



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

October 10, 2007

Dear Friends:

As the leaves begin to change and Fall settles in, the programs at Arts Midwest pick up steam. Following on the heels of this year's fantastic Midwest Arts Conference, the Somali Documentary Project opened in Columbus, Ohio; the French-Canadian ensemble Mauvais Sort landed in Spearfish, South Dakota to kick off the 2007-2009 Arts Midwest World Fest; and new Big Read communities are preparing events across the country. In the following pages, please allow me to share with you the successes of the past few months and the excitement for our upcoming programming.



2007 Midwest Arts Conference

The 20th Annual Midwest Arts Conference was a wonderful success! Columbus, Ohio provided an exceptional setting for this year's conference, which drew over 900 presenters, artists, managers, and agents who partook of the unique showcases, professional development sessions, and myriad networking opportunities available both in the Exhibit Hall and in a variety of social activities throughout the Conference. Highlights of this year's Conference include a wonderful Opening Night Party with eclectic foods and entertainment at North Market, the new addition of fast-paced "Speed Lead" business sessions, and Rebecca Ryan's excellent Plenary Session discussion on engaging younger generations of arts audiences.

Special thanks to our sponsors of the 2007 Midwest Arts Conference:

- National Endowment for the Arts
- The London Quartet and Agence Station bleu
- Robert Robinson and Dow Artists
- Ohio Arts Council
- Canadian Consulates General of Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, and Minneapolis
- CAPA
- Greater Columbus Arts Council
- IMG Artists
- Defending the Caveman and Theater Mogul
- Délégation du Québec à Chicago
- Riders in the Sky and New Frontier Touring
- Opus 3 Artists
- CMI Entertainment, Inc.
- Victoria Theatre Association
- Agency for Creative Talent Strategies / ACTS, Inc.
- Americans for the Arts
- LVanHart Artist Productions
- Lazer Vaudeville

The 2008 Midwest Arts Conference will be held in Kansas City, Missouri. I hope many of you will be able to join us next year! For more details, please visit the Conference Web site at www.artsmidwest.org/programs/mac. While there be sure to listen to our podcast from the Conference, with interviews from attendees and highlights from the Conference!



Somali Documentary Project Exhibition Opens in Columbus

On September 9th, the national tour of *Stories of the Somali Diaspora: Photographs by Abdi Roble* opened at the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus, Ohio. The exhibition features a selection of photographs by Abdi Roble that were collected during residencies with the Somali communities of Minnesota; Columbus, Ohio; and the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.

The opening in Columbus was a great success. Arts Midwest staff – as well as board members – were able to attend the event after wrapping up the Midwest Arts

Conference across town. Columbus is home to the second largest Somali community in the United States, and the opening provided an initial opportunity for conversation between members of the Somali community and groups across Columbus. Over 750 people attended the exhibit in the first two hours.

Arts Midwest, in partnership with the Columbus Museum of Art, has organized this national tour of this collection, which will be on view at the Columbus Museum of Art from September 9 – November 25, 2007; Bates College Museum of Art in Lewiston, Maine, from March 24 – June 21, 2008; and the Weisman Museum at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in fall 2008. We are in discussion with additional venues throughout the Midwest and the nation.

Arts Midwest – Named Best Place to Work!

Arts Midwest has become the first nonprofit arts organization to be named one of the Twin Cities’ “Best Places to Work” by the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*! Based on an examination of size, location, benefits, and employees’ opinions, Arts Midwest was selected from a group of 200 organizations to receive this award. The *Business Journal* highlighted the benefits received by Arts Midwest employees as well as the stimulating and creative work environment.



This award is a testament to our twenty-two years of experience and a reflection of the dedication and commitment of the Arts Midwest staff. Congratulations, and keep up the good work!

Arts Midwest World Fest

The 2007-2009 cycle of Arts Midwest World Fest began on September 23rd with week-long residencies by Mauvais Sort, an ensemble from Quebec, through communities in our western region. New to Arts Midwest World Fest, these communities include:

- Spearfish, SD
- Bismarck, ND
- Hutchinson, MN
- Ames, IA
- Menomonie, WI



Los Utrera, a Mexican Son Jarocho ensemble, will begin its tour this fall as well, bringing its lively music to:

- Nelsonville, OH
- Jasper, IN
- Elgin, IL
- Traverse City, MI
- Grand Rapids/ Muskegon, MI

Communities participating in the 2007-2009 Arts Midwest World Fest

An Da Union, hailing from the Inner Mongolian region of China, and Esta, an Israeli ensemble returning to the program for a second time, will join Mauvais Sort and Los Utrera as participating ensembles this cycle.

Russel Wright: Living with Good Design

Russel Wright: Living with Good Design closed at the Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Springs, CA after a highly successful run. The large numbers of patrons who visited *Living with Good Design* made it one of the Museum's highest attended exhibitions in recent years. The exhibition will continue its tour at the Bellevue Arts Museum in Bellevue, WA on October 6, 2007 and will run there through January 20, 2008. The collection will then travel to The Goldstein Museum of Design at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, MN, where it will be on exhibit from February 8 through April 20, 2008.



The Big Read

In addition to managing the next round of NEA Jazz Masters and the ongoing Shakespeare in American Communities initiative, Arts Midwest continues to develop The Big Read on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts. A national initiative of the NEA, The Big Read seeks to restore reading to the center of American culture by providing citizens the opportunity to read and discuss classic books through innovative reading programs in their communities.

In June, Arts Midwest hosted an orientation for 117 new Big Read communities, where organizers gathered to learn about educational and promotional materials, community partnerships, and media relations. The first of these communities began their programming in September with great success. In all, the September – December 2007 selected communities will be awarded \$1,555,600 in grants to support their Big Read programming. In August, Arts Midwest received the next round of applicants to The Big Read. Our panelists are currently reviewing these applicants, and those chosen will gather for orientation in November to begin planning for their events occurring from January to June 2008. For more information on The Big Read, including a calendar of events for participating communities, please visit www.neabigread.org.

We are pleased to announce that Arts Midwest has been selected to manage the production of The Big Read Film, a forthcoming documentary highlighting The Big Read activities and featuring interviews with the renowned authors whose seminal works were selected for The Big Read. In addition, Arts Midwest has been chosen to develop The Big Read Egypt, a landmark collaboration with the U.S. Department of State using the successful model of The Big Read to encourage discussion between citizens of the United States and Egypt.

As always, our programs would not be possible without your ongoing support of Arts Midwest and its mission. I hope you are enjoying your summer and I look forward to seeing you soon. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 612-341-0755, ext. 24 with questions or comments about Arts Midwest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DFraher'.

David Fraher
Executive Director