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2008 MIDWEST ARTS CONFERENCE COMING TO KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

PERFORMING ARTS CONFERENCE/TRADE SHOW SETS THE STAGE FOR MIDWEST PERFORMANCES

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – The 21st annual Midwest Arts Conference will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, from September 17–20, 2008. The only event of its kind in the Central United States, the Conference is one of the largest convenings in the nation for performing artists, artist managers/agents, theater and facility managers, and arts administrators from throughout the United States and beyond to strengthen business contacts, enhance professional knowledge, and coordinate performing arts tours and series. The event will take place at the Kansas City Convention Center and Marriott Kansas City Downtown.

One of the Conference's major components is the Marketplace exhibit hall, filled with organizations representing thousands of performing artists and ensembles ranging from world music, ballet, string quartets, and touring theater companies to percussion ensembles, illusionists, and youth and family entertainment. During Marketplace hours, conversations between artists, agents, and representatives from venues ranging from small community performance series to major performing arts centers will focus on booking future dates and venues. Much of what Midwest audiences will see on stages in the 2009–2010 season and beyond will be determined at this event.

In addition to the Marketplace, attendees can choose from a comprehensive slate of professional development sessions. Fee-based full-day seminars are offered on e-marketing for the 21st Century and branding for arts organizations, while a wide range of free sessions run the gamut from legal issues in the arts to audience development to discipline-specific discussions. The Conference also welcomes Alan Brown, principal at WolfBrown, whose keynote address titled "Rising to the Challenge: The Future of Arts Marketing" will headline the plenary session.

Among the highlights of this year's event are:

- Opening-Night Party at the historic Midland Theatre, sponsored by and featuring a performance by Tommy Fleming, the Voice of Ireland, represented by Windwood Theatricals
- All-Conference luncheon, sponsored by and featuring a performance by Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and cellist Natalie Haas, represented by Mike Green & Associates
- Saturday Brunch, sponsored by and featuring a performance by the Yu Wei Dance Collection, represented by SMG Artists
- Closing-Night Reception in the historic Muehlebach Tower of the Marriott Kansas City Downtown, sponsored by and featuring a performance by Ball in the House, represented by the Betsy DuBois Agency

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Performance Showcases

Performance showcases are a vital part of the Conference, offering presenting venue representatives the opportunity to see live performances of a wide range of artists while providing artists with a forum for presenting their work to a large and diverse audience. The Conference's Spotlight Showcases feature mini-performances by 18 panel-selected artists performing at the Folly Theater in downtown Kansas City. In addition, dozens of independently arranged showcases will also take place at venues across Kansas City throughout the Conference.

Support & Sponsorship

Arts Midwest is very pleased to announce acknowledge its 2008 sponsors. In addition to those listed above in the highlights section, this year's major sponsors include the Missouri Arts Council; Wisconsin Center District; Paul Taylor Dance Company; IMG Artists; Opus 3 Artists; Ball in the House, represented by the Betsy DuBois Agency; Delegation du Quebec a Chicago; Agency for Creative Talent Strategies, Inc./ACTS, Inc.; and *RAVE ON! The Buddy Holly Tribute*, Hyperion Productions. The Conference also benefits from support from the Canadian Consulate General – Chicago, in conjunction with the Canadian Consulates General of Dallas, Detroit, and Minneapolis, and from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Conference Leadership

The 2008 Midwest Arts Conference is co-chaired by Christine Tschida of Rena Shagan Associates in New York City and Todd Wetzel of Purdue University Convocations in West Lafayette, Indiana. The local Host Committee is co-chaired by Angel Mercier of the Carlsen Center at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, and Kimberly Mouser of University Concert Series at the University of Missouri in Columbia. The Conference is managed by Arts Midwest and serves the 15 states represented by Arts Midwest and Mid-America Arts Alliance.

About Arts Midwest

A non-profit regional arts organization headquartered in Minneapolis, **Arts Midwest** serves audiences, arts organizations, and artists throughout the nine states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and beyond. One of six regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's mission is to connect people throughout the Midwest and the world to meaningful arts opportunities, sharing creativity, knowledge, and understanding across boundaries. Arts Midwest presents and sponsors performances and exhibitions seen by more than half a million people annually across the Midwest and around the world. Throughout its programming, Arts Midwest maintains a commitment to artistic quality and to reaching underserved audiences and communities.

Complete information on the Midwest Arts Conference and Arts Midwest is available online at www.artsmidwest.org.