



BRIDGES to the WORLD

Bridging People & Cultures Across Continents

NEWS FROM WORLD ARTISTS EXPERIENCES

FALL 2018

WWW.WORLDDARTISTS.ORG



For 15 years, World Artists Experiences has journeyed together with people from more than 125 countries and thousands of volunteers to build bridges. By partnering with embassies, ministries of culture and education, and international organizations and institutions, the universal language of the arts brings countries' human spirit through World Artists Experiences' Ambassador Series, International Education, Cultural Immersion, Receptive Diplomacy, and Sustainable Development.

The artists come from all walks of life ... from professionals who perform on world stages, to those from everyday life, to youth who sing and dance. All genres bring joy to our communities, and, through these experiences, the arts reveal timeless, universal ideas and themes that transcend borders and overcome barriers.

Our local volunteers become goodwill citizen ambassadors. They

laugh and cry together, share stories, break bread, learn, and live together. Our international friends experience life in the United States by visiting schools, retirement homes, and senior centers; lecturing; and through cultural exchanges. Through many experiences behind the stage, we share our lives. The people of the world develop mutual understanding, respect, trust, and hope. Lasting friendships emerge.

The power of cultural and citizen diplomacy is huge, empowering everyone involved to make a difference. Giving and receiving, sharing, creating together, dialoguing, encouraging one another, and building harmony becomes a reality. World Artists Experiences is a quest to walk in other's shoes, to see through other's eyes, and to hear through other's ears while uniting the people and cultures of the world to achieve peace and harmony.

Heartfelt gratitude to everyone who created a 15-year journey to bridge people and cultures across the continents!

FILM FESTIVAL BROADENS LOVE OF GLOBAL CINEMA AND DIVERSITY

by Greg Faller, Associate Dean Towson University

The Bridges to the World International Film Festival is a statewide initiative in recognition of Maryland's global reach and connections. Collaborating with the International Division of Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State, the film festival also meets that office's mission — to increase global awareness and the level and consistency of open exchange between Maryland's citizens and institutions and their international counterparts. World Artists Experiences partners with embassies and ministries of culture to present the film from their country. The films are presented free of charge. Each film includes a pre-screening introduction and a post-screening discussion provided by the filmmaker, a cultural expert, or a representative from that country.

The films impacted me and broadened my love of global cinema and the diversity of the world. Perhaps my most memorable experiences include: seeing an Egyptian musical for the first time (*Love in Karnak*), learning about the practice of hesuipian (Chinese "new year" films like *Kung Fu Dunk!*), exploring the connection between the slave trade and the shared artistic expression of Oman and Zanzibar (*Arts of the Monsoon*), witnessing the horrors of a concentration camp in *Son of Saul*, and traversing the landscape of Colombia in *The Wind Journeys*.

In spring 2019, the 11th annual Bridges to the World International Film Festival will showcase films from Chile, Lithuania, Mongolia, Mozambique, and Israel at five locations across Maryland: Annapolis, Towson, Salisbury, California, and Cumberland. The festival starts February 4 and runs for five weeks, ending on March 8. Join us and learn about the world!

15th SEASON CALENDAR — EVENTS PLANNED TO DATE

AUGUST

Bridges to the World Writing Project Announcement

SEPTEMBER

ITALY Tri Dante (formerly Trio Lennon)

25 Annapolis, St. John's College

28 Cumberland, Our Lady of the Mountain Parish St. Mary's Church

EGYPT Recent Discoveries of the Pyramids

26 Salisbury, Salisbury University

27 Frostburg, Frostburg State University

28 St. Mary's City, St. Mary's College

30 Annapolis TBD

OCTOBER

EGYPT Alexandria Dance Ensemble/ Folkloric Troupe

15 Annapolis, Maryland Hall

20 Kingston, PA area

NOVEMBER

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MONTH

MONGOLIA Musical Ensemble, Yurt

EGYPT Pharaohs and Mummies

29 Salisbury, Salisbury University

30 St. Mary's City, St. Mary's College

JANUARY (2019)

SERBIA Peter Maric, Accordionist, dates TBA

FEBRUARY

11th ANNUAL BRIDGES TO THE WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

5 Chinese New Year Celebration, Annapolis, Maryland Hall

MARCH

RUSSIA Chamber Orchestra

26 Annapolis, St. John's College

27 Salisbury, Salisbury University

APRIL

BRAZIL Andre Mehrin, Pianist

9 Annapolis, St. John's College

12 Salisbury, Salisbury University

Bridges to the World Student Writing Project Celebration

JUNE

Finale for 15th Season Anniversary

WATCH WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT of World Artists Experiences for other experiences, dates, and places

www.worldartists.org

REFLECTIONS ...

PARAGUAY PARTNERS WITH WAE

While presenting World Artists Experiences with a plaque, Ambassador German Rojas Stated: "The Embassy of Paraguay in



Anga Rory, "Joy of the Soul"

the United States of America in partnership with the nonprofit organization World Artists Experiences presented Paraguay throughout the year. It is our honor to have the international Troupe, Anga Rory, hosted and organized by them. In Guarani, this means 'Joy of the Soul.' The historic and collective memory of our bilingual Guarani and Spanish reality could not be lacking, and Anga Rory created the opportunity to see one of the most traditional Paraguayan performances. A special appreciation to the organization to create the bridge for international understanding by establishing cultural and citizen diplomacy with countries of the world. On behalf of the Embassy,

we express our deepest gratitude to the World Artists Experiences, who have dedicated the year to learning about Paraguay through the

culture and people. The arts are an international language and can be most powerful in the communities and to change the world."

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Upon Anga Rory's return to Paraguay, they wrote: "We lived a unique experience we never imagined could be so wonderful. A thousand "thank yous" will never be enough. Through WAE, all the people, and the entire organization, we experienced wonderful feelings of sharing with one another. Everything was excellent, and our hearts are full of happiness and joy for your kindness. World Artists Experiences should be replicated in every country."

—Lilia Doldren and Anga Rory

BRIDGES TO THE WORLD STUDENT WRITING PROJECT

For the past five years, I've received a letter in the fall that has had a powerful effect on the course of my fourth graders' school year. It is from World Artist Experiences (WAE), an organization that invites Maryland students to participate in their annual Writing Project.

One of our foundational themes is world cultures. We also strive to integrate the arts into learning experiences. Our students are eager to learn about people with different backgrounds, and most are enthusiastic "artists." As a result, they are intrigued when they hear the name "World Artists Experiences."

Adults are not included in this project. WAE feels that children have a clear vision and powerful ideas for making the world a better, more peaceful place.

I tell them I received a letter from WAE asking for their participation in one of their projects. I emphasize they publish writings that express students' perspectives about the world.

Adults are not included in this project. WAE feels that children have a clear vision and powerful ideas for making the world a better, more peaceful place. Usually about three fourths of my students choose to write about the project's theme. They share their writings with their class, families, and sometimes other members of our school community. Most ultimately decide to submit their work to the project.

This is a writing opportunity for which I don't need to write a lesson plan. I simply tell them about WAE and read the invitation for them to participate in the writing project. Their motivation to respond is sparked by learning the value WAE places on hearing children's voices.

I believe all of those who choose to write for this project benefit in important ways. My students are at a developmental age in which they are starting to be aware of the world beyond their own day-to-day experiences. Nevertheless, in their daily lives, they naturally think first about their own interests, concerns, and desires. For them to become compassionate world citizens, willing to demonstrate authentic care for others, their empathy must be developed and nurtured. The WAE writing project fosters sensitivity, care, and respect for all people.

The project asks students to reflect on the world as a whole and consider what is most important in making it a place where everyone can feel safe, valued, and respected. We all tend to focus just on the things in our immediate surroundings. Hope for a peaceful and harmonious world lies in each person's willingness to think beyond their own situation. Helping children start to see a global perspective is an investment in their welfare and the welfare of all people who inhabit this planet.

The students who are selected attend a celebration of their work, the work of other writers, and of performing artists. The performances are opportunities to see and hear artistic expressions they may never have experienced. The celebration further affirms the value of learning about, respecting, and building relationships with people whose lives are different from ours in some ways. The celebration also reminds us that humans find value and meaning in many of the same things: creative thought, emotion, and connections with others.

I am deeply grateful for WAE for the many ways this organization brings light and hope to the world. I'm especially appreciative of how it has utilized the power of artistic expression to generate understanding and appreciation of others. Mostly, I am grateful for the opportunities WAE gives to students. Their concerns are real, their ideas powerful, their hopes encouraging, and their hearts full. It's important for them to know!

—Deborah Gilligan, Chesapeake Charter School



**BREAKING BARRIERS
BUILDING COMMUNITY**

I explain that a primary goal of WAE is to increase understanding and respect among people from countries all over the world, that this group plans, organizes, and supports experiences that encourage collaborative relationships among people of different countries and cultures. After that introduction,

STATE OF MARYLAND AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

by John Wobensmith,
Secretary of State, Maryland

Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State congratulates the board members and volunteers of World Artists Experiences (WAE) on the 15th anniversary of its founding! Over the years, the organization has touched the lives of thousands of Maryland citizens through its mission of Bridging People and Cultures Across Continents.

The success of WAE is due in large part to the people-to-people engagement that is at the heart of its mission. This engagement taps into our need to feel connected to one another. Through its presentations and performances, WAE brings together everyone from ambassadors and home stay families, to students and international artistic sensations, with the goal of breaking down stereotypes and building up cross-cultural

awareness.

The quality and variety of WAE programming is simply amazing. Mrs. Betty McGinnis' long-time passion for international education exchange, combined with her skills to inspire and organize, make WAE presentations premier events around the state. They have amazed us with spectacular shows and thoughtful pieces of work that bring awareness to the vastness of talent and artistry that exist across the world. And as if that were not enough, WAE provides its programming free to audiences.

What an exciting milestone for World Artists Experiences and all Marylanders who have worked on, participated in, and attended these programs. The Office of the Secretary of State appreciates the time and effort that is required to support these endeavors. We wish you many more years of success and thank you for all that you have done for the great State of Maryland.

VOLUNTEERS' MEMORIES — ON AND OFF THE STAGE

Over 15 years, many stories of cultural and citizen diplomacy have evolved, both on and off the stage. There are so many memories that the following only begins our world conversation:

- Tuvan throat singer group, Alash, years ago. They expanded my heart and mind as well as WAE's Vision. —Anne Ehlers
- Experiencing distant countries and their people here in Western Maryland —Rolf Singerman
- The Shanghai Traditional Orchestra ... no one had experienced such! —Ralph Booker
- Hosting people for WAE has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Artists often play music with me. The language barrier goes away when speaking the universal language of music. —Lynn Dale
- Oh, the accordion player! He was the world cup winner. And what fun all ages had with him in their homes! —Michael Stretansky
- The moving experience of the artists who came to the U.S. from Syria. The art, poetry, music, song, dance, and clarinet moved my spirit. —Suzanne Ohler
- The student ambassadors going to the stage to present following the performance and the reaction to the children from the artists. —Veronika Olifant
- When my wife and I hosted Emad, an Egyptian archaeologist, he was surprised when I showed him my Egyptian artifact, a wood-and-metal battle camel saddle. After his lecture, we invited an Egyptian friend he had not seen in 20 years. What a party that turned into! —Paul Aber
- When the Maasai came to Cumberland, we took them to a cattle farm. It was fascinating to watch the farmer and the Maasai comparing methods, to hear them calling the cattle in their traditional way, and

to see them interacting with the farmer's tow-headed 2-year-old son. —Linda Smith

• Bringing China to me in the United States. China added much to my life as well as other Chinese groups. How wonderful to experience those from my own country where I now live. —Yvonne Chen

• Sharing stories late at night and realizing my eyes were opened. And the groups sharing they never knew the U.S. was this way. This is what it is all about — appreciating and embracing real people! —Andrew Stuart

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Thousands of volunteers are the lifeblood of WAE! WAE Needs YOU!
Email: wae@comcast.net to volunteer.

Thanks to all the team leaders: Allen Black, David Mitchell, Helen Foxwell, Prue Clendenning, Holly Every, Ted Seymour, Greg Fallor, Linda Smith, Michael Stretansky, Raphael Micca, June Krell-Salgado, Mark Moran, Ling Zhou, Beth Wells, and Bud Silk!

RECEIVE WAE EMAIL NOTICES?

Email wae@comcast.net with name, address, and email.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

allow WAE to continue our conversation with the world. BE A DONOR this fall! WAE is a 501 c 3 organization. Mail to WAE, P.O. box 9753, Arnold, MD 21012. Thanks to so many individuals, family foundations, arts councils, and businesses.

Also, thanks to those who give generously of in-kind services: Margaret Rose Caro, editor and graphic designer of the newsletter. Heartfelt gratitude!

VISIT WORLD ARTISTS EXPERIENCES ON FACEBOOK!

