



CENTERSTAGESM



ARTISTS FROM
ABROAD
IN AMERICAN
COMMUNITIES

**A REPORT ON
CENTER STAGE 2012**



CENTER STAGESM

Diplomacy doesn't just happen in conference rooms or at embassies. It can burst out in classrooms and dance studios, at town greens and landmarks, in coffee shops and art centers, moving from person to person.

Center Stage brings cultural diplomacy to Main Street America. It introduces artists from abroad to American communities, and invites American citizens to engage with contemporary artists from around the world—on stage and off.

Between June and December of 2012, 10 ensembles from 3 countries visited 49 communities in 27 states, reaching more than 63,000 people of all ages.

Artists touring in 2014 will be announced in July 2013.

NEFA presents...Center Stage.

IMAGE CREDITS:

(COVER PHOTOS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM):

VERY LIVE AT EVERETT: COMPANY, STAGE & SCHOOL, PROVIDENCE, RI | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS • NOORI AT ANN ARBOR SUMMER FESTIVAL, ANN ARBOR, MI | PHOTO: MOHAMMED OMER • ZEB & HANIYA AT GLOBAL VILLAGE FESTIVAL, AKRON, OH | PHOTO: YW LUK • BÉLO'S BAND AT A JAM SESSION WITH LOCAL MUSICIANS AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, NEW LONDON, CT | PHOTO: LAURA CIANCIOLO • STUDENT DRUMMING FOR COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, WILMINGTON, NC | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER • CHILD WITH PAPERMOON PUPPET THEATRE PUPPETS AT FIRSTWORKS, PROVIDENCE, RI | PHOTO: EHSUN MIZRA • BÉLO PERFORMING AT HIBERNIAN HALL, ROXBURY, MA | PHOTO: SANCHO MAULION • BÉLO PERFORMING AT HIBERNIAN HALL, ROXBURY, MA | PHOTO: SANCHO MAULION • NAN JOMBANG REHEARSING AT REDCAT, LOS ANGELES, CA | PHOTO: STEVEN GUNTHER

(ABOVE):

NAN JOMBANG AT ASIA SOCIETY, NEW YORK, NY | PHOTO: KENJI TAKIGAMI



Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I share this report on the pilot year of Center StageSM, a groundbreaking cultural engagement initiative of the U.S. Department of State.

The arts are powerful. Alluring, vibrant, and bold, they help people connect. This is the driving force behind Center Stage, which brought 61 performing artists from Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan for month-long U.S. tours in 2012.

Producing Center Stage has been an incredibly rich experience for NEFA—an opportunity to catalyze the undeniable power of the arts to transcend boundaries and cultivate mutual understanding—and a natural extension of our work connecting artists and communities locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

I offer my deep appreciation to all who made Center Stage 2012 possible: the artists who dared to embark on this journey with us, our government, our advisors, our artist management agency, the private funders, community hosts, and presenters of all stripes across the country. Here at NEFA, Adrienne Petrillo, the program's manager, and many other staff, deserve special thanks and kudos.

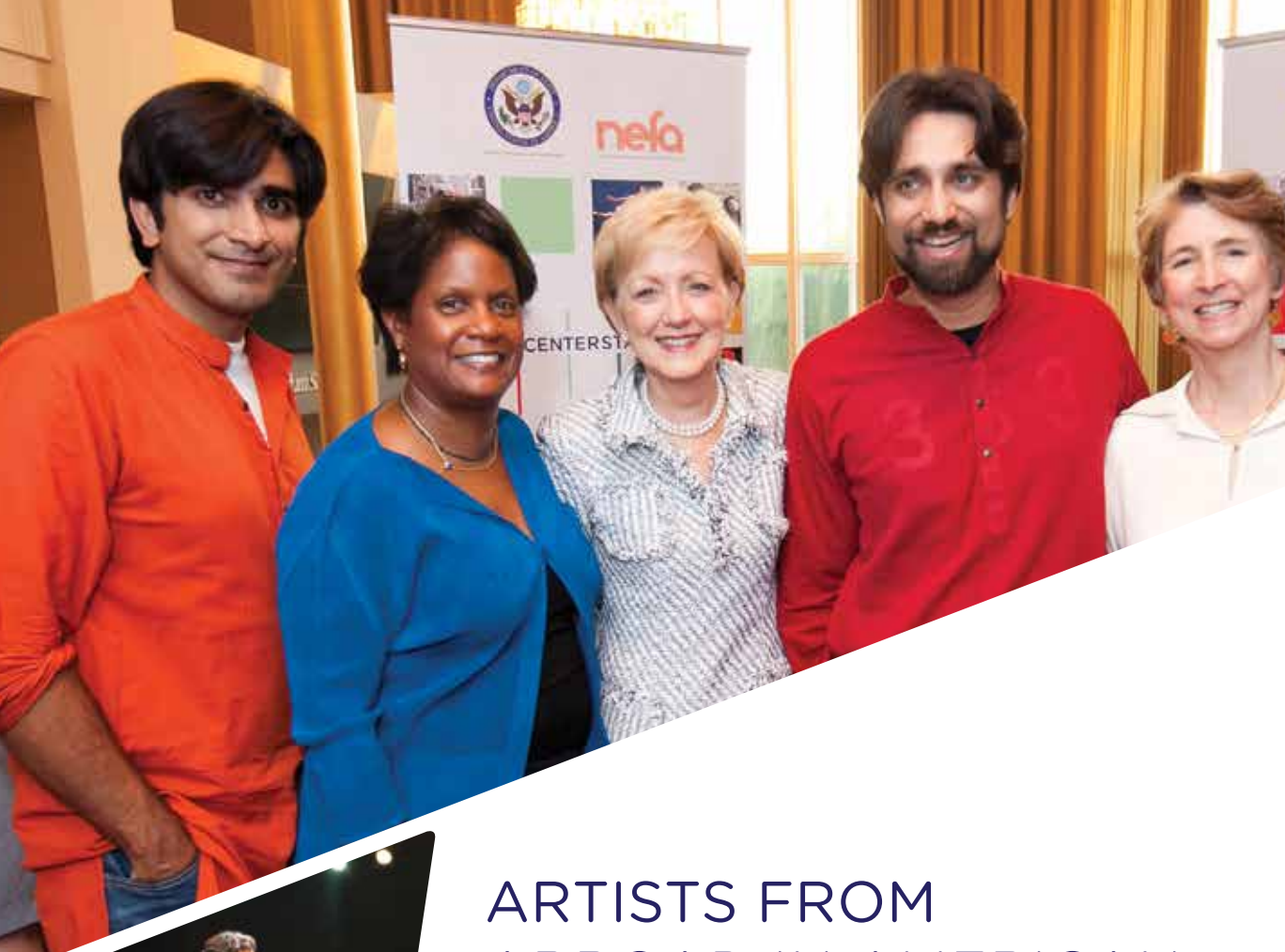
While the concept of artists as ambassadors is not new, cultural engagement and citizen diplomacy have never been more exciting. We hope you will join us for Center Stage 2014.

Very truly yours,

Rebecca Blunk
Executive Director

CONTENTS

2	Center Stage 2012
10	Artists & Tours
20	Shared Experiences
21	Community Impact
22	Thank You
24	Partners



ARTISTS FROM ABROAD IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

A REPORT ON CENTER STAGE 2012

Acclaimed at home but little-known to many Americans, 10 performing arts ensembles from Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan made independent month-long tours to the U.S. in 2012. The inaugural season of Center Stage featured a Sufi-rock band from Lahore, a global troubadour from Islamabad, a female folk/pop duo from Lahore, comedians from Karachi, master Haitian troubadours and singer-songwriters, puppetry and hip hop collectives from Yogyakarta, and power-house contemporary dance from Port-au-Prince and Padang. Artists were hosted by 49 communities in 27 states spanning east to west from Maine

to California.

Center Stage is among the most ambitious programs ever designed to bring contemporary foreign artists into direct contact with people across a wide range of American communities. An initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), the program is produced and administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in partnership with Lisa Booth Management Inc. (LBMI). Funding for this multi-year effort was provided by ECA, the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, the Asian Cultural Council, and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.





ARTISTS AS AMBASSADORS

During their tours to the United States, visiting artists described Center Stage as a rare opportunity to move beyond ordinary interactions, stereotypes, and the difficulties of the political moment. They affirm that the combination of openness and appreciation helped them and their audiences take important steps towards mutual respect and understanding. Center Stage artists share the beauty and sophistication of their cultures,

displaying the profound and challenging imagination of their nations as well as the ways in which art forms of any country develop in dialogue with global culture. Universalities across cultural expression, epitomized in Pakistan’s Sufi rock music scene and Indonesia’s distinctive style of hip hop, to name just a few examples, can present deeply meaningful opportunities for exchange and connection.

“When you hit that positive interaction with the audience, it’s not about where I come from, or where you come from; it’s about what we share; it’s about what we share in a fundamentally human way.”

- **Ali Hamza**
Rock band noori
(Lahore, Pakistan)

REINVIGORATING CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Center Stage uses the power of the performing arts to transcend boundaries and cultivate mutual understanding. Through performances, workshops, artist-to-artist exchanges, and community-level interactions, the program takes participants beyond the headlines and

common misperceptions to engage artists, audiences, and community members alike as citizen diplomats. Center Stage demonstrates that the arts can create goodwill at the grassroots level, reinvigorating American cultural diplomacy.



CONNECTING ARTISTS & COMMUNITIES

“VERY visionary indeed. This is a fantastic thing for our State Department to fund and a great thing for NEFA to administer.”

- **Ellis Finger**
Williams Center
for the Arts
Lafayette College
(Easton, PA)

“THANK YOU!!! 4 letting the dancers come 2 Park! They were super duper AMAZING! ;)”

- **Student at Park Middle School**
(Lincoln, NE)

Unlike tours that bring international artists to America’s big cities and most prestigious venues, Center Stage combines high-profile engagements with residencies and performances in small towns, mid-sized cities, and rural communities such as Bellows Falls, Vermont; Bloomington, Indiana; Gainesville, Florida; Overland Park, Kansas; Helena, Montana; and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Choosing the right mix of international artists for Center Stage was, as Lisa Booth of LBMI explains, like piecing together a giant puzzle. The State Department identified seven nations for initial consideration—Haiti, Indonesia, Mali, Pakistan, Senegal, Syria, and Turkey. NEFA and LBMI activated their own

networks of international artists and presenters and called for nominations of contemporary musicians, dancers, and theater artists from those countries. They invited U.S. embassy personnel, regional arts organizations, state arts agencies, and individuals in the U.S. and abroad knowledgeable about the performing arts to share the names of groups who might be suitable and effective cultural ambassadors.

“We were looking for creative minds and a younger generation of artists who could develop new viewpoints about America,” Booth explained later. Applications poured in, and by the deadline, Center Stage staff were able to forward 200 applications to a distinguished advisory council:



Alicia Adams of the Kennedy Center, Bill Bragin of Lincoln Center, Robert Browning of the World Music Institute in New York, Rachel Cooper of the Asia Society, Asad Jafri, global arts producer in Malaysia, and Lily Kharrazi at the Alliance for California Traditional Arts. This group helped to narrow the field to a selection of artists from Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Curatorial decisions, however, were not left entirely to the written proposals and videotaped work samples. NEFA and LBMI needed to know that Center Stage participants would exemplify the highest caliber of contemporary artistic achievement and be open and excited about engaging with Americans.

Advance trips to each country by Center Stage staff teams made it possible to establish key relationships in person. U.S. embassies in Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan played important roles in introducing the program to their artists and communities through meetings, performances, and social events, and through well-crafted media outreach.

Another important facet of these trips was to include representatives from American performing arts organizations, providing the artists with direct access to U.S. presenters, and engaging presenters as ambassadors of the program both abroad and at home.

The advance trips yielded a more nuanced perspective on each country and allowed for some happy surprises. In Islamabad, for instance, the Pakistani embassy hosted a showcase where Center Stage staff could see artists in live performance and meet them in person. One of these, singer-songwriter and global troubadour Arieab Azhar, had not been eager to apply for the program. After a lively conversation with Center Stage staff over an impromptu dinner exposed Azhar to a more personal and informal experience of the team, his interest was sparked, and he was selected to participate. On tour in the United States, he proved a natural diplomat.

“We were particularly interested in Haiti because it’s a country that is geographically quite close to the Southeast, but has little representation in our region other than through the national media (which focuses primarily on the earthquake, poverty and AIDS). While we did not want to ignore these realities, we wanted to explore these and other issues within a larger context of the country’s history and current day arts/culture.”

– **Courtney Reilly**
University of
North Carolina
(Wilmington, NC)



A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP

Center Stage was developed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in Boston, and Lisa Booth Management Inc. (LBMI) in New York. NEFA and LBMI were natural collaborators for ECA based on a shared professional expertise and deep commitment to international cultural engagement.

Long dedicated to working directly with artists and presenters, NEFA's programs create opportunities for artists

to make and tour work in communities in New England, across the U.S., and around the world. Its track record with both public and private funders and its ability to leverage presenter networks and connections with sister regional arts organizations were instrumental in developing Center Stage. LBMI brought rich experience in managing international performing arts projects, and was an ideal partner for NEFA in the planning and execution of the complex logistics associated with managing 10 companies on overlapping, cross-continental tours.



SMALL TOWNS, BIG IMPACT

Center Stage was designed to build on, leverage, and bring attention to existing resources in the presenting community—theaters, schools, festivals, and venues—and to create economies of scale so that even small communities could afford access to the program and these artists.

Arts presenters in the U.S. typically face steep barriers in presenting performing artists from overseas: international touring is expensive, and engaging artists that a community has never heard of means taking risks. Center Stage managed the logistics and costs of visas, airfare, travel, and insurance for each tour, and provided content and collateral to enrich and contextualize engagements. Presenters who had never been able to present international performing arts introduced local audiences to cultural worlds outside American borders. Presenters who more frequently present culturally

diverse programming were able to enrich their seasons with high-quality events and deeper residency opportunities for their communities.

Center Stage also served as a link between visiting artists and emigre communities in the United States, seeding the potential for new and diverse audiences for many presenters. Two years into building new relationships with the local Haitian community displaced by the 2010 earthquake, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, MA, hosted the Center Stage visit of Haiti's BÉLO, giving the community "an amazing opportunity to dig deeper," according to MCLA's Berkshire Cultural Resource Center director Jonathan Secor.

For artists and audiences alike, Center Stage was filled with discovery and human connections. Artists stayed in each community over a

number of days, which provided opportunities to engage with ordinary Americans at coffee shops, malls, farms, and festivals.

"With cultural diplomacy we can start conversations and make lasting personal connections among people world wide. These personal connections are the reason the State Department supports programs like Center Stage."

- Ann Stock
U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs



CENTER STAGE 2014

A new slate of ensembles from Morocco, Pakistan, and Vietnam will be announced in the summer of 2013 for a second round of tours to take place between June and December of 2014. Center Stage 2014 will continue to bring important new voices into the global cultural dialogue and create opportunities for understanding and new relationships through meaningful exchange. To learn more about the program, including opportunities for presenters, communities, and supporters, please visit www.centerstageUS.org.

“I got to see Americans in a different light altogether. I found those certain people, especially among artists, who think and feel beyond borders, who believe in the reality of a human collective. Artists have the ability to think outside of the box, they have the tools to connect on a deeper/emotional level that not only eases communication, but allows an exchange of ideas where one can appreciate and be receptive to new dimensions of everyday life.”

- **Ali Hamza,**
Rock band noori
(Lahore, Pakistan)

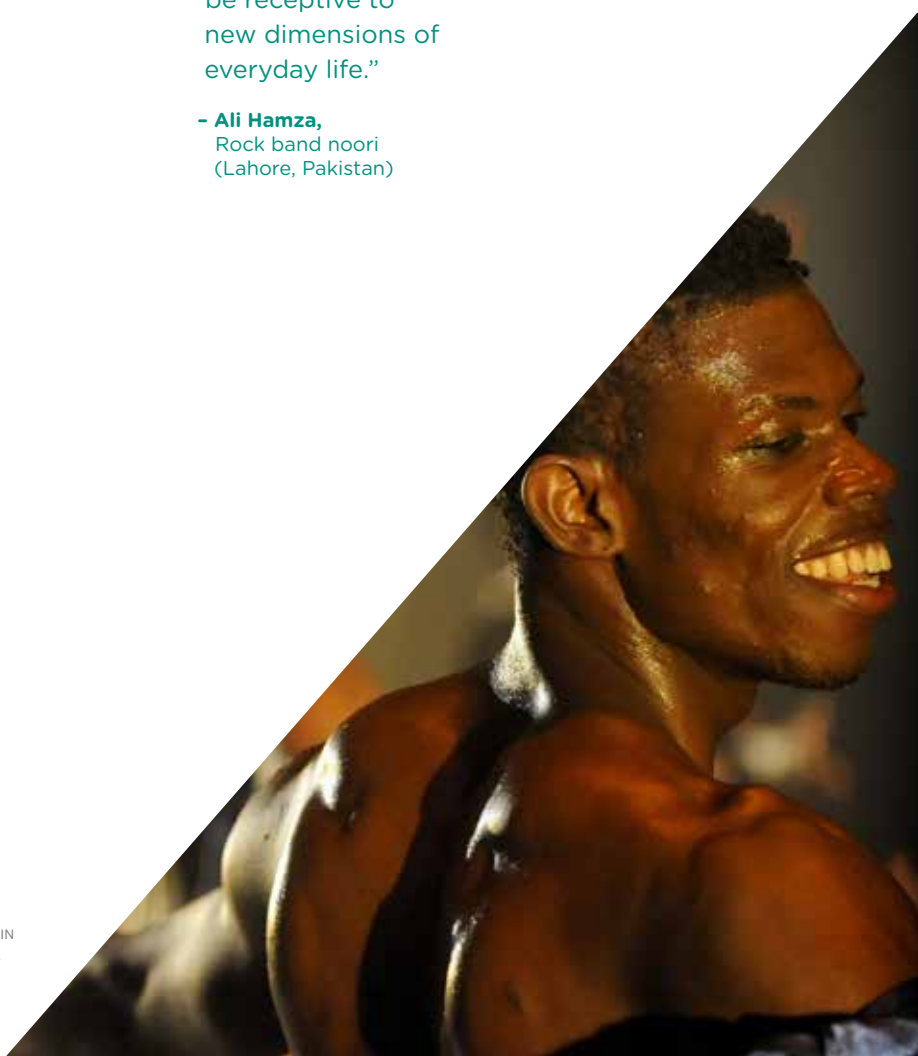
“We often find it challenging to present artists from other countries because our audience is hesitant to come to things that are unfamiliar to them. Framing this as cultural exchange/diplomacy was a very effective strategy to convincing people to engage in the project.”

- **Jacob Yarrow**
University of Iowa
(Iowa City, IA)

IMAGE CREDITS

(OPPOSITE PAGE): NOORI IN NEW YORK, NY | PHOTO: MOHAMMED OMER · COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN IN WILMINGTON, NC | PHOTO: JAMES MONCRIEF

(RIGHT): COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN IN WILMINGTON, NC | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER





ARIEB AZHAR

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

Sharp eloquence, humanist politics, and mystic poetics are given a global voice by Arieb Azhar and his band from Islamabad, Pakistan. Defying easy categorization, Azhar's mesmerizing baritone is a voice for social change and justice. With an eclectic mix of urban and folk-based songs, Azhar pays tribute to Irish balladeers, Croatian gypsies, Punjabi traders, Sufi poets, and western troubadours. He and his band made their U.S. debut tour with Center Stage.

TOUR

U.S. Pakistan Leaders Forum on Media & Culture	Potomac, MD
The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
Rockingham Arts and Museum Project & Eugene Friesen String Institute	Bellows Falls, VT
Silvermine Arts Center	New Canaan, CT
Portland Arts Festival & One Longfellow Square	Portland, ME
Small Town Concert Series & Amalgamated Muck	Chester, CT
River to River Festival (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council)	New York, NY
Old Town School of Folk Music & Inner-City Muslim Action Network	Chicago, IL
Roots Cultural Center	Providence, RI

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
PERFORMING AT RIVER TO RIVER FESTIVAL | PHOTO: SOPHIE LAM · PERFORMING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: DANIEL SCHWARTZ · WITH AMALGAMATED MUCK IN CHESTER, CT | PHOTO: MARIO LAMOTHE · PERFORMING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: DANIEL SCHWARTZ

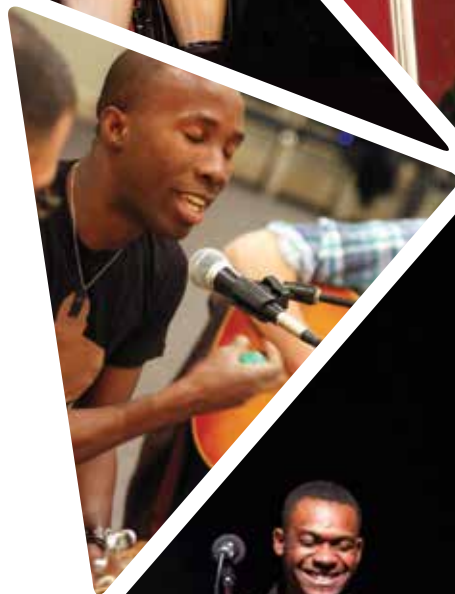
BÉLO

PÉTION-VILLE, HAITI

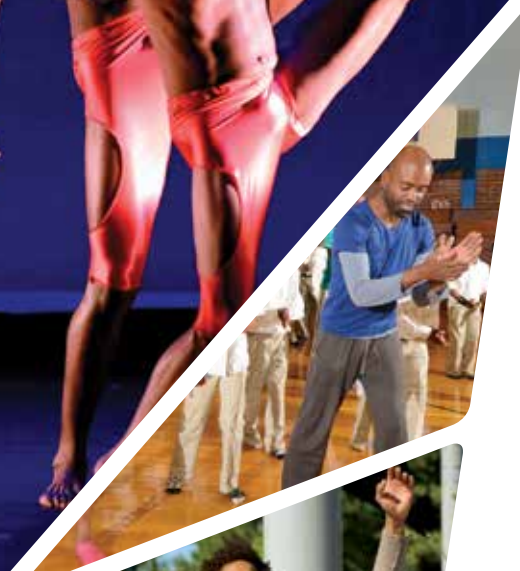
BéLO has been hailed as Haiti's musical ambassador to the world. An outspoken groove innovator, he interweaves the Afro-Caribbean depths of Haitian tradition with a progressive voice for social and political transformation. BéLO keeps the socially conscious spirit of reggae alive, while drawing on the vibrant sounds of his artsy native town of Croix des Bouquet, and a globally informed, upbeat pan-African vibe. BéLO's punchy, energetic Ragganga sounds served up in Creole are a perfect fit for the dance hall or the concert floor.

TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
Academy of Music	Northampton, MA
Hibernian Hall	Roxbury, MA
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	North Adams, MA
Boothbay Opera House	Boothbay Harbor, ME
Bay Chamber Concerts	Rockport, ME
Portland Ovation	Portland, ME
Connecticut College	New London, CT
University of Florida Performing Arts	Gainesville, FL
The Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts	West Palm Beach, FL



ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
PERFORMING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: JULIA GÓMEZ-NELSON · PERFORMING AT HIBERNIAN HALL | PHOTO: SANCHO MAULION · BÉLO JAM SESSION WITH LOCAL MUSICIANS AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE | PHOTO: LAURA CIANCIOLO · PERFORMING AT HIBERNIAN HALL | PHOTO: SANCHO MAULION



COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN

PÉTION-VILLE, HAITI

This company of high-powered dancers and drummers, led by choreographer Jean-René Delsoin, cultivate a nuanced, sophisticated view of Haitian culture. Traditional movements, classical ballet, and modern dance techniques along with Haiti’s rich rhythms and sounds are projected in bold, emotionally resonant moments. Delsoin’s work captures Haiti now—raw and refined, spiritual, powerful, and precarious. The company made its U.S. debut with Center Stage.

TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center	Miami, FL
Coker College	Hartsville, SC
American Dance Festival	Durham, NC
University of North Carolina	Wilmington, NC
Lied Center for the Performing Arts, University of Nebraska	Lincoln, NE
Johnson County Community College	Overland Park, KS

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM): PERFORMING AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA | PHOTO: JAMES MONCRIEF · TEACHING A WORKSHOP IN WILMINGTON, NC | PHOTO: JAMES MONCRIEF · AT A DRUM CIRCLE AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER · PERFORMING AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER

JOGJA HIP HOP FOUNDATION

YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

If there were still any doubt that hip hop is a truly global culture, look no further than Indonesia's Jogja Hip Hop Foundation (JHF). Recognized as one of Southeast Asia's foremost collectives, JHF was established to promote diversity and pluralism. This crew samples poems, wishes, and curses in a mix with literary Javanese texts and colloquial riffs. Their musical hooks are pinned to global rhythms, traditional gamelan music, and a love of language. Their songs speak out about corruption, shout for social justice, and have been taken up as anthems in public demonstrations and rallies.

TOUR

**Lincoln Center for
the Performing Arts**

New York, NY

**Dancing in the Streets &
Casita Maria Center for
the Arts and Education**

The Bronx, NY

The Kennedy Center

Washington, DC

**Scottsdale Center for
the Performing Arts**

Scottsdale, AZ

**Mondavi Center for the
Performing Arts, University
of California, Davis**

Davis, CA

**UCSB Arts & Lectures,
University of California**

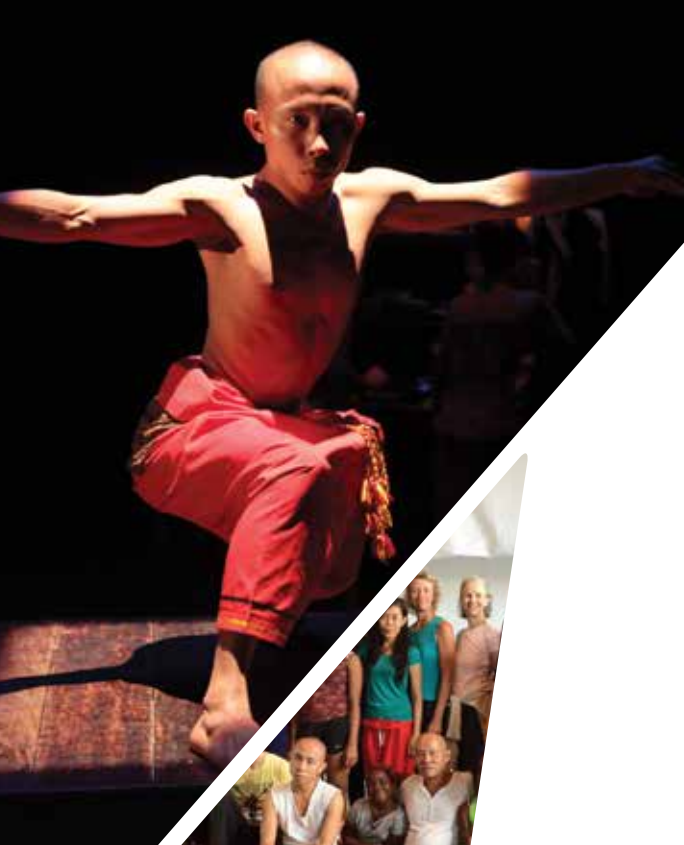
Santa Barbara, CA

**Yerba Buena Center
for the Arts**

San Francisco, CA

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):

ON A WALKING TOUR IN THE BRONX, NY | PHOTO: ABIGAIL MAULION · PERFORMING AT CASITA MARIA CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION | PHOTO: ABIGAIL MAULION · PERFORMING AT LINCOLN CENTER | PHOTO: ABIGAIL MAULION · WITH FANS AT THE KENNEDY CENTER IN WASHINGTON, DC | PHOTO: ANN WICKS



NAN JOMBANG

PADANG, INDONESIA

Hailing from the island of Sumatra, apart from Indonesia's dominant cultures, Nan Jombang is a family of artists whose work describes a compelling mix of Minangkabau performing arts traditions (drumming, dance, and martial arts), spiritual practice, and contemporary movement making. Percussive, persuasive, and vital modern dance, choreographer Ery Mefri examines and reframes movement and sound elements in new ways and contexts to express contemporary ideas, emotions, and dynamics. Nan Jombang made their U.S. debut with their Center Stage tour.



TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
Dance Place	Washington, DC
FirstWorks	Providence, RI
Fall for Dance, City Center	New York, NY
Asia Society	New York, NY
REDCAT	Los Angeles, CA

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
REHEARSING AT REDCAT | PHOTO: STEVEN GUNTHER · TEACHING A MASTER CLASS AT DANCE PLACE | PHOTO: DAVID DOWLING ·
TEACHING A WORKSHOP IN PROVIDENCE, RI | PHOTO: ERIN X. SMITHERS · AT ASIA SOCIETY | PHOTO: KENJI TAKIGAMI

NOORI

LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Led by charismatic brothers Ali Hamza and Ali Noor, along with powerhouse drummer and producer Louis “Gumby” Pinto, noori’s first Urdu-language album helped to spark Pakistan’s ‘21st Century Pop Revolution.’ Noori bursts through local convention and international rock barriers with brainy songs and emotional beats. The band’s complex thematic and musical explorations push boundaries to deliver a great rock and roll show with a distinctive subcontinent kick. The band made its U.S. debut with Center Stage.

TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
Huntington Arts Council	Huntington, NY
International Festival of Arts & Ideas	New Haven, CT
Ann Arbor Summer Festival	Ann Arbor, MI
(Le) Poisson Rouge with Ariz, Inc.	New York, NY
University of Houston with Rajput Media	Houston, TX
Irving Arts Center with VJ Entertainment	Irving, TX



ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
PERFORMING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: DANIEL SCHWARTZ · PERFORMING AT (LE) POISSON ROUGE | PHOTO:
MOHAMMED OMER · WITH ANN STOCK AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: DANIEL SCHWARTZ · PERFORMING IN NEW HAVEN, CT
| PHOTO: MOHAMMED OMER



PAPERMOON PUPPET THEATRE

YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

In a country renowned for its puppetry traditions, Papermoon Puppet Theatre is a young, contemporary standout. Papermoon draws on a variety of Indonesian and other performing arts forms and techniques to create its mixed-media works. Not content to create productions for the theatrical stage, the company also stages site-specific performances in markets, trains, town squares, art galleries, and other public spaces. For their U.S. debut as part of Center Stage, Papermoon presented *Mwathirika*, which chronicles the history of loss, and the lost history of a nation in 1965, Indonesia's "Year of Living Dangerously."

TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College	Easton, PA
Halbritter Center for the Performing Arts, Juniata College	Huntingdon, PA
Weis Center for the Performing Arts, Bucknell University	Lewisburg, PA
Great Plains Regional Puppet Festival	West Liberty, IA
FirstWorks	Providence, RI
Asia Society	New York, NY

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
 PERFORMING AT FIRSTWORKS | PHOTO: ERIN X. SMITHERS · AT FIRSTWORKS FESTIVAL | PHOTO: SARAH SIDMAN · WORKSHOP AT
 FIRSTWORKS FESTIVAL | PHOTO: ERIN X. SMITHERS · IN TIMES SQUARE, NYC | PHOTO: SARAH SIDMAN

TI-COCA & WANGA-NÈGÈS

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

Masters of Haiti's twoubadou (troubadour) tradition, Ti-Coca and his band Wanga-Nègès perform with a straightforward and utterly committed joy. The band moves through Haiti's African, Caribbean, and Latin acoustic sounds with the high-energy determination and lightness of the group's namesake, the hummingbird. Nimble banjo and shimmering accordion pair up with earthy percussion, the rollicking manoumba (traditional double bass), and Ti-Coca's tcha-tcha, a simple gourd percussion instrument he coaxes into virtuosity. Led by his gritty, warm voice and unflagging charisma, Ti-Coca and his group make a mixture designed to elevate and seduce.

TOUR

The Kennedy Center	Washington, DC
iGlobalquerque!	Albuquerque, NM
Colorado Mountain College	Breckenridge, CO
University of Denver	Denver, CO
Central College	Pella, IA
Hancher Auditorium, University of Iowa	Iowa City, IA
Grinnell College	Grinnell, IA
Richmond Folk Festival	Richmond, VA

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
PERFORMING IN RICHMOND, VA | PHOTO: SKIP ROWLAND PHOTOGRAPHY, INC. · PERFORMING IN RICHMOND, VA | PHOTO: SKIP
ROWLAND PHOTOGRAPHY, INC. · PERFORMING IN RICHMOND, VA | PHOTO: SKIP ROWLAND PHOTOGRAPHY, INC. · PERFORMING AT
iGLOBALQUERQUE! | PHOTO: NEAL COPPERMAN





VERY LIVE

KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Danish Ali, a doe-eyed M.D. turned punster, and improv comedy frontrunner and viral sensation Ali Gul Pir will tell you: in Pakistan there's no lack of material for a comic. The comedic trailblazers insist on pushing boundaries in a place where stand-up was virtually unknown as a performance genre. Along with a handful of other young comedic lights, they have carved out curious, wildly successful careers as professional comedians, performers, writers, and television personalities. Danish and Ali made their U.S. debuts as part of Center Stage.



TOUR

Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College	Hanover, NH
New England Foundation for the Arts, Idea Swap	Worcester, MA
Everett: Company, Stage, and School	Providence, RI
Upright Citizens Brigade	New York, NY
Friars Club	New York, NY



ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):
PERFORMING AT EVERETT: COMPANY, STAGE & SCHOOL | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS · AUDIENCE REACTING TO VERY LIVE AT EVERETT:
COMPANY, STAGE & SCHOOL | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS · RESIDENCY AT DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS ·
WORKSHOP AT EVERETT: COMPANY, STAGE & SCHOOL | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS

ZEB & HANIYA

LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Cousins, lifelong friends, and longtime musical collaborators, Zeb and Haniya bring a highly listenable, global sensibility to earthy originals and sounds from the Eastern edge of Central Asia, continuing an unsung tradition of strong female artists making an impact on Pakistani popular music. Based in Lahore, the duo's original songs and newly interpreted tunes from West and South Asia carve a space for music that transcends national boundaries. The duo counts as influences the classical traditions of the Indian subcontinent, Latin and West African grooves, American folk, and blues.

TOUR

**Akron International
Friendship,
University of Akron**

Akron, OH

The Kennedy Center

Washington, DC

**Madison World
Music Festival**

Madison, WI

iGlobalquerque!

Albuquerque, NM

**Helena Presents/Myrna
Loy Center for the
Performing and Media Arts**

Helena, MT

University of Denver

Denver, CO

Asia Society Texas Center

Houston, TX

ARTIST PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM):

PERFORMING IN DENVER, CO | PHOTO: PAUL DOCKTOR · PERFORMING AT GLOBAL VILLAGE FESTIVAL | PHOTO: YW LUK · AT
IGLOBALQUERQUE! | PHOTO: SARAH LONG HOLLAND · IN PAKISTAN | PHOTO: NIDA REHMAN

SHARED EXPERIENCES

Center Stage included a rich and diverse range of activities beyond the busy schedule of master classes, workshops, artist-to-artist exchanges, and formal performances in traditional and nontraditional venues.

ARTISTS

A university basketball game

Roasted oysters in North Carolina and lobster in Maine

Jamming with American bluegrass musicians

A welcoming Haitian meal prepared by the mother of a Haitian-American student

Having their caricatures drawn by a street artist in Times Square

Visiting guitar and violin makers

An open mic where American students shared their poetry, music, and dance

Meeting winners of a high school "Battle of the Bands"

Touring the White House

Speaking to a group of Haitian professionals and members of a Creole Student Association

A community pancake breakfast at a local fire station

Touring South Bronx, the birthplace of hip hop, with hip hop artist and history aficionado Chief '69

Singing Frank Sinatra's *My Way*

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Artist flash mob at the local mall

Joining an outdoor participatory drum circle

French language Q & A between Haitian artists and middle school French students

Learning how to rap in Javanese

Improvising comedy with Pakistani comedians

Special workshops for military families at Camp Lejeune

Radio and television interviews on local outlets

Contributing their own comments over Facebook, Twitter, and other social media

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONNECTIONS

Center Stage 2012

61 artists in 10 ensembles from Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan

49 communities visited in 27 states and Washington, D.C.

34,400+ cumulative tour miles travelled

100,000+ global viewers via web content and social media

1,000,000+ online and in print media impressions placed










		People Reached	Performances	Workshops & Other Activities
ARIEB AZHAR		2,444	9	41
BÉLO		3,947	20	37
COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN		7,561	12	46
JOGJA HIP HOP FOUNDATION		2,814	8	47
NAN JOMBANG		5,670	12	22
NOORI		13,791	7	30
PAPERMOON PUPPET THEATRE		3,631	8	51
TI-COCA & WANGA-NÉGÉS		14,761	17	35
VERY LIVE		645	17	35
ZEB & HANIYA		8,670	13	52
TOTAL		63,004	113	380

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THANK YOU

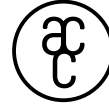
To the artists, presenters, funders, and many advisors around the world whose vision, commitment, expertise, and love made Center Stage 2012 possible – we thank you all!



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Yeager, Lead Writer; Rachel
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Stacy White, Cultural Program
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THE ENSEMBLES

Arieb Azhar

Arieb Azhar, Vocals, Guitar
Kashif Ali, Tabla
Muhammad Akmal Qadri, Flute
Zeeshan Mansoor, Guitar

BéIO

BéIO, Lead Vocalist, Acoustic Guitar
Rodyoume "Ume" Dieujuste, Electric Guitar
Junior Dorcelus, Electric Guitar
Emmanuel Jean-Baptist, Drums
Wesner St. Louis, Percussion
Josue Jude Nazaire, Bass

Compagnie de Danse Jean-René Delsoin

Jean-René Delsoin, Artistic Director
Jenifer Jessie Castil, Dancer
Hugues H.T. Dupiton, Dancer
Makerson François, Dancer
Judner Rock, Dancer
Téophilo Tattegrain, Dancer
Fritzner Dauphin, Percussionist
Gérald Dauphin, Percussionist
Rodrigue Jean-Baptiste, Percussionist

Jogja Hip Hop Foundation

Muh Marzuki (Kill the DJ), Director, Rapper
Yanu Prihaminanto (Ki Ageng Gantas), Rapper, Producer
Balance Perdana Putra (Balance), Rapper, Producer
Heri Wiyoso (M2MX), Rapper
Vanda Verena Kartikasari (Vanda), DJ
Chandra Bernhard Suandi, Film Maker
Aulia Anindita, Manager

Nan Jombang

Ery Mefri, Artistic Director
Angga Mefri, Performer
Rio Mefri, Performer
Geby Mefri, Performer
Intan Mefri, Performer
Ririn Mefri, Performer
Ricco Fadhillah, Technical Director

noori

Ali Noor, Vocals, Guitar
Ali Hamza, Vocals, Bass
Louis John Pinto, Percussion
Faraz Anwer, Guitar
Rakae Rehman Jamil, Sitar
Zeeshan Parwez, Keyboards, Synths, Loops
Mohammed Omer, Tour Manager

Papermoon Puppet Theatre

Maria Tri Sulistyani, Artistic Director, Director, Puppeteer
Iwan Effendi, Artistic Director, Artistic Designer, Puppet Engineer, Puppeteer
Octo Cornelius, Artistic Engineer, Puppeteer
Anton Fajri, Puppet and Set Builder, Puppeteer
Beni Sanjaya, Puppet and Set Builder, Puppeteer
Yennu Ariendra, Music and Sound Designer
Banjar Tri Andaru, Lighting Designer
Amanda Mita, Puppeteer

Ti-Coca and Wanga-Nègès

David Mettelus (Ti-Coca), Lead Vocalist, Tcha-Tchas
Belony Benis, Accordion, Backing Vocals
Richard Hector, Banjo, Backing Vocals
Wilfrid Bolane, Manoumba, Backing Vocals
Mathieu Chertoute, Conga, Backing Vocals

Very Live

Danish Ali, Comedian
Ali Gul Pir, Comedian

Zeb & Haniya

Zeb Bangash, Vocals
Haniya Aslam, Acoustic Guitar, Ukulele, Vocals
Hamza Jafri, Guitar
Muhammad Ahsan Pappu, Flutes
Amir Azhar, Bass
Kami Paul, Drums



An initiative of the U.S. Department of State, Center Stage is administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in cooperation with the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations, with funding for the 2012

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Based in Boston, the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) provides leadership and resources that benefit artists, the public, arts funders, and policymakers throughout New England, nationally and internationally. Established in 1976 as one of six regional arts organizations designed to cultivate the arts regionally and strengthen the national arts infrastructure, NEFA works in partnership with, and is supported by, the National Endowment for the Arts and the six state arts agencies of New England. NEFA is the U.S. Department of State's primary partner for Center Stage.



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Based in New York City, Lisa Booth Management, Inc. (LBMI) brings contemporary performing arts projects before the widest possible public. A producer, manager, and curator, LBMI projects have taken place in more than 400 cities in 51 countries on six continents since 1983. As General Manager for Center Stage, LBMI is primarily responsible for tour scheduling, residency planning, artist care, travel and visa arrangements, production and backline needs assessment and coordination, on-tour staffing, and 24/7 tour oversight.



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(BACK COVER):

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CAROLINA | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER



Center Stage
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of the performing
arts to transcend
boundaries and
cultivate mutual
understanding.



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