

U.S. REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE
NOVEMBER 2007**

US REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Arts Midwest

David J. Fraher, Executive Director
Barbara Robinson, Chair – *Cleveland, Ohio*

Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mary Kennedy McCabe, Executive Director
Jim Tolbert, Chair – *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Alan W. Cooper, Executive Director
Lisa Frigand, Chair – *New York, New York*

New England Foundation for the Arts

Rebecca Blunk, Executive Director
Andrea Rogers, Chair – *Burlington, Vermont*

Southern Arts Federation

Gerri Combs, Executive Director
Tog Newman, Chair – *Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

Western States Arts Federation

Anthony Radich, Executive Director
Keith Colbo, Chair – *Denver, Colorado*

For additional information about the US Regional Arts Organizations, visit
www.usregionalarts.org or contact Coordinator, Mickey Smith at 612/338-5720.

ARTS MIDWEST

David J. Fraher, Executive Director

Arts Midwest World Fest

As of this fall, Midwest World Fest is known as *Arts Midwest World Fest*. The 2007-09 cycle features three ensembles new to our program as well as one group returning for a second cycle. Mauvais Sort, a French Canadian ensemble, completed a five-week tour to our western communities which include Spearfish, SD; Bismarck, ND; Hutchinson, MN; Ames, IA; and Menomonie, WI. Simultaneously, Los Utrera, a Son Jarocho ensemble from Veracruz, Mexico completed a five-week tour to our eastern communities including Nelsonville, OH; Jasper, IN; Elgin, IL; and Traverse City, Grand Rapids and Muskegon, MI. Curricula materials have been made available to all our communities to help schools squeeze as much value out of these week-long ensemble visits as possible. Esta from Israel and An Da Union from the People's Republic of China begin touring in the spring.

Midwest Arts Conference

The 20th annual Midwest Arts Conference concluded in Columbus, Ohio to rave reviews. A total of 914 attendees from 554 unique organizations convened to connect with colleagues, view a variety of performing arts showcases, enhance their skills in professional development sessions, and conduct business in the Marketplace. Highlights included an Opening Night Party at North Market with drinks and food from around the world, Rebecca Ryan's keynote address on the future of arts audiences, performances at the All-Conference Luncheon by The London Quartet and at Saturday's brunch by Robert Robinson and the Twin Cities Gospel Choir. The 2008 Midwest Arts Conference will convene in Kansas City, Missouri, September 17-20.

Russel Wright: Living with Good Design

Russel Wright: Living with Good Design opened October 6 and will remain at the Bellevue Arts Museum through January 20, 2008. The exhibit will then travel to the Goldstein Museum of Design at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, MN, and will be on display February 8 – April 20, 2008.

The Somali Documentary Project

The exhibition *Stories of the Diaspora: Photographs by Abdi Roble* opened at the Columbus Art Museum in Columbus, OH September 9. The exhibition ran through November 25. The exhibition will travel to Bates College in Lewiston, ME, and the Weisman Arts Museum in Minneapolis, MN.

The Big Read

All 117 communities have begun programming in the September-December 2007 cycle of The Big Read. The latest round of grantees, which will conduct programming January-June 2008, will be publicly announced on November 13. Representatives from the selected 128 communities attended the national orientation meeting in Minneapolis on November 4-5.

We have recently completed filming an extended interview with author Ray Bradbury at his home in Los Angeles. Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is the first of several *The Big Read* books that will be featured in a series of short documentary films designed to compliment the other program materials about them. Next up is Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club* who will be filmed discussing her life and work hopefully within the next month.

The Big Read Egypt/U.S. is a cultural exchange initiative of the NEA and the U.S. Dept. of State designed to broaden the understanding and cultural dialogue between Egyptians and Americans through the transformative power of literature. Arts Midwest staff traveled to Egypt in mid-November to meet with Egyptian partners and lay the groundwork for this exciting international program. The U.S. titles selected to be translated into Arabic are Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. US participants will read Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs*.

MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE
Mary Kennedy McCabe, Executive Director

IMLS \$400,000 Grant Received

Mid-America Arts Alliance received a 21st Century Museum Professionals grant in the amount of \$400,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The grant will provide governance training for the staff and trustees of 60 small, rural museums through Mid-America's Hands-on Experiential Learning Project (HELP). The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums.

"Live" Event Boosts Awareness, Delivers Fun

For the second consecutive year, Mid-America Arts Alliance presented a live summer concert in Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District. The four-part series, *Mid-America Presents: Live in the Crossroads*, offered cultural activities during the summer's "First Friday" evening events. More than 20,000 people experienced the four summer events – nearly twice the audience impact as 2006.

M-AAA Management Team

Mid-America Arts Alliance has filled two management positions. Dick Brumbaugh is the new Director of Finance, responsible for all financial planning, reporting, treasury management, and information technology functions. Michael L. Johnson was named Director of Communications. He will provide direction and guidance for marketing, public relations, and collateral materials. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Johnson held several key positions, including Manager of Marketing and Media Services and Director of Creative Services.

Mid-America Delivers Variety Through ExhibitsUSA and NEH on the Road

Going Places, the newest exhibition to join the NEH on the Road program, debuted in September 2007 at the Fort Morgan, Colo., Museum. Developed in cooperation with the Long Island Museum of Art, History, and Carriages, *Going Places* explores the culture, evolution, and eventual demise of horse-drawn transportation.

In January 2008, *Return of the Yellow Peril* begins its national tour. Among contemporary visual artists working in the United States, Roger Shimomura is a paradigm of the artist as social critic. For over four decades he has mined his history and experience as a Japanese American to critique racial relations in the face of historical events that have triggered recurring episodes of anti-Asian sentiments.

Cardinal Points/Puntos Cardinales: A Survey of Contemporary Latino and Latin American Art from the Sprint Art Collection, will be presented in eight venues through 2009. *Cardinal Points* uses works from more than 30 artists to highlight the dominant themes and creative approaches produced by artists in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the United States over the last two decades. The exhibition is organized and toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance through ExhibitsUSA and is made possible by the generous support of Sprint Nextel Corporation.

MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION

Alan W. Cooper, Executive Director

American Masterpieces

Mid Atlantic's American Masterpieces tour for 2007-2008, entitled *Artistry & Influence*, celebrates the legacies of Joan Myers Brown, Martha Graham, and Bernice Johnson Reagon through tours of the companies they founded: PHILADANCO, the Martha Graham Dance Company, and Sweet Honey in the Rock, respectively. MAAF is providing presenters with a tri-fold educational piece in support of the tour and online marketing supporting including information on each performing group and founder, images for download, logos, ideas for a successful PR campaign, and a media kits with template releases and other materials. The *Artistry & Influence* tour will visit 42 communities in 2007-2008. For 2008-2009, MAAF surveyed over 400 presenters throughout the region to inform the Foundation's final selection of artists for the American Masterpieces roster. For 2008-2009, MAAF will support a tour package featuring the diversity of the mid-Atlantic region's rich jazz and folk/traditional musical heritage. The *Rhythm & Roots Tour* will feature Jimmy Heath, McCoy Tyner, The Dixie Hummingbirds, and Ralph Stanley.

Mid Atlantic Tours

In 2007-2008, Mid Atlantic Tours is supporting tours of the Aquila Theatre Company, Jason Moran and The Bandwagon, Mick Moloney and Friends, the Morgan State University Choir, and Taylor 2 in 52 communities throughout the region. For 2008-2009, MAAF again turned to a presenter survey for feedback regarding potential artists. The 2008-2009 Mid Atlantic Tour Roster will feature Cephas & Wiggins, Inbal Pinto Dance Company, Christian McBride Band, The Acting Company, and Simon Shaheen.

ArtsCONNECT

In FY08, MAAF awarded \$308,720 in touring and administrative support to 12 projects involving 55 presentations at 49 different organizations. Current ArtsCONNECT tours include Borealis Wind Quintet, Diavolo, Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, Gary Burton-Chick Corea Duo, McCoy Tyner Trio with Savion Glover, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, North American Festival of Traditional Arts, Peru Negro, Urban Bush Women, Victoria Marks, and Yamoto.

Mellon Jazz 2007 Living Legacy Award

The Mellon Jazz 2007 Living Legacy Award was presented to jazz saxophonist Benny Golson on Friday, October 12, 2007 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Following a dessert reception and the Award presentation, guests adjourned to the Kennedy Center Jazz Club for a performance by Mellon Jazz 2006 Living Legacy Awardee Oliver Lake. The Mellon Jazz 2007 Living Legacy Award was sponsored by The Bank of New York Mellon with additional support from Amtrak: The Official Rail Carrier of the Mellon Jazz 2007 Living Legacy Award and the General Motors Foundation.

State Fellowships

MAAF manages components of the individual artist fellowship programs for the Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA), Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC), New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA), and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). For 2008, a total of 1,832 applications were received for consideration. Over a ten-week period, MAAF will convene 23 review panels incorporating a total of 78 artists and art professionals as jurors.

NEA International Poetry Tours

MAAF is concluding work on a series of NEA international poetry tours that began in the spring. The first tour sent two US artists to Mexico City for four days of readings. The second tour brought four poets from Northern Ireland to Washington, DC for readings at Georgetown University and the National Geographic Society, among other activities. In June, a US poet residing in Athens, Greece traveled to Genoa, Italy for three days of participation in a poetry festival. The Phoenix Art Museum hosted a poet from Mexico in September as a continuation of the *Connecting Lines* anthology events that MAAF was involved in previously.

NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

Rebecca Blunk, Executive Director

Native Arts @ NEFA

NEFA announced its first round of grantmaking to support Native American art and artists as part of its new program, Native Arts @ NEFA. Ten grants of \$3,000 each were awarded to individual artists and organizations based in New England. Artists are receiving support to develop new work aimed at maintaining traditional art forms. These include pottery, flute-making, basketry, and projects that promote native language through music. Artists receiving awards are from the following tribes: Tuscarora, Aquinnah Wampanoag, Micmac, Nipmuc, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot. NEFA has designed and implemented this program in partnership with the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance and with support from the Ford Foundation.

American Masterpieces: Dance

American Masterpieces: Dance (AMD), the national dance component of the NEA initiative administered by NEFA, has awarded \$353,000 in a second round of grants to support the reconstruction and restaging of American dance work that will tour nationally. Grant amounts range from \$20,000-\$60,000. The list of master choreographers celebrated through the program is now expanded to include Twyla Tharp, Merce Cunningham, Katherine Dunham, Anna Sokolow, Sophie Maslow, Arthur Duncan, Dianne Walker, and Pilobolus.

National Dance Project: A Regional Dance Development Initiative for New England

NEFA's National Dance Project held a Regional Dance Development Initiative lab at Connecticut College from July 27 – August 4, 2007. Twelve artists selected from throughout New England and seven mentors worked over the course of the 9-day lab on the articulation of their work and how to build relationships with presenters. Thirty-two presenters attended the final two days for an artist/presenter exchange. A series of regional artist/presenter exchanges will follow in each state in New England in 2008.

CultureCount ('Cause Culture Counts!)

CultureCount is the new name for the New England Cultural Database. Developed with the six state arts agencies of New England, CultureCount is an online resource for engaging participants in the creative economy. The site may be accessed at www.culturecount.org. It contains profiles for over 22,000 cultural nonprofits and creative businesses in New England, and a calculator enabling users to project the impact of new arts expenditures on jobs, income, and property values in Massachusetts. Both tools document and track the region's creative economy and help make the case for understanding the arts as indispensable.

MatchBook.org LIVE

MatchBook.org – NEFA's online marketplace for performing artists and presenters – produced the first-ever MatchBook.org LIVE, a day long program of professional development workshops and networking opportunities for New England's performing artists and presenters. The November 11th event drew over 100 participants to Manchester, NH and featured a Connection Room - a display hall with tables hosted by New England performing artists - and concluded with an evening showcase of performances by MatchBook.org artists.

New England Touring: Idea Swap 2007

Idea Swap – NEFA's annual networking event for New England-based nonprofit presenting organizations – drew over 90 participants to Manchester, NH on November 12 to encourage the exchange of ideas for projects that may qualify for touring support through NEFA's Expeditions program.

SOUTHERN ARTS FEDERATION
Gerri Combs, Executive Director

Emergency Preparedness: Readiness, Response & Recovery

Following the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, SAF established an Emergency Relief Fund as a way to provide assistance to artists and arts organizations along the Gulf Coast who were affected. Today, recognizing that our entire region is subject to potential emergencies, SAF is designing an emergency preparedness program for arts organizations and artists to ensure that the arts sector is available to serve communities during and following emergencies. The program will help individuals and organizations to develop personalized emergency preparedness plans, establish an SAF action plan to provide support during and after a crisis, and advocate for national policies and procedures to support emergency preparedness and recovery.

Professional Development for Arts Presenters

SAF is continuing its professional development workshops for presenters, artists and managers (formerly known as NALI/National Arts Leadership Institute) as an integral part of the Performing Arts Exchange. Curriculum is developed at three levels: *Fundamentals*; *Skills*; and *Issues and Ideas* for professionals at various career and experience levels. SAF is working in concert with the other two regional conferences - Midwest Arts Conference and Western Arts Alliance Conference - to find opportunities for shared/complementary professional development activities. Additionally, SAF has conducted research on possible "next steps," and is interested in identifying opportunities for expansion of presenter professional development in the SAF region, and to have dialogue with other professional development providers across the country about opportunities for coordination of information and delivery.

Short Circuit and Southern Circuit Film Tours

The *Short Circuit Traveling Film Festival* features 12 short films by filmmakers living and working in the Southeast. The festival will travel to 19 Southern communities between October 2007 and May 2008. The *Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers* will visit 16 Southern communities in 2007. By pairing short films from *Short Circuit* with the *Southern Circuit* touring filmmakers, SAF will tour works by 18-region filmmakers and eight out-of-region filmmakers. There have been 1,195 unique visitors to the *Southern Circuit* blog since Sept. 1, 2007 and 122 friends have linked to *Southern Circuit's* MySpace page. In the spring of 2008, SAF will be coordinating a filmmakers' residency with a New Orleans-based arts organization as part of the American Film Institute's national film touring program. In May 2008, The Studios of Key West (FL) will present all 2007-08 Southern Circuit films and filmmakers in a multi-day film festival.

American Masterpieces

February 2008 will mark the launch of SAF's nine-state tour of *Tradition/Innovation: American Masterpieces of Southern Craft and Traditional Art*. As our regional partnership program with the NEA, *Tradition/Innovation* features over 130 artworks created by living Southern master traditional artists and contemporary craft artists, and goes well beyond the museum walls. An audio guide features the artists' stories in their own words through incorporation of field interviews, and indigenous and traditional Southern music. A robust website, www.traditioninnovation.org, will not only engage museum visitors, but serve as a virtual exhibit to people nationally; photo and audio galleries, connections to the exhibiting artists, and learning/teaching materials including lesson plans, arts activities and connections to national arts education standards are key components. The exhibit launches at the Atlanta History Center, then moves in May to the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft; a full tour schedule is online.

Southern Visions: Rhythm & Roots, Southern Music Traditions

The touring exhibition, *Rhythm & Roots*, opened in May 2007 at the Dixie Carter Center in Huntingdon, TN. This is the first SAF exhibit to feature music and musicians from the South. The exhibit features an audio component that allows museum visitors to experience the voices and music of Southern music traditions.

WESTERN STATES ARTS FEDERATION
Anthony Radich, Executive Director

WESTAF and WSAC Partner to Present a Seminar that Explores Cultural Tax Districts

WESTAF and the Washington State Arts Commission (WSAC) will jointly convene a seminar on the structure and impact of cultural taxing districts. The seminar is scheduled for early 2008 and will take place in Seattle. Forum participants will present and then discuss diverse perspectives on the cultural taxing district structures currently in operation. The seminar will include topics such as: the efficacy of cultural tax districts as funding vehicles for the arts, unanticipated outcomes of the implementation of cultural taxing districts, how cultural tax districts are structured to respond to participation and economic changes in the nonprofit arts environment, and the effects of tax districts on existing arts communities and their funding structures. Invited participants include cultural leaders, policy analysts, arts administrators, financial supporters of cultural initiatives, and academics. Knowledgeable individuals from established cultural tax districts will inform the discussion. Members of the public are invited to participate as observers.

Multicultural Advisory Committee Meets to Create New Plan

The WESTAF Multicultural advisory committee will meet in late November in Portland, Oregon, to develop a new set of goals for the coming five years. The Committee, which was established in 2000, has already met many of its original goals, which included the sponsorship of symposia, increased inclusion of people of color on the WESTAF board and staff, and the provision of professional development for WESTAF and state arts agency staff in the area of cultural diversity and the arts. Though more remains to be accomplished in these areas, the Committee will meet to develop new goals for the infusion of multicultural values and perspectives into the work of WESTAF. The Committee is chaired by WESTAF Trustee Juan Carrillo.

WESTAF Collaborates with the Western Governors' Association on 08 Symposium

In June, 2008, WESTAF will collaborate with the Western Governors' Association on a symposium focusing on ways state governments can enhance their creative economies. Participants will discuss the status of creative economies in the West, be introduced to innovative tools and strategies for stimulating creative economic development, and consider ways their state arts agencies can be a partner in creative economy development efforts. The meeting at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, will bring senior state administration and economic development officials together. It will be held in conjunction with a meeting of the Western Governors' Association, and the governors will participate in segments of the symposium.

Executive Directors' Consider the Arts in 2028

On November 5 and 6, WESTAF-region state arts agency executive directors met in San Francisco. A key part of the meeting was a presentation by Erin Trapp, the Director of Denver's Office of Cultural Affairs, on the projected state of the arts in the year 2028. The draft presentation on this topic is under development to present to participants in the National Performing Arts Convention, which will take place in Denver in June, 2008. Trapp presented and then discussed with the executive directors issues such as: the impacts of demographics, technology, mobility, leisure time, workforce trends, civic engagement, and democratization on the arts over the next 20 years. The executive directors provided advice on the draft presentation and will present Trapp with content related to their view of where state arts agencies may be in the year 2028.

Oregon Releases CVI Findings

The Oregon Arts Commission recently released a well-designed and augmented report based on the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) research WESTAF managed for them. The CVI is WESTAF's ongoing effort to give municipalities and states a well-researched annual snapshot of the health of their arts-related creative economy. Oregon's core CVI report is supplemented with information that further acquaints the reader with the characteristics and elements of Oregon's creative economy. The report, which has received extensive positive press, is perhaps the best current sample of how a state arts agency can use the CVI as a tool to better position a state's cultural community. You can access Oregon's CVI report by visiting <http://www.oregonartscommission.org> and clicking on the link for the full report located under the heading *New Study Measures Oregon's Cultural Vitality Index*.