Ray Bradbury. In Las Vegas, Nevada, the Sahara West Library will be hosting an Asian culture festival including traditional dance demonstrations, Chinese Lion Dancers, Tai Chi, and authentic food in connection to The Joy Luck Club, by Amy Tan.

April 12, 2007 marks the deadline for communities hoping to participate in the next cycle of The Big Read. Approximately 120 organizations in communities of varying sizes across the country will be selected to participate. The Big Read egrant application is now available at [www.neabigread.org](http://www.neabigread.org).

### **Operation Homecoming: Muse of Fire premieres at National Archives**

On March 14, 2007, the National Endowment for the Arts presented the world premiere of Muse of Fire at the National Archives in Washington D.C. This documentary film explores the creation of the anthology Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience. Operation Homecoming was an NEA initiative created to help U.S. troops and their families write about their wartime experiences. In addition to those literary works published in the anthology, all of the writing submitted by the troops will be preserved in an open, national government archive.

Arts Midwest managed the documentary film, which features compelling readings and interviews with troops and families who participated in the program. Directed by Lawrence Bridges of Red Car Productions, the film also features renowned writers who taught writing workshops for the initiative, such as best-selling novelist Jeff Shaara and award-winning poet Marilyn Nelson. Actor and director Kevin Costner is also featured along with actor Stephen Lang.

As always, our programs would not be possible without our ongoing friends and supporters. On behalf of Arts Midwest board and staff, thank you for your encouragement of Arts Midwest and its mission. Please feel free to contact me at 612-341-0755, ext. 24 with questions or comments about Arts Midwest.

Sincerely,



David Fraher  
Executive Director