

# CENTERSTAGE<sup>SM</sup>

ARTISTS FROM  
ABROAD  
IN AMERICAN  
COMMUNITIES

**A REPORT ON  
CENTER STAGE 2012**





## CENTER STAGE<sup>SM</sup>

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 Stage<sup>SM</sup>, 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

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# 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.

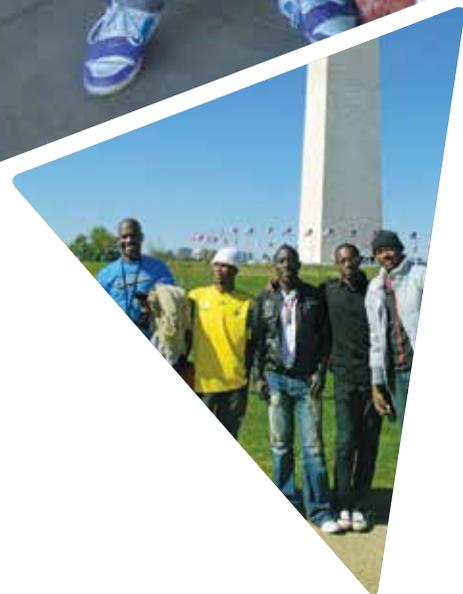
Advance trips to each country by Center Stage staff teams made it possible to establish key relationships in person. U.S. embassies in Haiti, Indonesia, and Pakistan played important roles in introducing the program to their artists and communities through meetings, performances, and social events, and 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](http://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)

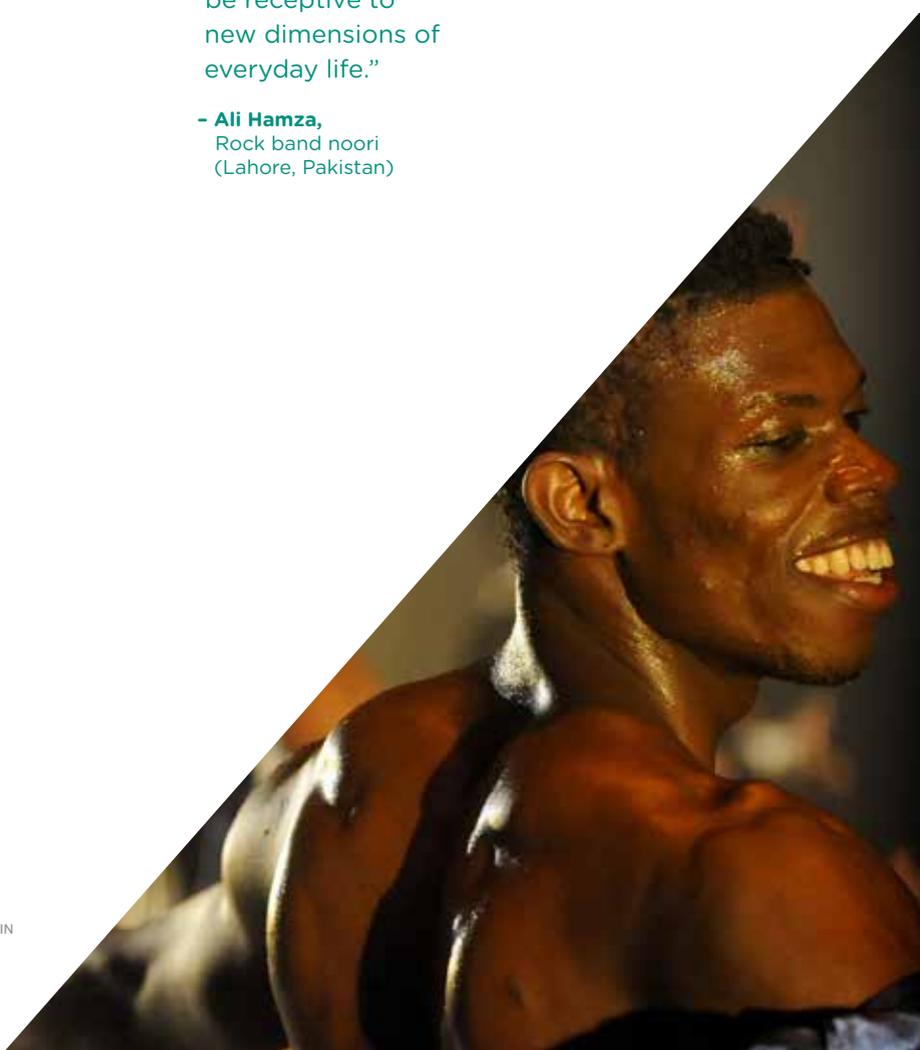
“We often find it challenging to present artists from other countries because our audience is hesitant to come to things that are unfamiliar to them. Framing this as cultural exchange/diplomacy was a very effective strategy to convincing people to engage in the project.”

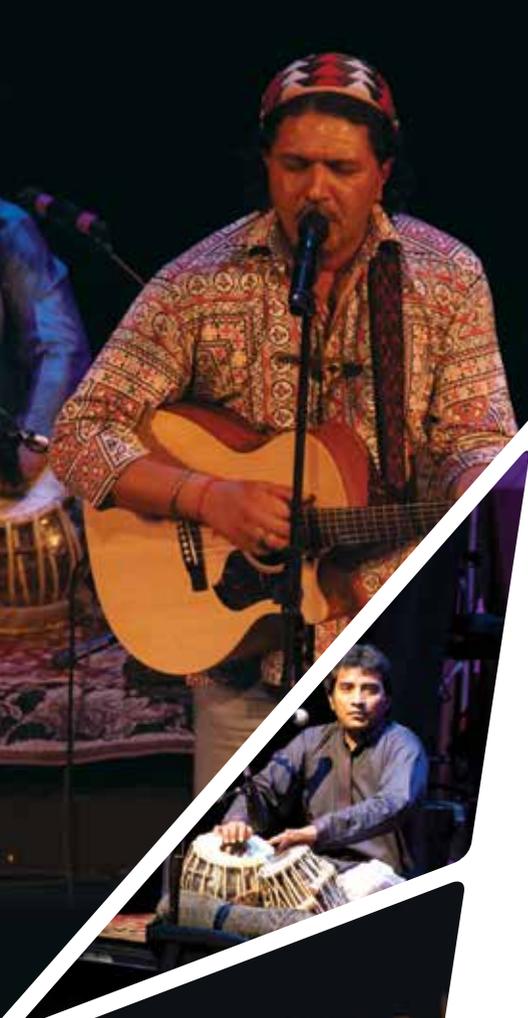
- **Jacob Yarrow**  
University of Iowa  
(Iowa City, IA)

### 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 Arieب 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

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**U.S. Pakistan Leaders Forum on Media & Culture** Potomac, MD

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**The Kennedy Center** Washington, DC

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**Rockingham Arts and Museum Project & Eugene Friesen String Institute** Bellows Falls, VT

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**Silvermine Arts Center** New Canaan, CT

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**Portland Arts Festival & One Longfellow Square** Portland, ME

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**Small Town Concert Series & Amalgamated Muck** Chester, CT

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**River to River Festival (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council)** New York, NY

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**Old Town School of Folk Music & Inner-City Muslim Action Network** Chicago, IL

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**Roots Cultural Center** Providence, RI

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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

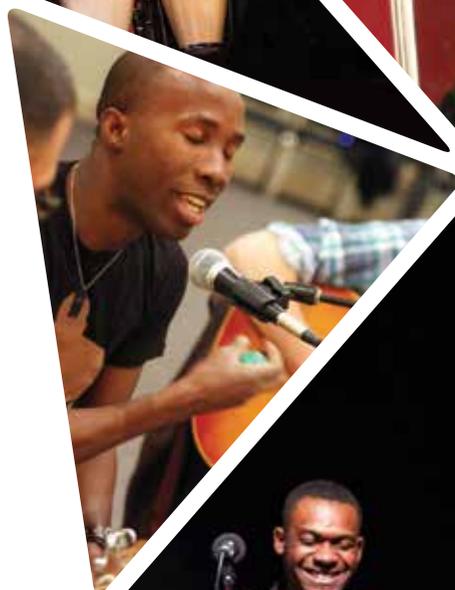
# BÉLO

## PÉTION-VILLE, HAITI

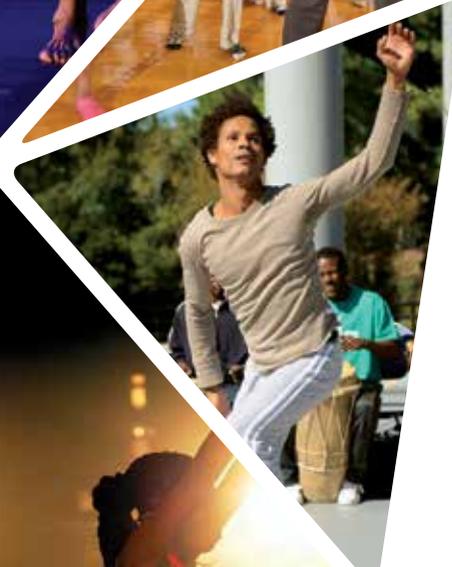
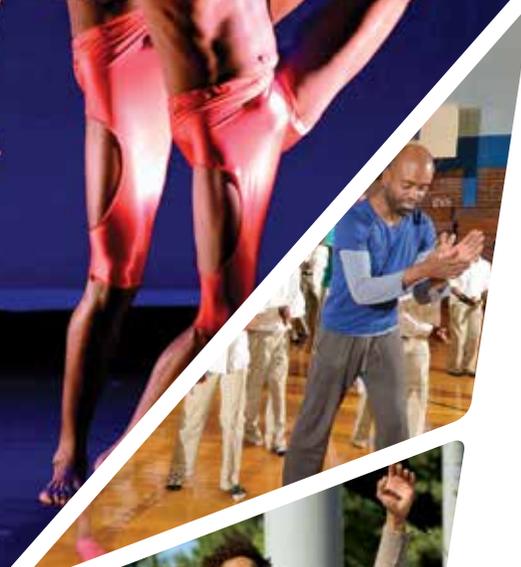
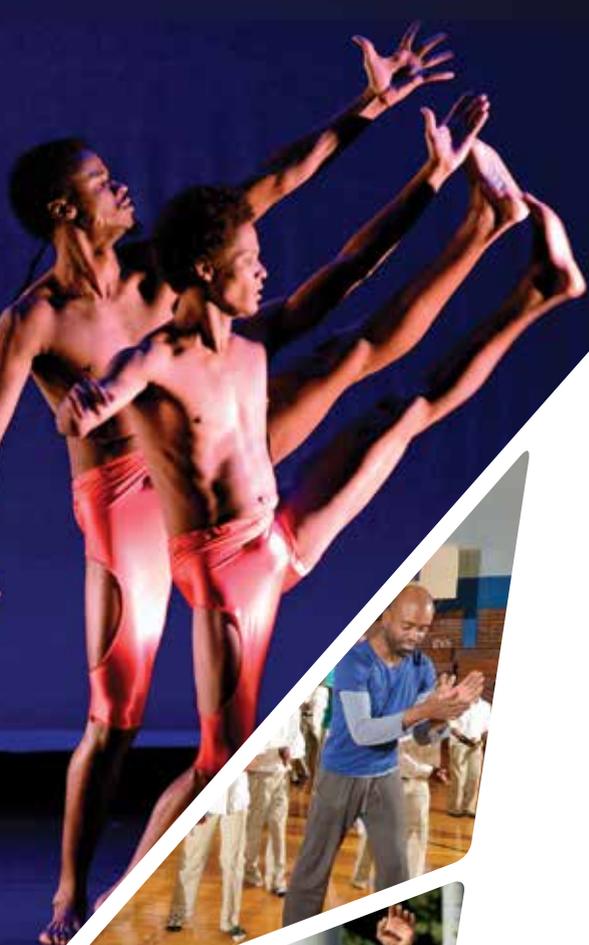
BéLO has been hailed as Haiti's musical ambassador to the world. An outspoken groove innovator, he interweaves the Afro-Caribbean depths of Haitian tradition with a progressive voice for social and political transformation. BéLO keeps the socially conscious spirit of reggae alive, while drawing on the 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

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

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

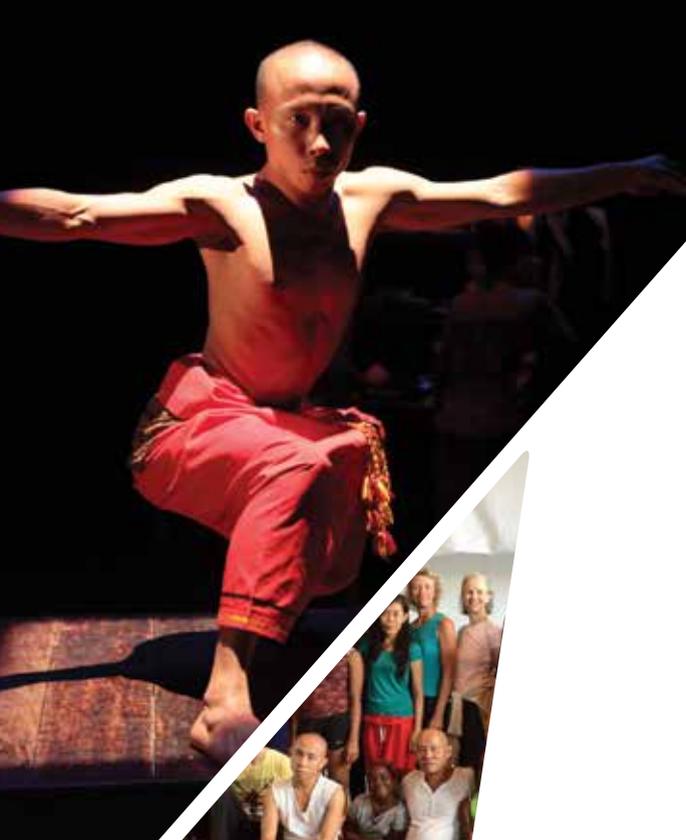
Santa Barbara, CA

**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

<b>The Kennedy Center</b>	Washington, DC
<b>Dance Place</b>	Washington, DC
<b>FirstWorks</b>	Providence, RI
<b>Fall for Dance, City Center</b>	New York, NY
<b>Asia Society</b>	New York, NY
<b>REDCAT</b>	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

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

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

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

<b>Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College</b>	Hanover, NH
<b>New England Foundation for the Arts, Idea Swap</b>	Worcester, MA
<b>Everett: Company, Stage, and School</b>	Providence, RI
<b>Upright Citizens Brigade</b>	New York, NY
<b>Friars Club</b>	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
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>63,004</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>380</b>

IMAGE CREDITS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM): AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: DANIEL SCHWARTZ · AT THE KENNEDY CENTER | PHOTO: JULIA GÓMEZ-NELSON · AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER · AT LINCOLN CENTER | PHOTO: ABIGAIL MAULION · AT REDCAT | PHOTO: STEVEN GUNTHER · AT (LE) POISSON ROUGE | PHOTO: MOHAMMED OMER · PAPERMOON PUPPET THEATRE | PHOTO: SARAH SIDMAN · AT ¡GLOBALQUERQUE! | PHOTO: NEAL COPPERMAN · AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PHOTO: STACEY BOGGS · AT MADISON WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL | PHOTO: FAHD MAJEED

# THANK YOU

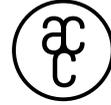
To the artists, presenters, funders, and many advisors around the world whose vision, commitment, expertise, and love made Center Stage 2012 possible – we thank you all!



DORIS DUKE  
FOUNDATION FOR ISLAMIC ART



ROBERT  
STERLING  
CLARK  
FOUNDATION



asian cultural council

## ADVISORS

### Alicia Adams

Vice President for International Programming  
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Washington, D.C.

### Bill Bragin

Director, Public Programming  
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New York, NY

### Robert Browning

Former Executive &  
Artistic Director  
World Music Institute  
New York, NY

### Rachel Cooper

Director of Cultural Programs  
and Performing Arts  
Asia Society  
New York, NY

### Asad Jafri

Global Arts Producer  
Malaysia

### Lily Kharrazi

Program Manager, Living Cultures  
Grants Program  
Alliance for California Traditional Arts,  
San Francisco, CA

## NOMINATION REVIEWERS

### Anan Ameri

Arab American National Museum  
Dearborn, MI

### Laura Faure

Bates Dance Festival  
Lewiston, ME

### David Fraher

Arts Midwest  
Minneapolis, MN

### Bau Graves

Old Town School of Folk Music  
Chicago, IL

### Alison Loerke

Alia Productions  
Seattle, WA

### Zeyba Rahman

Independent Producer/Curator  
New York, NY

### Cathy Zimmerman

MAPP  
New York, NY

## ADVANCE TRIP TRAVELERS

### Neal Copperman

Executive Director  
AMP Concerts  
Albuquerque, NM

### Kathryn Garcia

Executive Director  
MDC Live!  
Miami, FL

### Kathleen Pletcher

Artistic Director  
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Providence, RI

### Courtney Reilly

Assistant Director  
Cultural Arts  
UNC Wilmington  
Wilmington, NC

### Jonathan Secor

Director  
MCLA Presents  
North Adams, MA

### Jacob Yarrow

Programming Director, Hancher  
Auditorium, University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA

### Emeline Michel

Singer/Songwriter  
New York NY

## TOUR STAFF

### Alexis Ortiz

### Robert W. Henderson Jr.

### Mario LaMothe

### Theresa L. Teague

### Suzanne La

### Sarah Sidman

### Stacey Boggs

### Cynthia Karaha

U.S. Embassy staff in Haiti,  
Indonesia, Mali, Pakistan,  
Senegal, Syria, and Turkey

### rock paper scissors, inc.:

Dmitri Vietze, President; Tristra  
Yeager, Lead Writer; Rachel  
DiGregorio, Publicist

Amna Kusumo of Yayasan Kelola  
(Kelola Foundation), Indonesia in-  
country consultant

### Debra Cash, Program Evaluation

U.S. Department of State, Bureau  
of Education and Cultural Affairs:  
Ann Stock, Assistant Secretary;  
Stacy White, Cultural Program  
Division Chief; Marjorie Ames, U.S.  
Consul General in Mexico City; Julia  
Gómez-Nelson, Program Officer

## 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

tours from the Asian Cultural Council, the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, and with general management by Lisa Booth Management Inc.

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[www.exchanges.state.gov](http://www.exchanges.state.gov)

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs promotes mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and exchange programs. Through its Cultural Programs Division, the Bureau supports a variety of cultural exchange programs that support U.S. foreign policy, foster America's artistic excellence, and demonstrate America's respect and appreciation for other cultures and traditions.



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## NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

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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## LISA BOOTH MANAGEMENT, INC.

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.



# SUPPORTING NEFA

NEFA plays a unique role in sustaining the arts. Our work is made possible through individual donations, public support, and foundation and corporate grants.

Your gift is an investment in building systems of support for the arts. Become a part of NEFA's work to support artists and cultural organizations, create vital connections between artists and communities, and champion the creative economy.

To learn more about NEFA's work and ways to become involved, visit [www.nefa.org](http://www.nefa.org) or email [development@nefa.org](mailto:development@nefa.org).

IMAGE CREDITS

(ABOVE):

AUDIENCE MEMBER ENJOYING A PERFORMANCE BY BÉLO IN ROXBURY, MA | PHOTO: SANCHO MAULION

(BACK COVER):

JOGJA HIP HOP FOUNDATION PERFORMING AT LINCOLN CENTER | PHOTO: ABIGAIL MAULION · COMPAGNIE DE DANSE JEAN-RENÉ DELSOIN AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA | PHOTO: KATHERINE FRESHWATER



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



NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

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[www.nefa.org](http://www.nefa.org)  
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