Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds

Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds is a project of South Arts, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds introduces Southern jazz, blues and traditional musicians and music to presenters from around the world, with the goal of increasing international touring opportunities for artists. These festival and concert programmers are immersed in performances, history and conversations about our region’s quintessentially American music – traditional/folk, Native American, jazz, blues, Gospel, zydeco, country, bluegrass and more.

Is Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds a program for you?

Participation in Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds is by invitation; South Arts is seeking artists/ensembles who wish to be considered for participation. Working with our artistic advisors, we will select a mix of recommended and self-nominated artists for showcasing and other opportunities, including professional development in the area of international touring. Generally, artists to be considered for this program should:

- Have multi-state or some national touring experience
- Be at a point to consider undertaking international touring, but have no or limited prior international touring experience
- Reside in one of South Arts’ states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina or Tennessee)
- Perform jazz, blues, or traditional music forms from the region

In late September, 2018, a cohort of 8-10 invited presenters from abroad will gather in Raleigh, North Carolina to attend performances by Southern artists at the Wide Open Bluegrass Festival. They will then attend a South Arts-curated Independent Showcase of Southern traditional musicians, as well as visit the Marketplace and participate in conference activities at the Performing Arts Exchange in Orlando, Florida.

In April, 2018, a separate cohort of international presenters will visit the region to attend festivals and performances by Southern jazz and blues musicians.

To indicate your interest, please complete our form at https://southarts.formstack.com/forms/artist_submission_form_performing_arts_discovery_american_sounds

Traditional musicians: the submission deadline is June 4, 2018.
Jazz and blues musicians: the submission deadline is September 30, 2018.

If you are a music programmer from outside of the United States or Canada interested in presenting American jazz, blues and/or traditional music, please contact Andrea Snyder, Performing Arts Strategies, andrea@performingartsstrategies.com to learn more about participating.
Background

*Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds* began as a pilot program in 2016. In fall 2016, our first cohort of eight invited presenters from abroad attended showcase and festival performances in the South Arts region. A curated Independent Artist showcase was presented at the Performing Arts Exchange (PAE) 2016, in Orlando, FL, and the cohort then attended IBMA’s Wide Open Bluegrass Festival in Raleigh, with particular attention on performances by Southern-based artists and ensembles. In April 2017, a cohort of nine invited presenters attended Merlefest in Wilkesboro, NC, and conducted a curated listening tour in Nashville, TN.

*Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds* immerses the presenter participants in the history and context of these unique Southern artforms. Both cohorts experienced dozens of performances and also met with the traditional and jazz musicians and their management, participated in presentations and discussions with scholars and folklorists about these unique musical forms, engaged with other U.S. presenters, and shared their own programming visions.

The international presenters involved to date represent the Beirut Spring Festival/Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon; Brunswick Music Festival, Australia; MÜPA Budapest, Hungary; National Museums Northern Ireland - Appalachian & Bluegrass Music Festival, UK; Tonica Foundation/Jalisco Jazz Festival, Mexico; Budapest Music Center, Hungary; Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong; Port Fairy Folk Festival, Australia; HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival, Armenia; La Roche Bluegrass Festival, France; Moniaive Michaelmas Bluegrass Festival, Scotland; West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong; Plovdiv Jazz Festival, Bulgaria; and Belfast International Arts Festival, Ireland.

The artists and ensembles featured in the 2016 *Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds* Showcase were Marcus Roberts and the Modern Jazz Generation; The Malpass Brothers; Jake Fussell; Pat “Mother Blues” Cohen; Shana Tucker; Ron and Natalie Daise; Lakota John Locklear; Quentin Baxter; and Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience. These bluegrass artists were also designated by our artistic advisors, and seen/heard by our international presenters during Wide Open Bluegrass: Balsam Range; Band of Ruhks; Darin and Brooke Aldridge; Flatt Lonesome; and Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley.

If you would like occasional updates on *Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds*, please sign up for our mailing list at [https://www.southarts.org/resources/newsletter-signup/%20/](https://www.southarts.org/resources/newsletter-signup/%20/) – check “International Cultural Exchange.”

For more information on *Performing Arts Discovery: American Sounds*, please contact Project Director Mollie Quinlan-Hayes, South Arts, mquinlanhayes@southarts.org, 404-874-7244 x 31; or Project Coordinator Andrea Snyder, Performing Arts Strategies, andrea@performingartsstrategies.com.