**ARTS MIDWEST ANNOUNCES 10 NEW WORLD FEST COMMUNITIES**   
Residencies and Concerts Aim to Foster Culture Exchange in Small Communities

Arts Midwest is thrilled to announce the selection of ten new communities across our nine states that will be participating in the upcoming World Fest cycle.

World Fest offers Midwestern communities, especially smaller and mid-size communities, an opportunity to experience music, language, and culture from across the world. This cycle will see three international ensembles tour across the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Ensembles will spend one week in each community to share their music and culture through school workshops, masterclasses, and a public concert celebration at the end of the week.

“We’re excited to partner with these incredible communities over the next three years,” says Torrie Allen, President & CEO of Arts Midwest. “We believe the creativity and community present in these smaller Midwestern communities make them a perfect place to host artists like Okra Playground, Pamyua, and Okaidja Afroso, who work to foster appreciation and understanding of culture through music.”

Since World Fest’s inception in 2003, the program has served more than 650,000 individuals, including 450,000 youth, through more than 280 public performances and 2,300+ educational events.

Communities

Arts Midwest will be working with one organization in each of the ten selected communities to organize concerts, workshops, and other artist events.

Freeport, Illinois | [Freeport Art Museum](https://www.freeportartmuseum.com/)

Sullivan, Indiana | [City of Sullivan](https://www.cityofsullivan.org/)

Oskaloosa, Iowa | [George Daily Auditorium](https://georgedaily.org/)

Albion, Michigan | [Bohm Theatre](https://bohmtheatre.org/)

Virginia, Minnesota | [Lyric Center for the Arts](https://www.lyriccenteronline.org/)

Minot, North Dakota | [Minot Area Council of the Arts](https://minotarts.org/)

Portsmouth, Ohio | [Vern Riffe Center for the Arts](https://vrcfa.com/)

Custer + Hot Springs, South Dakota | [Custer Area Arts Council](https://www.custerareaarts.com/) + [Chautauqua Artisans Market](https://www.chautauquablackhills.org/)

Marinette, Wisconsin | [Rusty Wolfe Studio](https://www.rustywolfe.com/)

Ensembles

Arts Midwest will be working with three ensembles in this cycle. These artists will tour to World Fest communities for week-long residencies.

### [Okaidja Afroso](https://okaidja.com/)

#### Ghana | USA

Okaidja Afroso follows his family’s tradition of storytelling by creating genre-defying music that calls back to his upbringing in a village on the western coast of Ghana. His music speaks to a spectrum of experiences deeply connected to the traditions of the African diaspora. He is devoted to bringing together diverse modes of expression in pursuit of global harmony through his signature performances that blend percussion and dance.

### [Okra Playground](https://okraplayground.fi/)

#### Finland

Okra Playground plays traditional Finnish music with a fresh approach, combining classic folk with modern instruments to create unique tunes with hypnotic beats and a homegrown feel. While rooted in the traditions of their homeland’s music, the project also serves as a musical “playground” for its members to experiment with new instruments and techniques, just as the group’s name suggests!

### [Pamyua](http://www.pamyua.com/)

#### Yup’ik / Alaska

Pamyua is Alaska’s most famous Inuit band. Founded in 1995 by brothers Phillip and Stephen Blanchett, the group includes Ossie Kairaiuak and frequent guest member Karina Moeller. Their performances honor and share indigenous Inuit cultural traditions through ceremony and songs passed down through generations. Their unique performances blend traditional Inuit drum/dance melodies with contemporary R&B and soul music, often referred to as “tribal funk” or “Inuit soul.”

**Listen: World Fest Artist Spotify Playlist**

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Kdg1M46pOQVteQQuTcUSV?si=5eb64138cdb14d70>

A program of Arts Midwest, the 2022 World Fest artist tours are generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. World Fest is also made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Arts Midwest is also generously supported by the Illinois Arts Council Agency, Indiana Arts Commission, Iowa Arts Council, Michigan Arts and Culture Council, Minnesota State Arts Board, North Dakota Council on the Arts, Ohio Arts Council, South Dakota Arts Council, Wisconsin Arts Board, 3M, Crane Group, and individual donors and partners.

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Arts Midwest believes that creativity has the power to inspire and unite humanity. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest grows, gathers, and invests in creative organizations and communities throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six nonprofit United States Regional Arts Organizations, Arts Midwest’s history spans 35 years. For more information, visit artsmidwest.org.