



July 22, 2010

Arts Midwest is celebrating its 25th anniversary! Since July 1985, our programs have fostered creativity among Midwestern residents, promoted cross-cultural understanding, and provided communities access to a variety of arts experiences. Over the coming year, we'll share stories from our past and visions for our future, including highlights from the people and communities we have served and news on the exciting initiatives we are planning for the coming year. In the meantime, please allow me to share with you some of our incredible programming from the past few months.

On May 25, I presented *From the Middle Kingdom to the Midwest: Taking the Long-term Path to Cultural Understanding* at the **BARNETT SYMPOSIUM** on the Arts and Public Policy at The Ohio State University. Joining me at the presentation was Narisu, the leader of the Inner Mongolian musical ensemble, An Da Union, who you may remember as a participant in our 2007-2009 cycle of Arts Midwest World Fest. While the presentation covered the ten year relationship between Arts Midwest and the People's Republic of China, I focused on An Da Union's tour and its incredible impact in Midwestern communities.

Registration is now open for the 2010 **MIDWEST ARTS CONFERENCE**, which will take place Monday September 13 - Thursday September 16 in Indianapolis, Indiana. We are excited to offer the same strong programming that participants have come to expect - a lively Marketplace, ample opportunities for networking, an ever-growing lineup of live performances, and a wealth of knowledge from a carefully chosen slate of professional development sessions. The Conference and Development teams continue to work with our Conference co-chairs and the Indiana Host Committee to develop programming ideas, pursue funding opportunities, and secure sponsorships.



**ARTSLAB** conducted a retreat for metro and northern Minnesota partners at the Trollwood Performing Arts School in Moorhead, Minnesota in late May. 85 participants representing 17 ArtsLab grantee organizations gathered for a very successful Open Space Technology session led by Bill Cleveland, Executive Director for the Center for the Study of Art and Community. As a testament to the value that various ArtsLab grantees place on the program, session participants brainstormed how they could share the benefits of ArtsLab with arts leaders in their communities. As ArtsLab approaches its final year, Arts Midwest and the five foundations supporting ArtsLab (The McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, Mardag Foundation and F.R. Bigelow Foundation) continue to discuss future applications of the training materials and field expertise.

The Arts Midwest **DEVELOPMENT** team is happy to announce that, thanks to the ongoing generosity of our donors, we met our fundraising goals for Arts Midwest World Fest and Individual Giving for the fiscal year. Support for Arts Midwest World Fest came, in part, from the arts and cultural heritage funds from the Minnesota State Arts Board, which provided more than \$25,000 for 2010-2011 activities. We're also making great progress toward our 2010 Midwest Arts Conference goals, securing sponsorships for our upcoming event in Indianapolis, Indiana. Thanks to everyone who helped us reach these goals this past year!

We just concluded the 2009-2010 cycle of the **PERFORMING ARTS FUND**. Over the course of the season, we connected people across the Midwest to 352 performances and 118 in-depth educational activities. The Performing Arts Fund awarded 221 grants to presenting organizations across the region, who reached more than 298,800 residents, including more than 136,000 children. Performing Arts Fund engagements served residents in all nine of Arts Midwest's member states. Here is a sampling of the wonderful events that have occurred this cycle:

The College of St. Scholastica (Duluth, MN) presented Ying Yang from Champaign, IL:

*"Ms. Yang's performance was excellent. She explained the history of the erhu, Chinese culture, and her musical journey giving our patrons an appreciation and understanding of the fine arts from other cultures."*



Green Lake Festival of Music (Green Lake, WI) presented Apollo Chorus from Chicago, IL. This engagement included a performance and a masterclass that reached 316 residents.

*"The Performing Arts Fund is extremely important to us. It provided vital support for artists' fees..."*

- Chamber Music Society of Detroit (MI)



Chester Fritz Auditorium at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks (ND) presented Dallas Brass from Garland, TX.

The Lakeside Association (OH) presented Eisenhower Dance Ensemble from Southfield, MI. This engagement included seven residency activities that reached 900 individuals, including 263 youth.



Sioux Falls Jazz & Blues Society (SD) presented the Kyle Eastwood Band from Los Angeles, CA. This was a Star Project that provided cultural access for at-risk youth by partnering with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Sioux Empire.

Iowa State Center (Ames, IA) presented Aquila Theatre Company from New York. This engagement included a performance and three in-depth educational activities that reached 1,318 residents, including 390 youth.

*"Performing Arts Fund support is crucial to our organization. With reduced funding from corporate foundations and the state arts councils, programs like this one...help us leverage other community foundation grants."*

- Quad City Arts (Rock Island, IL)

Lotus Education and Arts Foundation (Indianapolis, IN) presented Kinobe and Soul Beat Africa.



Photo credits (clockwise from bottom left): Photo courtesy of Sioux Falls Jazz and Blues Society. Photo by Tiffany Rodgers, courtesy of Arts Midwest. Photo courtesy of Green Lake Festival of Music. Photo by Jerry Herman, courtesy of Lotus Education and Arts Foundation.

If you would prefer to receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please contact Anne Romens, Development Associate, at [anne@artsmidwest.org](mailto:anne@artsmidwest.org).

Our initiatives with the National Endowment for the Arts continue to reach diverse audiences across the United States. Over the course of the 2009-2010 cycle, we served more than 460,000 adults and 570,200 youth, through more than 262,800 events associated with the **NEA JAZZ MASTERS LIVE**, **SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**, and **THE BIG READ** programs.

The Agatsuma tour of **ARTS MIDWEST WORLD FEST** was a great success, as evidenced by this photo of Mitch and Leo, two young men from Marquette, Michigan who were captivated by the unique sounds of the traditional Japanese shamisen. The boys' reaction paralleled what we heard and saw elsewhere in the tour. Audience members across the Midwest were fascinated by the fusion of the three-stringed shamisen, the thundering taiko drums, and the more familiar sounds of the piano.



While public concerts are often considered the high point of each residency, workshops are at the heart of our tours. Of the seven days an ensemble spends in each community, four are typically devoted workshops. Elementary, middle and high schools are the most common workshop locations, but the Agatsuma Ensemble also visited colleges, Rotary clubs, restaurants, and community centers- all the while playing music, teaching about the instruments and culture, and inviting audiences to participate and ask questions. It is hard work, but our ensembles do it very well.

The Quebecois ensemble, Mauvais Sort, also had a fantastic tour this Spring. The concert in Alexandria, Minnesota was sold out several days in advance - a first for our program! And residents in Knoxville, Iowa enjoyed an energetic concert complete with enthusiastic student singers and dancers. The concert followed a lovely reception at the Peace Tree Microbrewery in Knoxville, Iowa, hosted by Jennifer Herlein of the Québec Delegation in Chicago. Jane Herth, a music teacher in Alexandria, wrote a short e-mail after Mauvais Sort's visit that nicely articulates what this program can accomplish:

*I'm still hearing wonderful comments about Mauvais Sort and the whole Arts Midwest experience. As I looked at the audience on Saturday night, I KNOW there were first time concert-goers there. There were people there whose lives have never had these connections before. The children and their families came because they were excited about what they learned and heard in school. That exposure ignites fires in kids to learn and hear more about these people and their Arts. Who knows where these connections may lead! Thanks to all for two super concerts. We look forward to two more!*

I hope this update finds you well and I encourage you to visit [www.artsmidwest.org](http://www.artsmidwest.org) for further details- subscribe to our RSS feed or the online version of this newsletter, and much more. Thank you for your continued support and I hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

David J. Fraher  
Executive Director

If you would prefer to receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please contact Anne Romens, Development Associate, at [anne@artsmidwest.org](mailto:anne@artsmidwest.org).