A LIVING LEGACY

Preserving Intangible Culture

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Cover: Dancers from the Texas-based troupe, Ballet Folklórico de San Antonio, perform a traditional Latin dance.
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About This Issue

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Individuals, community groups, philanthropic organizations and others across the United States celebrate and preserve the country's diverse cultural heritage. Here a young girl plays a Korean drum at a cultural event in Anchorage, Alaska. With 93 languages spoken, Anchorage is like many places in the United States: a vibrant mix of cultures and people.

The cultural heritage of the United States is rich, diverse and grounded in the contributions of many peoples. It includes millennia-old indigenous Native American culture and tradition and spans the customs, culture and art of the many immigrant groups who have settled in the United States over past centuries and generations.

Many tangible expressions of this cultural patrimony are protected in museums, galleries, and other publicly- and privately supported institutions. But no museum can preserve less tangible forms of cultural expression as effectively as those who perform them. The Ghanaian-American drummer who performs Ga music for rapt audiences enriches American culture, as does the Native American storyteller, or the scholar who keeps alive a threatened language.

American culture remains vibrant and of global interest precisely because men and women in every part of the nation preserve intangible forms of artistic cultural expression by living them. This issue of *eJournal USA* explores their stories. ■

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Intangible Cultural Heritage

A New Horizon for Cultural Democracy

James Counts Early and Ryan F. Manion

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Courtesy of Jeff Tinsley, Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is held annual in Washington, D.C. It celebrates language, storytelling, music, dance, traditional crafts and other cultural expressions from U.S. and world communities.

James Counts Early *is Director of Cultural Heritage Policy for the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution.*

Ryan F. Manion *is a former intern in applied ethnomusicology at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.*

Traditionally, preserving cultural heritage has meant conserving historical buildings, monuments and works of art. But starting in the 1960s, thanks to a growing appreciation of diverse cultures and modes of cultural expression, the preservation of cultural heritage has expanded to encompass so-called "intangible" cultural expressions such as music, language and dance. The Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States, has played an important role in this expansion not least through its collaborations and cooperation with thousands of educational, cultural and government institutions. Today many institutions and individuals contribute to preserving cultural heritage in all its forms, tangible and intangible alike.

One pioneering direction was forged in 1967, when the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) established heritage preservation programs in collaboration with diverse local communities in and outside the United States. This culminated with the first Smithsonian Folklife Festival on Washington's National Mall, the grassy public space between the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol. The then-novel approach to heritage preservation highlighted the value of language, storytelling, music, dance, traditional crafts, social practices, ethno-sciences, traditional agricultural practices and other cultural expressions from communities across the nation. It included Chinese lion

Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

A Maryland-based Cambodian cultural group performs the traditional Cambodian "Golden Mermaid" dance at the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

dancers, American Indian sand painters, potters, a Bohemian hammered dulcimer band and storytellers, along with mountain banjo-pickers, a Russian chorus and blues and gospel singers. That first free festival drew nearly half a million attendees. The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is an annual event now, attended by well over one million people each year, and often features cultures of other nations as well homegrown ones.

By emphasizing how ordinary citizens practice and preserve their cultural heritage, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival significantly expanded both the understanding of other cultures and the desire to celebrate them. As local communities and lesser-known artisans increasingly were recognized as important mainstays of imagination and creativity, the scope and definition of "valuable" cultural expression worthy of preservation broadened commensurately. A new paradigm in which cultural institutions partner with grassroots communities inspired similar cultural heritage stewardship practices among other national and international cultural institutions.

In the late 1990s, the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) emerged. It reflected the principles upheld in the nearly four decades of work carried out by the CFCH, together with other U.S. cultural institutions and organizations, including the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, the Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as state folklorists, global scholars and communities of artists and artisans whose works express their cultural heritage. ICH now informs both national and international cultural protocols. Earlier efforts had tended to privilege exclusively monuments, sculpture and other material artifacts produced by developed countries and dominant social groups. Official national cultural institutions frequently failed to acknowledge local and small-scale cultural expressions of their own countries' diverse communities. Recognition that intangible forms of cultural heritage are as important as tangible ones represented a fundamental departure from earlier practices and expanded the realm of cultural expression worthy of preservation.

By emphasizing how ordinary citizens practice and preserve their cultural heritage, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival significantly expanded both the understanding of other cultures and the desire to celebrate them.

The preservation of intangible cultural heritage continues to shape national and international cultural discussions, practices and protocols. Diverse voices are heard and more forms of expression are included. Worldwide cultural preservation is becoming more inclusive, democratic and open. U.S. cultural institutions are capable and ready to collaborate with institutions and communities within and beyond our borders to preserve culture for the enrichment of peoples worldwide. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

kēia o Malaki
kēia.
Po'alima
Po'aono
2
3
ha ka la ma na pa wa
hā kā lā mā nā pā wā
he ke le me ne pe we
hē kē lē mē nē pē wē
hi ki li mi ni pi wi
hī kī lī mī nī pī wī
ho ko lo mo no po wo
hō kō lō

Saving Endangered Languages in the United States

Juliette Blevins

©AP Images /Julia Cumes

Jessie Little Doe Baird (left) studied linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and began the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project to preserve the tongue of the Native Americans who participated in the first Thanksgiving dinner. Here she shakes hands with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

***Juliette Blevins** is a professor in the Graduate Program in Linguistics at the City University of New York. Blevins is also a director of the Endangered Language Alliance.*

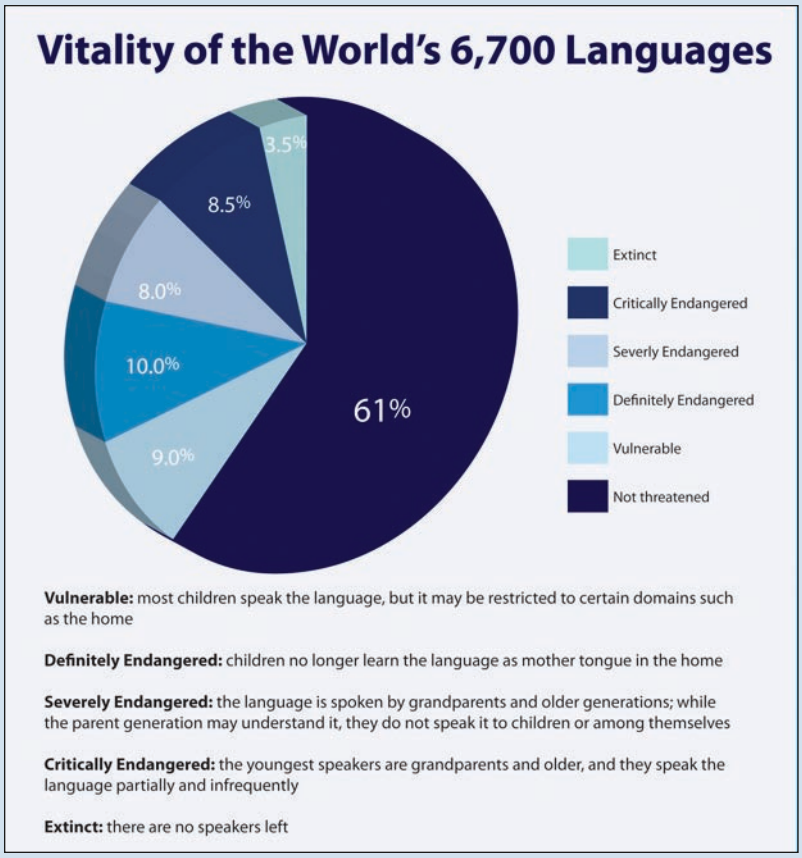
We are living in the middle of a global language crisis: every two weeks, a language dies. Half of the world's 6,700 languages are in danger of disappearing within the next 100 years.* If not reversed, the loss will be tragic: a recent United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report argues that languages embody the identity of individuals and groups and exemplify their intangible cultural heritage.

Thanks to a long history of human habitation and widespread immigration, the United States has one of the world's most linguistically diverse populations. Even so, many languages, particularly indigenous ones, are endangered. Over the past 500 years, more than 100 languages native to North America have died, and many are moribund with only a few elderly speakers. It thus is especially important that languages indigenous to the United States are being revitalized, preserved, documented, taught — in some cases, written — and most importantly, spoken, by many individuals.

Some of the most noteworthy individual language reclamation efforts are made by Native Americans whose languages have been dormant for some time. Every United States schoolchild is taught the story of the first Thanksgiving, where pilgrims and Wampanoag (Wôpanâak) Indians feasted together in 1621, but few learn that Wampanoag and other Eastern Algonquian languages disappeared very shortly afterward. By the time of the American Revolution, all that was left of the language was a handful of elderly speakers, some wordlists and a translated Bible. Thanks to these materials, and what was known of other closely related languages, a near miracle occurred. In 1997, Jessie Little Doe Baird, a Wampanoag, and a graduate student in linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who dreamed of speaking her tribal language, began the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project. Today, Wampanoag classes are offered and a dictionary of more than 9,000 words is being compiled.

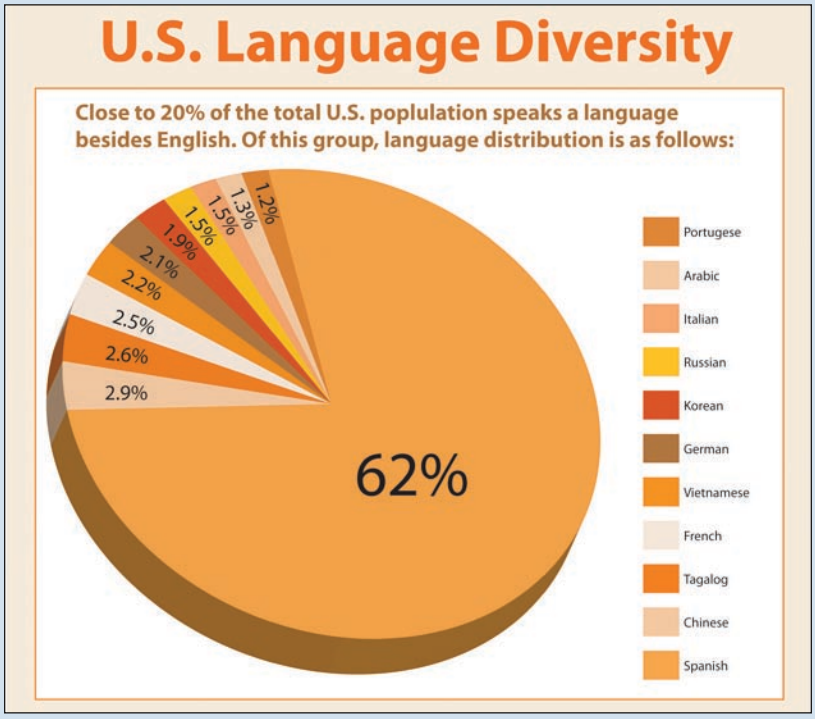
Another extraordinary effort is the work of Daryl Baldwin, linguist, Miami Tribe member and current director of the Myaamia Project. Daryl began to teach himself Miami, an Algonquian language of the Midwest, as a young adult, though the language was no longer spoken when he was born. Due in large part to his efforts, the language is now used by a small but growing number of people, and is an integral part of Miami cultural revitalization, which includes a children's language

Left: Pre-school teacher Nailima Gaison reviews the Hawaiian alphabet with his students in Keaau, Hawaii.
© AP Images /Tim Wright



Data from: Moseley, Christopher (ed.). 2010. Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 3rd edn. Paris, UNESCO Publishing. Online version: *http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas*

Erin Riggs

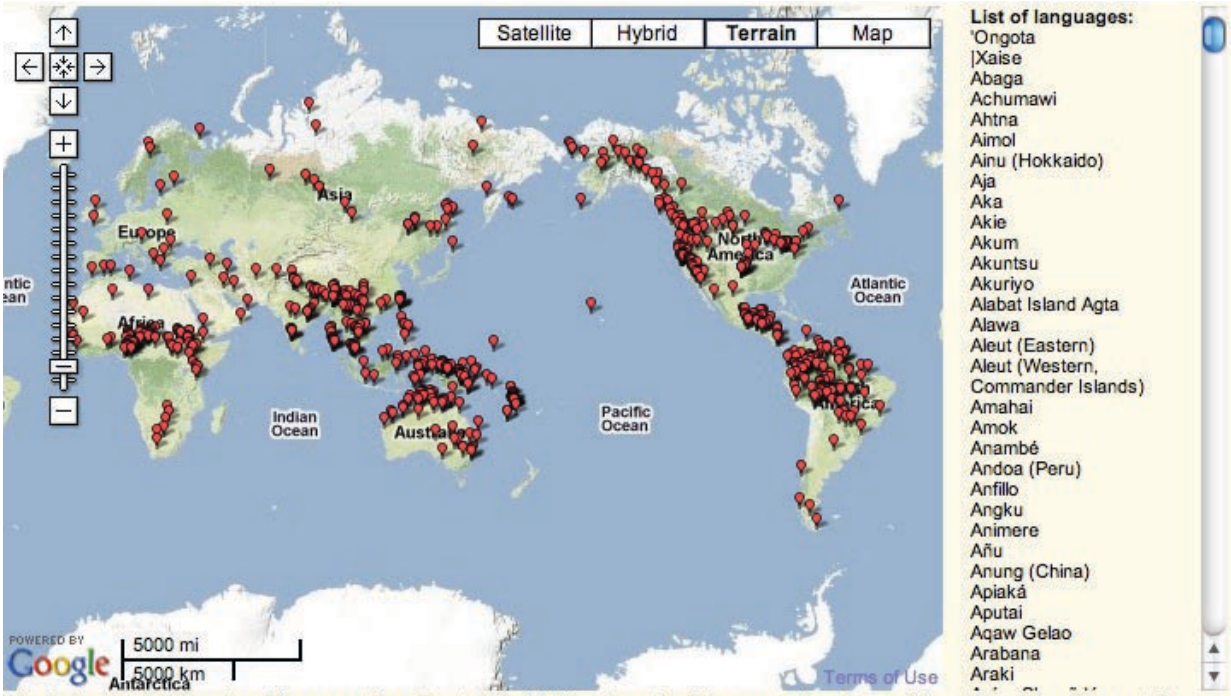


Data from: *The Modern Language Association Language Map, MLA. http://www.mla.org/resources/map_main*

Erin Riggs

UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) compiles an atlas of vulnerable, endangered and extinct languages. The map below depicts the distribution of some of the 578 languages that UNESCO classifies as "critically endangered."



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Source: Moseley, Christopher (ed.). 2010. *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, 3rd edn. Paris, UNESCO Publishing. Online version: *http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas*

curriculum, studies of ethnobotany and publication of traditional Miami stories.

In addition to remarkable individual efforts of this kind, many tribes have begun their own revitalization, preservation and documentation projects. Though Navajo (or Diné Bizaad), with 170,000 speakers, is the most widely spoken indigenous language north of Mexico, the number of Navajo who do not speak the language is increasing faster than the number of speakers. Forty years ago, 90% of children entering school were Navajo-speaking; the rate is now less than 30%. To keep the language strong, Diné College, located in Tsaile, Arizona, now has a Navajo Language Program to prepare students to become Navajo language teachers, interpreters and translators. While many Americans are familiar with Navajo from its role as the language of U.S. Army "code talkers" during World War II, few are aware of its structural richness or cultural power. Navajo, like other Athabaskan languages, has one of the most complex word-structures of any language, with a string of up to 11 prefixes preceding the verb stem.

One of the most successful efforts to revitalize a language indigenous to the United States has given new breath to the Polynesian language, Hawaiian. In the 19th century, there were 37,000 native speakers. Through the Hawaiian language, they passed along traditional stories, songs and religion. But by the 20th century, fewer than 10,000 remained, very few of them young.

In 1983, language nests, pre-school language programs, ('Aha Punana Leo) were started in Hawaii, the only state with a designated native language. Language nests offer a total language immersion environment for infants and pre-school children, and are one of the most natural methods to ensure language transmission from one generation to the next. The nests were very successful and soon more Hawaiian schooling was needed. After

©AP Images /Heard-Times, Jeremy Hogan

A professor teaches Swahili at the Summer Cooperative African Language Institute in Indiana. The Institute seeks to increase the number of speakers of African languages in the United States.

the Hawaii State Constitution mandate to promote the study of Hawaiian culture, language and history in 1987, the state Department of Education opened Kula Kaiapuni, Hawaiian immersion primary and secondary schools. Currently there are more than 1,500 students (kindergarten through high school) in the Kula Kaiapuni program. The number of Hawaiian speakers has grown to 8,000 and dozens of new publications are now available in Hawaiian.

Linguistic diversity in the United States is further enhanced by the vast number of languages brought to the country by immigrants. An estimated 800 languages are spoken in New York City's 305 square miles, making it one of the most linguistically dense and varied places in the world. While many of these languages are in good health, at least half are either endangered or under serious threat.

Within the past few years, linguists, language activists and community leaders have united in New York and other major U.S. cities to identify, document, preserve and teach threatened minority languages. The Endangered Language Alliance in New York City, for example, is a not-for-profit organization that works to identify, record and preserve languages at risk of becoming extinct. These include Maasalit and Zaghawa, spoken by Darfurian refugees; Xochistlahuaca Amuzgo, Ayautla Mazatec, and dozens of other indigenous languages of Mexico and Central America; endangered languages of the Caucasus region, including Svan and Mingrelian; and a wealth of threatened languages from West Africa. Strong grassroots support for this young organization, which is staffed by dozens of hard-working volunteers, is just one demonstration of the great value Americans place on linguistic and cultural diversity.

Far from major U.S. cities, new "language centers" are being launched. Organized to serve the local needs of language communities, centers can serve many functions, from training community members in language documentation and description, to offering language classes, creating dictionaries, or producing maps with local indigenous placenames. One of the oldest is the Alaska Native Language Center, established in 1972 by state legislation to document and to cultivate of the state's 20 native languages. Other centers include Sealaska Heritage Institute in Alaska, Three Rivers Language Center in Indiana, and the Navaho Language Academy in Window Rock, Arizona. In contrast, urban centers tend to house language centers maintaining heritage languages spoken by large immigrant groups. New York, for example, is the home of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, one of the world's major resources for Yiddish language studies.

Across the United States, tribes, community groups, government agencies, charitable organizations, universities, professional organizations and individuals continue to revitalize languages and to preserve U.S. linguistic diversity. ■

** While there is a lengthy discussion of when a language is considered endangered, two primary factors are taken into account. The first is the number of remaining speakers. The second and more significant factor is the age demographics of the speech community. A language can have hundreds of thousands of speakers, but if they are mostly over the age of 40, then this is an indication that the language is no longer being passed along to children and that within a generation or two it could disappear.*

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Preserving Alaska's Native Languages — One Word at a Time

Kyle Hopkins

© AP Images/Anchorage Daily News, Bob Hallinen

Guillaume Leduey traveled from France to Alaska to learn Eyak, a dying Alaska Native language. Leduey holds the book, *In Honor of Eyak: The Art of Anna Nelson Harry*, by linguist Michael Krauss.

***Kyle Hopkins** is a reporter with the* Anchorage Daily News.

Mona Curry sat in a living room in Alaska's largest city on a summer morning, listening carefully.

"Awa'ahdah," said the young Frenchman seated across from her.

A shy 21-year-old with a passion for language, Guillaume Leduey was doing his best to recreate the word for "Thank You" in the extinct Alaska Native tongue of Eyak.

Curry's mother, Marie Smith Jones, had been the last native speaker of the language. When she died in 2008 the Eyak language died too — the first of the 20 Alaska Native languages to disappear. Experts fear more will soon follow unless new generations learn fading Inuit and Indian speech. Now, here in a friend's Anchorage home was Leduey, a handsome, skinny young man with a wisp of a beard and a bandanna, speaking the language of Curry's ancestors with a French accent. Curry, moved by the emotion of hearing her mother's tongue, asked Leduey to say the word once more.

"Thank you," he repeated in Eyak.

Visiting from Le Havre, France, a city of about 180,000 people, Leduey knows or has studied at least six languages. He grew up in France dreaming of exotic dialects while the other boys played PlayStation. Leduey's visit to Cordova, Alaska, which was covered in local newspapers and the *Wall Street Journal*, ignited talk in Alaska of not only documenting the dead language, but resurrecting it. Many saw the Eyak language as a harbinger; unless younger generations learn to speak and teach other native languages, they too were at risk of extinction.

"My trip to Alaska allowed me to face the destiny of a people in search of identity and to understand that in reality, the extinction of a language is not something irreversible," Leduey said.

"For the first time, I've seen real interest and enthusiasm and follow through on saying, 'We want to do something about this," said Laura Bliss Spaan, an Anchorage filmmaker who directed a 1995 documentary about Curry's mother.

She has been working with the Eyak Preservation Council on stoking interest in the language, which had been fading for decades.

Eyak was spoken by the indigenous people along the Gulf of Alaska coast from what's now Cordova east to Yakutat. As far as historians and linguists can tell, there were never more than a few hundred Eyak, says Fairbanks linguist Michael Krauss, who has written an Eyak

© AP Images/Anchorage Daily News, Marc Lester

Chief Marie Smith Jones, the last native speaker of Eyak, died in 2008 at the age of 89.

dictionary and served as a kind of mentor to Leduey during the student's visit.

Before Americans arrived in Alaska, the Eyaks were already being absorbed by the Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska. Curry, who says her mother was punished for speaking Eyak in school, estimates fewer than 120 people who are even half Eyak remain.

Enter Leduey, who chanced upon the language while looking for information about different Alaska Native languages as a teenager. He tracked down Bliss Spaan's e-mail address and asked her for copies of the instructional DVDs she had created about the language. He began studying Eyak at age 13.

When the pair met years later in Paris, the filmmaker was surprised to learn the young man was already on his way to learning the language and could quote entire passages from Krauss' book.

She invited Leduey to Alaska for what would become a six-week stay starting in June 2010. In Fairbanks, Krauss tasked Leduey with analyzing traditional Eyak tales word by word, building his grasp of the language and testing his abilities.

"My work, even if I manage to finish what I would like to do, still has a lifetime of work for someone to study further," Krauss said in June.

Achieving that is a tall order for Leduey, a 20-something still deciding what to do with his life. Early in his visit to Alaska, it was unclear if he wanted to be the torchbearer for the language. Leduey is also an aspiring sculptor. "The longer he was in Alaska, the more people he met, the more he really felt that this was something he was absolutely committed to doing," Bliss Spaan said.

"My plans are to work with Dr. Krauss and to work with the Eyak people, to teach them [the] language," wrote Leduey in a recent email. "They are the key to the preservation [and] recovery of the language."

Already there are signs of life for the Eyak tongue. Since returning to France, Leduey has been working with Bliss Spaan and others on a project to post an Eyak word or phrase of the week on Facebook* and Twitter.

"The battle is not over yet. They [the Eyak] are soldiers and I'm just giving them weapons to fight with," Leduey wrote in an email after returning to France. "The best gift I received from them is their courage." ■

**http:/www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=49706794284&ref=search*

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Native American Storytelling

Keeping Dakotah Culture Alive Through Spoken Word

***Mary Louise Defender Wilson** is primarily Dakotah Sioux and is a noted Native American storyteller. Wilson received a 1999 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship and currently teaches at Sitting Bull College on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota.*

Image by Troyd Geist, courtesy of the North Dakota Council on the Arts

Mary Louise Defender Wilson (top right) tells a Dakotah story in Hofsos, Iceland. The audience included citizens of both the United States and of Iceland.

Question: Please describe some of the cultural attributes of the Dakotah people.

Wilson: Well, the Dakotah people are one of four major groups of the Sioux people. The way that I understand who we are from our oral traditions is that [Dakotah people] were identified by the way they spoke. I come from the ones who say that we are Wichiyena speakers.

Q: What are some challenges that you face in preserving Dakotah storytelling?

Wilson: [Storytelling] is one of the areas [of Dakotah culture] that is rather difficult to continue because the stories that … I heard were told in the Wichiyena dialect of the Dakotah people. And [when] one attempts to tell these stories in English, which is what I would say a majority of our people on the reservation where I live speak, it loses something… so that it makes [storytelling] difficult.

However, in my classes, I will say certain phrases or certain parts of stories in [Wichiyena]. I always watch people's faces when I tell stories to see am I getting across? Am I communicating? And it seems that even if they don't know exactly what [I am] saying, that there is some communication that exists and they might get the message of the story.

Q: What are some of the main themes of Dakotah storytelling?

Wilson: In our own teaching we say that we came through evolution. One of the early, early evolved ones who was somewhat human [was] called Unktomi or the Spiderman. Now, it is not the Spiderman one sees on TV today. But Unktomi, the Spiderman, was primitive, but he tried to act civilized [but] was quite not very apt at it.

Our people have a belief that when we evolved into human beings, there were certain parts of us that never change, which will always stay primitive [and that is an important theme in the stories] [There are] four areas that always remain with us [and are often incorporated into the stories]. [The first,] is our need for food. The [second area] that remains with us today is anger and violence. And the [third] is group behavior.

And the [fourth] is our sexual nature that is always with us. And our people had certain things that they did, so that it did not take the forefront and people were not preoccupied with it or ways to be disrespectful about it. So those are kind of the themes of the stories. And I think that they are relevant today in how we live.

Q: Please describe one story that you particularly like.

Wilson: "The World Never Ends" is a story about this woman, this old, old woman…this ancient woman who lived in this cave. She had a dog and that is who she was there with. She had a fire going in this cave…and on it; she had a pot where she was cooking something.

And she was quilling a strip that she was going to put on the robe. You know, we used the porcupine's quills before we got beads from the traders to decorate the clothing and the other objects that were decorated. But she was quilling this strip for this robe. And she would make her designs. And by that time, the fire would die down, so she would get up and put wood on that fire. As soon as she rose, and, of course, she was very old, so she moved very [slowly]…as soon as she would stand up to do that, her dog would go and rip out the work she had done.

So she would come back to sit back down, "I thought I did this before,"…she would kind of think to herself, "I thought I completed this." Then she would start over again. Then, of course, the fire would go down. She would get up and put wood on it. The dog would rip out the work she did. And this one goes on and on and on.

Image by Troyd Geist, courtesy of the North Dakota Council on the Arts

Wilson with her dog Sapa,—which means "black" in Dakotah—on North Dakota's Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

But the story says that if she ever finishes making that [robe], the world would end. So that is where that title…came from, "The World Never Ends," because the dog is very efficient at ripping out her work.

Q: You are preserving Dakotah culture by teaching Wichiyena at Sitting Bull College. What else do you teach?

Wilson: I teach Native Women Studies. It is a class where I use different writings by [Native American] women and I go into the history of how women's status changed from the time of the first contact [with Westerners] and how it is today.

Q: Why do you think storytelling is an important part of cultural preservation?

Wilson: Because it tells us about how we are as human beings. You know, you don't preserve something just because it looks nice or just because you like it. I think you preserve something or you try to keep something for your people that will enhance their civilization. And that is what the Dakotah people did. But it is very hard to continue this because certainly people think other things are more important [to preserve] in our culture. But [storytelling] is important because it is from these stories that you begin to understand yourself as a human being. ■

For more information please visit:
http://www.nd.gov/arts/whatsnew/publications_recordings.html
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/index.html
http://www.nea.gov/pub/pubFolk.php

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Being Multilingual

Immigrants to the United States have sometimes faced a tension between keeping their native language and learning English, a tension also felt by their children. The following quotes show how Americans have wrestled with this challenge and how attitudes have changed.

"We should have every child speaking more than one language…if you have a foreign language that is a powerful tool…"
— U.S. President Barack Obama during a campaign speech in 2008.

"I considered Spanish to be a private language… Without question, it would have pleased me to hear my teachers addressme in Spanish when I entered the classroom. I would have felt much less afraid…But I would have delayed — for how long postponed — having to learn the language of public society…But I couldn't believe that the English language was mine to use."
— Essayist Richard Rodriguez details the tension between learning Spanish, the language of his parents, and learning English.
Quote from: Rodriguez, Richard. *The Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez, an Autobiography*. New York: The Dial Press, 1982, p. 19.

"…growing up, my mother's 'limited' English limited my perception of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say…I later decided I should envision a reader for the stories I would write. And the reader I decided upon was my mother, because these were stories about mothers…I imagined…her internal language, and for that I sought to preserve the essence…"
— Author Amy Tan describes her childhood perception of her mother, an immigrant from China, and how that perception changed when Tan wrote *The Joy Luck Club*.
Quote from: Tan, Amy. "Mother Tongue." Originally published as "Under Western Eyes" in the *Threepenny Review,* 1990, pp. 315-320.

"The term 'heritage language' denotes a language learned at home that is different from the dominant language of the community…later in life, proficiency in [a] heritage language provides [the speaker] with additional opportunities and advantages, whether in academia, professional life, or the business world."
— University of California, San Diego, Heritage Language Program Homepage.
http://linguistics.ucsd.edu/language/heritage-languages.html

"…for many of us who have come from different countries, our difficulties with American idioms often lead to unexpected syntactic constructions and surprising turns of phrase which enrich the language and by which we all are enriched."
— Gregory Djanikian, a poet of Armenian descent who emigrated from Egypt to the United States, reflects on how the English language has been molded by immigrant communities.
Quote from: "Poet Celebrates Family Picnics and 'Great Melting Pot' of Language." PBS News Hour (4 July 2007).
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec07/picnic_07-04.html

Loanwords in the English Language

English incorporates many words from other languages. Here are a few examples:

English Loanword	Language of Origin
Armada	Spanish
Bazaar	Arabic
Chess	Persian
Deli / Delicatessen	German
Icon	Russian
Shampoo	Hindi
Tsunami	Japanese
Wok	Chinese

KING

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

"A Museum of Sound"

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

D. A. Sonneborn and Megan Banner Sutherland

© 2010 Smithsonian Institution

***D. A Sonneborn**, Ph.D., is associate director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.*

***Megan Banner Sutherland** (College of William and Mary, B.A. Music, 2010) is an applied ethnomusicology intern at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.*

"…[I] bequeath the whole of my property … to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase & diffusion of knowledge…."

Last Will and Testament of James Smithson, October 23, 1829 [*http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/smithsonwill.htm*]

Courtesy of Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution, photo by Diana Davies

Moses Asch founded Folkways Records and made preserving American and world folk music his life's work.

After receiving British scientist James Smithson's endowment in 1846, the U.S Congress established the Smithsonian Institution as an independent public trust. Today the Smithsonian Institution is the largest national museum and research complex in the world. Dedicated to its mission to preserve and diffuse knowledge, it publicly shares millions of artifacts and other expressions of world cultures, communities and identities – both material and intangible.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is a museum of sound that makes tens of thousands of sound recordings of music, spoken word, poetry, drama, instruction, natural and man-made sounds publicly available. The Smithsonian acquired an independent record label, Folkways Records and Service Corporation, from founder Moses Asch's estate in 1987. Asch, the son of a renowned Yiddish writer, had a profound appreciation for cultural and artistic expression of every sort. He was driven by a passion to show how music and sound convey our essential humanity. He valued what he called "people's music," seeking out timeless recordings rather than popular ones. He kept the entire catalogue of recordings in print — ultimately more than 2,000 albums — whether an album sold one copy in 10 years or thousands of copies per year. Asch believed that through the medium of recorded sound, anyone could transcend ethnic, linguistic, racial and other differences to increase their cultural understanding. From the label's start in 1948, Asch documented the world of sound, welcoming traditional music from the United States and around the globe with considerable help from scholars, field recordists and enthusiasts the world over.

In efforts to encourage and express national and cultural

Left: Jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie; one of the many performers whose music is preserved by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.
© AP Images

pride many countries experienced a revitalization of folk music in the second half of the 20th century. In addition to recording talented folk musicians in studios, Asch often preferred gritty field recordings. He released many albums by collectors who took recording equipment to musicmakers' remote communities, whether small fishing village in New Brunswick, Canada or a tribal encampment deep in the Congo rainforest.

To help listeners gain a better understanding of the music's cultural context, Folkways records were typically packaged with extensive liner notes. These notes included images, translated lyrics, information about musical instruments, biographies of performers and the history of places where the field recordings were made. Folkways Records was a profound influence for what is now widely referred to as world music. Additionally, Asch was a pioneer by his use of children's music for educational purposes. He saw music as a tool that promoted creativity, movement and multicultural understanding. His record label offered folk music and culturally and/or historically significant recordings to children and young adults at all stages of learning, from the iconic American blue musician, Lead Belly, singing to kids to the science of sound to narrations of Frederick Douglass' writings.

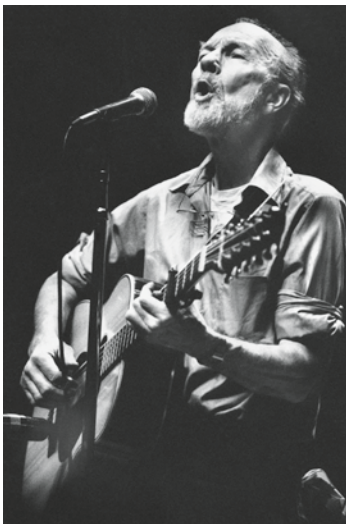
Smithsonian Folkways produces recordings in many genres including a children's album sung by American blues musician Lead Belly (top) and an album of Latin roots music (right).

Courtesy of Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution (for both album covers)

Since acquiring Folkways Records nearly a quarter of a century ago, the Smithsonian Institution has upheld a promise to keep Folkways' entire catalogue available to the public. It has expanded upon the original collection by publishing community-based music and by adding other culturally significant independent record labels and collections, including Collector, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, M.O.R.E. (Minority Owned Record Enterprises) and Paredon Records. Smithsonian Folkways also is committed to upholding the rights of artists to profit from recordings of their work. Besides increasing the royalty rate paid to artists, who had historically received only pennies per unit sold, Smithsonian Folkways goes to extraordinary lengths to locate artists due royalties, even if the artist is owed only a few dollars.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings selects material for new recordings in a number of ways. Specific gaps in the knowledge of the collection are noted, funding is sought and one album or a whole series of recordings are made. In some cases, a third party — for instance, a musicologist or other scholar, artist or institution — may propose a recording that fits Smithsonian Folkways' mission. Reissues of a single artist's work or compilations of a genre are produced from recordings in the archival collection; these always include remastered audio, with new liner notes and packaging.

The Smithsonian Folkways collection — all master recordings, album, artwork and texts — is archived in temperature and humidity-controlled storage along with all the business records and correspondence related to the recordings. By digitizing the entire catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is able to make all archival recordings publicly available online and via an in-house, on-demand archival fulfillment service that makes one CD or audio cassette at a time. As a museum of sound, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings strives to provide its audience with the resources to listen to, learn about and appreciate music and sound from cultures around the world, thereby increasing and diffusing knowledge of Americans' and other peoples' cultures and traditions. ■



© AP Images/Mark Costantini

Pete Seeger is one of the many American folk singers whose music is preserved by Folkways Recordings.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

To sample music streams from the Smithsonian Folkways Recordings archives please visit *http://www.america.gov/cultural_hertiage.html*

State Dept

For more information please visit:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
http://www.folkways.si.edu/

Independent Record Labels, Collections and Albums Mentioned in the Article

Lead Belly
http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=2528

Science of Sound
http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=1092

Narrations of Frederick Douglass' Writings
http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=1037

Collector
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/Collector.aspx

Cook
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/Cook.aspx

Dyer-Bennet
http://folkways-beta.si.edu/listen2.aspx?type=preview&trackid=48536

Fast Folk
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/FastFolk.aspx

Monitor
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/Monitor.aspx

M.O.R.E.
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/MORE.aspx

Paredon
http://www.folkways.si.edu/find_recordings/Paredon.aspx

Couple Beats the Drum for Traditional Ghanaian Music

***Yacub Addy** is a renowned drummer from the Ga ethnic group of Ghana and created the Ghanaian music performance group, Odadaa! in 1982. Living in the United States with his wife, **Amina Addy**, manager and producer of Odadaa!, he teaches drumming at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. Yacub Addy is a recipient of the 2010 U.S. National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship.*

Question: Describe Ga music, what instruments are typically played and what are some common themes?

Yacub Addy: In social music there is a bell, the timekeeper, that starts before anything is involved. Then the supporting drums play and finally, the master drum. The master drum controls [the music].

Amina Addy: The master will play the part it's supposed to play, and then it can improvise, especially in social music. You can do what you want. And then the lead singers — because there will be a lead singer who calls the song and there will be responders. And the lead singer can improvise a lot.

[There is music for the medicine man] where the drums — invoke the *jinn* [spirit] of the medicine man. [Ga] culture is controlled by a combination of secular and religious leaders. And then under the religious leaders, the *wulomo*, are medicine people.

And there's music to be used in the Ga royal court. There's music when the king walks. There's drum poetry — actually language on drums — that is recited — the history of the king, and so forth. And then the third one — and the one that probably, most people are most interested in — is social music, which is music just for fun. And that's used at all kinds of events, everything you can imagine.

Q: Why did you decide to come to the United States and how have you helped keep Ga music alive?

Yacub Addy: There was no support for traditional music in Ghana.

© Enid Farber

Yacub Addy

Amina Addy: If you're doing contemporary music in Ghana, you might be able to live from what you're doing. But if you're doing traditional music in Ghana, [there] simply isn't a lot of support for it. And there's no way [for traditional music artists in Ghana] to make a living. Yacub has helped keep Ga music alive by performing and teaching with Odadaa! in the United States for 28 years. In the 1960s, Yacub created a system of five basic hand drumming techniques that produce five very distinctly different tones, and then multiple variations of those tones. He put it into effect when he first came to the Pacific Northwest in the 1970s, and then expanded it as he went on and taught in colleges across the United States.

Q: Where has Odadaa! toured and what effect do you think the group has had on preserving Ga music?

Amina Addy: We have been primarily in the U.S., done a little bit in Canada. We've been in Puerto Rico. We did one tour in Japan. And regarding impact; The first thing is, I think, we introduced Ghana culture to Americans. People did not know about Ga people before we started Odadaa!. In 1982 we started — as far as we know we were the only all-African performing group based in the United States.

Yacub Addy: Once [some] Ghanaians in America were embarrassed of their culture. But [Odadaa!] has changed those [misperceptions]. ■

For more information please visit:
www.yacubaddy.com/odadaa.html
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/index.html
http://www.nea.gov/pub/pubFolk

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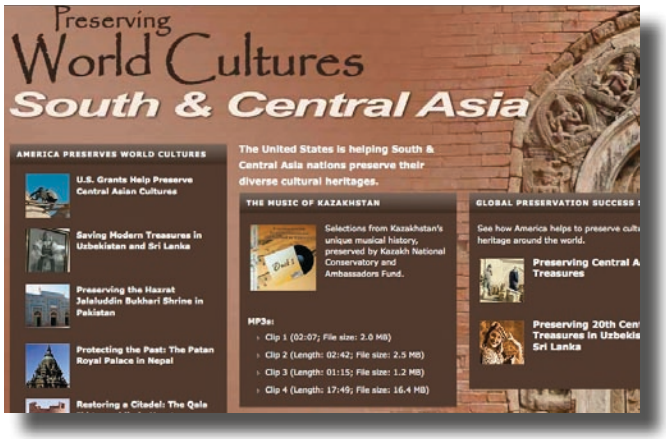
Preserving World Cultures

The U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation

The U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation helps to safeguard cultures across the globe by awarding grants for local heritage preservation projects. Find out more at about these diverse projects.

Cultural Preservation in the Americas
http://www.america.gov/esp/patrimonio.html



Cultural Preservation in South and Central Asia
http://www.america.gov/preserving_culture-sca.html

Cultural Preservation in Europe
http://www.america.gov/preserving_world_cultures.html

Cultural Preservation in the Arab World
http://www.america.gov/preserving_culture-mena.html

For more information on the U.S. Ambassadors Cultural Preservation in Africa and East and Southeast Asia please visit:

http://go.usa.gov/Ca7
http://go.usa.gov/Cao
http://go.usa.gov/CaH

Local Festival Sustains World Dance

Michael Gallant

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

Members of the dance ensemble Imani's Dream fuse elements of hip hop, African, modern and jazz dance.

***Michael Gallant** is the founder and CEO of Gallant Music (gallantmusic.com). He previously lived in San Francisco and now lives in New York City.*

Thanks to its beautiful rolling hills, iconic Golden Gate Bridge, picturesque seaside views and rich cultural history, the city of San Francisco, California, attracts millions of visitors each year. But the city is quickly gaining recognition for another reason: the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival.

San Francisco is home to a uniquely diverse dance community. Some of the most outstanding local ethnic dance companies perform throughout the month of June as part of the annual San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, created by the not-for-profit World Arts West organization. The festival not only showcases many rare and unique forms of dance, it actively preserves those dance traditions, helping them stay vibrant both within the United States and around the world.

Left: A performance at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival celebrating Mexico's bicentennial.
Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

BUILDING THE FESTIVAL

"I believe that we have the most extraordinary dance community anywhere," says Julie Mushet, executive director of World Arts West. "We work with over 400 dance companies in the greater San Francisco Bay Area, easily 20,000 dancers who sustain over 100 distinct traditions from around the world."

Culling the festival line-up from such a large group of potential participants is no easy matter. The festival's producers put audition attendees, all of whom must

be based in Northern California, through a rigorous selection process that involves both live auditions and written essays about the cultural traditions from which their performances spring. A panel of experts reviews each applicant, applying criteria ranging from stage presence to appropriateness to the dance's cultural origins. The competition can be fierce; for the 2010 festival 137 auditions culled about 2,500 dancers down to a final line-up some of some 600 artists in 37 performances.

In 2010, the festival program represented cultures from every part of the globe. One evening's performance featured companies dedicated to Indian, Haitian, Peruvian, Tahitian, Indonesian, Spanish and Japanese dance traditions. Several years earlier, one performance even featured the rarely-seen Balinese Gamelan *jegog*, an ensemble of giant bamboo marimbas that musicians must climb in order to play.

Mushet says she loves spotlighting such a diverse array of dance traditions within a single performance. "People may come to see Spanish Flamenco, but fall madly in love with other forms they would never have otherwise been exposed to," she adds.

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

The Afoutayi Dance Company performs the Haitian ceremonial ritual dance, "Simbi Dlo" (the Goddess of Water).

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

The dance depicted here originates with the Qiang people from China's Sichuan province. A member of the Hai Yan Jackson Chinese Dance Company performs.

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

Elements of dance are incorporated into Japanese *taiko* drumming, performed here by a member of the Jun Daiko company.

ETHNIC DANCE BEYOND SAN FRANCISCO

While the festival focuses on local dance companies, its effects touch communities thousands of miles away, especially since World Arts West recently began sponsoring the involvement of guest artists from around the world. "There was one Muslim tribal chief from the Philippines who had never left [his home] island of Palawan before he participated in this festival," says Mushet. "Two dancers from San Francisco had gone to Palawan years before, trained and learned the local dance form. They taught it to a San Francisco-based dance company and brought the chief over as a guest artist for our festival. The company performed that style to 3,000 people across three sold-out shows."

"The tribal chief videotaped the whole performance to bring back to the people in his tribe. It was transformative. Kids in that culture [had] less-than-wonderful American movies as their only window into what American life was like* — and this was really

troubling to the tribal leaders." Playing the video of the dance festival performance sparked a new interest in America among the children on Palawan and showed that appreciation of their own culture extends far beyond Philippine borders. This realization "made a big difference in the chief's ability to sustain his own local culture."

Though the festival seeks to nurture and share traditional dance forms, stylistic innovations regularly make it to the festival stage. "There are dancers who have significantly changed their form," says Mushet. "It can be controversial, but after years of being masters in their fields, they have the credibility to pull it off."

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

Tara Catherine Pandeya performs an Uzbek and Uighur dance while Abbos Kosimov plays the *doira*, an Uzbek percussion instrument.

One recent example included Charya Burt, a former faculty member of Cambodia's Royal University of Phnom Penh who immigrated to the United States in 1993. "Three years ago, she stood in the wings before going on stage, very nervous," says Mushet. "To her knowledge, this was the first time in 2,500 years that a Cambodian dancer had ever sang and danced at the same time. She was so afraid that she was ruining the authenticity of the form. But as a Cambodian American, she felt that this was the next step in her artistic development. (Editors' Note: For more on Ms. Burt, see page 26).

"Not many in the audience knew this major change was being made to the art form, but for people in that culture, it was certainly a huge shift. It wasn't 'authentic,' but it was beautiful and well received."

For Mushet, the significance of ethnic dance transcends any particular style or tradition. "Dance is core to human experience," she says. "It's amazing that, in cave drawings from thirty thousand years ago, the images that are repeated millennia after millennia are of hunting and *dancing*."

"Dance has been key to humans' sense of community, to living a rich life. These styles that the festival celebrates come from a cultural context that brought people together to celebrate, to mourn, to connect spiritually. There's so much that is embedded and transferred in the knowledge of these dance forms."

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

A Turkish folk dance performed by the Presidio Dance Theater.

Courtesy of World Arts West, photo by RJ Muna

The dance pictured here, performed by Bolivia Corazon de America, is rooted in the Aymara and Quechua cultures indigenous to the Bolivian Andes.

The culture and artistry intrinsic to any given dance form make events like the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival all the more important and necessary. These festivals help ensure that dance traditions are seen far from the lands where they originated, resulting in greater understanding and appreciation of a broad array of cultures and forms of cultural expression. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Editors' Note: for more on this theme see the book, ***Pop Culture versus Real America
http://go.usa.gov/CaL

Classical Cambodian Dance Thrives In California

When American audiences flock to watch Charya Burt dance at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival in California, they see much more than an enjoyable synthesis of graceful movement, meticulous technical precision and elegantly ornate costumes on stage — they're getting a glimpse into the carefully-sustained world of Cambodian dance, as well as the rich culture from which the tradition springs.

Burt immigrated to the United States from Cambodia and founded the Charya Burt Cambodian Dance organization in 1993. In her role as Artistic Director of the Northern California company, she shares and promotes Cambodian dance by teaching and holding public performances and dance workshops.

As a dance faculty member at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Burt brings a high level of expertise and knowledge of traditional Cambodian dance to her teaching and performances. "It is my great obligation to preserve Cambodian dance," writes Burt in an artist's statement. "I restage dances from the classical repertory, document old dances, and pass on the tradition to the next generation."

© Bonnie Kamin Morrissey

Charya Burt

Though Burt's work stays true to its Cambodian origins, she emphasizes creative innovation, incorporating other influences into her constantly evolving original work. One piece, entitled "Villeer Chruas Knear" (Intersections Through Time), draws inspiration from Burt's life as an artist who grew up elsewhere, but now lives and creates in the United States. Another piece, "Pka Kolab Khiev" (Blue Roses), explores the sweet but lonely character of Laura from American playwright Tennessee Williams' seminal work, *The Glass Menagerie*. When she performed the world premiere of "Blue Roses" at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival in 2007, Burt wore a traditional Cambodian outfit as she danced to a live ensemble of musicians who played both Western string instruments and traditional Cambodian instruments.

Burt's efforts to share, preserve and develop Cambodian dance continue to earn her success and recognition in the United States. A favorite regular performer at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival for more than a decade, Burt also received the Isadora Duncan Award for Outstanding Achievement in Individual Performance and has won numerous grants from organizations like the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and the Creative Work Fund. In 2006, the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper praised Burt as "an exquisite practitioner of Cambodian classical dance."

Precise, elegant and graceful, the classical Cambodian dance form that Burt performs and teaches carries deep historical significance. With more than 1,000 years of history behind it, classical Cambodian dance evolved as a connection with the spiritual world and was often performed for royal rituals. Classical dance education and performance were banned, though, when Pol Pot took control of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. In the ensuing Khmer Rouge genocide, many artists — musicians, writers and dancers — were killed. During that period, Cambodian classical dance nearly disappeared.

Burt continues to dedicate herself to assuring that the tradition in which she was trained grows and flourishes. From her adoptive home of California, her efforts incorporate a global perspective in the process. "Through my creative endeavors, I have developed classical and folk dances, and I have also created innovative works that push the boundaries of the traditional form, both musically and thematically," she wrote. "These dances reflect my concerns and passions, and hopefully, those of people everywhere." ■

— *Michael Gallant*

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Americans Preserving Cultural Heritage

Americans preserve music, dance and othere cultural expressions by living and celebrating them in communities both large and small.

© Getty Images/Alex Wong

The Omani dance and music troupe Al Majd Ensemble performs traditional music from Oman at a Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C.

© AP Images/Lynn Hermosa

A Mexican dance performed at the annual Charro Days Fiesta in Brownsville, Texas. Brownsville partners with the town of Matamoros, across the border in Mexico, to present the bi-national festival.

© AP Images/Houston Chronicle, Johnny Hanson

In Houston, Texas, members of McGregor Elementary School Steelight Orchestra play the steel drums—an instrument that originates in Trinidad and Tobago.

© AP Images/The Exponent Telegram, Paul Stephen

A Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania teenager plays the bagpipes at the Scottish Heritage Festival and Celtic Gathering in West Virginia.

© AP Images/Bebeto Matthews

Members of the Ibo Dancers of Haiti perform in New York City in 2004 to celebrate the bicentennial of Haiti's independence.

Courtesy of Katherine Fogden, NMAI, Smithsonian Institution

Native American musician Bill Miller of the Mohican tribe is known for his skill at playing the Native American flute. He has released many albums of Native American music.

© AP Images/Robert Mecea

Two actors perform the Iranian musical, *Ta'ziyeh* at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City.

© AP Images/Chitose Suzuki

Young dancers from Boston, Massachusetts' Woods School of Irish Dance celebrate St. Patrick's Day. A quarter of Massachusetts' population has Irish roots.

© AP Images/The South Bend Tribune, Santiago Flores

The Rwandan cultural group, Berwa, dances at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

Courtesy of Katherine Fogden, NMAI, Smithsonian Institution

Left: Halau Ho'omau I ka Wai O Hawaii performs a type of hula dance at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. The group, based in Alexandria, Virginia, also offers Hawaiian dance classes.

© AP Images/Reed Saxon

Two members from the Kerala Dance Theater perform a dance from Kerala, India at the Lotus Festival in Los Angeles, California. The festival showcases expressions of Asian and Pacific Islander culture.

© AP Images/Michael Dwyer

At a festival held at the Vietnamese Cultural Center in Boston, Massachusetts, visitors were invited to sample a variety of Vietnamese dishes.

© AP Images/Beth Schlanker

A Hmong woman displays a *Paj Ntaub Tib Neeg* or "story-cloth" that she made. Hmong who lived in refugee camps in Thailand started making story cloths as a way to remember traditional stories.

© AP Images/Daily Sun, B.J. Fictum

Two members of the Wilber Junior Czech Dancers perform at the annual Wilber Czech Festival in Nebraska. The small town started as a Czech settlement in 1865.

who's RIGHT?

Repatriation of Cultural Property

Two Experts Debate Whether Art and Artifacts Should Be Repatriated

By Malcolm Bell, III

Courtesy of Malcolm Bell, III, photo by Leslie Rahuba

Malcolm Bell, III

***Malcolm Bell, III** is professor emeritus in the McIntire Department of Art at the University of Virginia. He specializes in Greek art archaeology and serves as co-director of the Morgantina excavations in Sicily.*

Governments typically argue for the repatriation of artifacts and works of art in order to protect their culture and prevent exploitation by foreign museums and collectors. Bell explains the legal and moral justification of these claims.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "repatriate" as "to restore (an artifact or other object) to its country or place of origin," and recognizes repatriation as a process of restoration, of making whole again. Many artifacts and works of art have special cultural value for a particular community or nation. When these works are removed from their original cultural setting they lose their context and the culture loses a part of its history.

Cultural artifacts are often subject to claims of repatriation. The immediate cause is usually a legal or moral claim by the country or community of origin. Although opponents of repatriation often dismiss such claims as serving nationalistic ends, repatriation advocates usually offer rational justifications not inspired by politics. Many countries, although not the United States, declare state ownership of all subsoil or underwater antiquities, the artifacts, tombs and structures located within national boundaries that are unknown until they are discovered, either casually or by excavation. Most

By James Cuno

©AP Images /M. Spencer Green

James Cuno

***James Cuno** is the President and Eloise W. Martin Director of the Art Institute of Chicago and the author of* Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle over our Ancient Heritage *(Princeton 2009).*

Providing museum visitors with a diverse range of art from around the world promotes inquiry, tolerance and broad knowledge. Artistic creations transcend national boundaries as well as the cultures and peoples that created them, argues Cuno.

Art museums in the United States are dedicated to the professional stewardship of the works of art in their care. Curators and directors of museums with art representing the world's many cultures believe that by introducing visitors to a diverse range of art we help to dissipate ignorance about the world, while promoting inquiry and tolerance of cultural differences.

This is especially important in today's urbanized and globalized world. Take Chicago, for example, the city where I live and work. According to the 2000 census, 42 percent of Chicago's residents were of European descent, and 37 percent of African descent. Hispanics comprised both the largest percentage of foreign-born residents and the fastest growing part of Chicago's population. The city has the fifth largest foreign-born population in the United States, the second largest Mexican population in the United States and the third largest South Asian population in the United States. In addition, Chicago has the third largest Greek population of any city in the world. Some 22 percent of Chicago's population is foreign born, comprising more than 26 ethnic groups speaking

Bell continued

© AP Images/Petros Giannakouris

A view of the Parthenon (far right) on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. Many of the Parthenon's marble sculptures are housed in the British Museum in London. Whether they should be repatriated to Greece is the source of much debate.

countries declaring such ownership have been exploited in the past by the demand for their antiquities by foreign museums and collectors.

The ownership claim of a country of origin offers two benefits:

- It blocks the undocumented digging that destroys archaeological sites and strips artifacts of their functional and historical contexts.
- It prevents the export of illegally excavated artifacts and works of art.

The ownership claim protects the object when it is in the earth and, once discovered, discourages its disappearance into the realm of international commerce and collecting. This legal claim is the basis for most repatriation requests.

International laws and norms recognize and codify repatriation. In 1970, the cumbersomely named — but nonetheless vital — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property was ratified, discouraging the international trade in looted antiquities. As a consequence, buyers of undocumented antiquities have (or should have) recognized the uncertain legal status of objects without known provenance acquired after 1970. Countries of origin have pressured prominent museums and collectors to give up such antiquities and a good number have been repatriated over the past decade.

A request for repatriation of an artifact thus usually

Cuno continued

more than 40 languages. By presenting works of art from around the world without prejudice, the Art Institute of Chicago not only introduces visitors to cultures distant from them in time and space but, increasingly, we introduce them to the cultures of their neighbors.

Museums should be encyclopedic; they should strive to present art from many different cultures. Philosopher Paul Ricoeur could have described encyclopedic museums when he said, "When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently… acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly… suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an 'other' among others." Encyclopedic museums are committed to this important aim of shedding light on other cultures.

Governments worldwide tend to claim cultural property as national property. Art found in a particular country is said to be linked to the nation by common historical, even ethnic roots, and often is viewed as something that indelibly distinguishes one nation from another. With the diversity of art in their collections, encyclopedic museums argue against this narrow definition of culture. Instead, they urge their visitors to view art as transcending political boundaries. Works of art —paintings, artifacts, music, or dance — transcend the cultures and people that create them, intertwining the histories of different peoples; for example, the influence of Greek art on the subsequent cultures of Rome, Ghandara and neo-classical Europe, or the influences of Hindu, Buddhist and Persian Muslim painting, poetry and music on Indian culture. Political scientist Roxanne Euben is right to warn us against compartmentalizing the world into "uniform and identifiable entities whose

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Some of the Parthenon's marble sculptures, also known as the Elgin Marbles, in the British Museum in London.

Bell continued

State Dept

America.gov is home to the Who's Right debate series. [*http://www.america.gov/whos_right_archives.html*]

has a strong legal basis. The antiquity was exported illegally, probably also excavated illegally, and most importantly it is now defined by U.S. courts as stolen property. We may also note that even in the United States, where private property rights are greatly respected, the government claims ownership of antiquities from federal lands — and would request their repatriation if they were to be privately excavated and exported.

> "The recovery of wholeness… is the real, underlying justification for the return of artifacts…In this sense; repatriation is an expression of justice."
>
> — *Malcolm Bell*

New legislation can afford additional justifications for repatriation. In the United States, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 requires federal museums and collections to restore to Native American tribes skeletal remains, grave goods and sacred objects — some excavated or collected as early as the mid-nineteenth century. While NAGPRA does not apply to similar privately held materials or to collections outside the United States, it has nonetheless sets an example for all foreign institutions that hold objects of importance to tribal cultures or even to nation-states. One example might be the extraordinary collection of Benin bronzes that were seized by the British colonial authority in 1897 in what is today Nigeria. Exhibited today in leading international museums, these great works of African art are integral to the culture of the modern nation-state where they were created and where someday they may be repatriated.

Cuno continued

boundaries are clearly demarcated from one another carv[ing] up the world in ways that erase fissures within each category and the mutual historical indebtedness between them." When art and culture are strictly attached to a nation we lose the cross-culture ties that bind many different peoples together.

American art museums are dedicated to building encyclopedic collections in accordance with all relevant national and international laws and treaties. We investigate the legal status of every potential acquisition. Where are its origins? If from abroad, when was it exported? What is its recent history of ownership? We have to be certain that we can hold clear title to the work of art in question. Should we learn later that a work of art in our collections was exported illegally, we have an ethical and legal obligation to repatriate it.

> "When art and culture are strictly attached to a nation we lose the cross-culture ties that bind many different peoples together."
>
> — *James Cuno*

Some contend, however, that art should be repatriated to its "home" country, even if it has been acquired legally. They argue that these are another nation's by right, because they are said to be meaningful to the claimant nation, important for its and its citizens' identity and self-esteem. This rewrites history. Where should we draw the line? History is long and untidy. Territory held today by a given nation-state in the past likely belonged to a different political entity, one with other descendents. Take the greater Afro-Eurasian world, for example. Empires there have expanded and contracted, risen and fallen for more than 3,500 years; from ancient Assyria,

©AP Images /J. Paul Getty Trust, Bob Riha, Jr.

Created in Italy, this ancient Roman marble statue of Faustina the Elder now is displayed at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa in the Los Angeles area.

Bell continued

A further argument for repatriation derives from the moral (as opposed to legal) rights that have recently begun to be attributed to the works themselves. These include:

- the right to continued existence — here we can remember the tragic case of the great Buddhist sculptures at Bamian in Afghanistan, intentionally destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban;
- the right to proper conservation;
- the right to the preservation of relevant historical or archaeological documentation;
- the right to public access and;
- the right to consolidation when a work exists in fragments.

The last of these rights — the right to wholeness — can be important for repatriation, reminding us again that repatriation is a form of restoration. Fragmentary works divided among museums around the world deserve to be viewed and understood as elements of a whole. The ancient Greeks believed that sculptures brought their subjects to virtual life, and so completeness was an essential feature of an imitative or representational work of art. There are many examples of divided antiquities that could be returned to wholeness by intelligent, reciprocal exchanges. The most prominent among these are, of course, the dispersed component parts (in Latin, disiecta membra) of the greatest single work of classical antiquity, the temple of Athena on the Acropolis in Athens known to the world as the Parthenon. Many of the marble sculptures of the Parthenon were removed by the British in 1803 and are today held by the British Museum. A few others are located elsewhere. While there have been various political, economic and legal arguments favoring the return of all the Parthenon sculptures to Greece, the strongest case of all lies in the claim of the great temple itself to wholeness. There is no better reason to repatriate the Parthenon sculptures. The recovery of wholeness, whether of a tribal culture or a great work of art, is the real, underlying justification for the return of artifacts and antiquities. In this sense; repatriation is an expression of justice. ■

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Cuno continued

Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, Mughal India, and modern Portugal, France and Britain, among others. Does ancient Hellenistic art made and found in Afghanistan, once on the edge of the Greek empire, belong to Greece or to Afghanistan? Or what about the Egyptian glass and the ivories found in Begram now in the Naitonal Museum, Kabul, the latter betraying the influence of Indian, Persian and Greek precedents? To which modern nation do they belong? The lines designating claims to art and culture are not clear-cut.

Others have called for the repatriation of works of art in order to reunite individual works or ensembles of works now dispersed. Once again where would one draw the line? And even if one wanted to reunite dispersed works of art, where would one do so? Which among the many countries, cities, and museums in possession of parts of a work of art (a panel from a larger altarpiece, for example, or one sculpture from a group of sculptures) should be the designated "home" of the reunited work?

I would argue that within the limits of the law, museums, wherever they are, should be encouraged to acquire works of art representative of the world's many and diverse cultures. This can be through purchase or long-term loan and working in collaboration with museums and nations around the world. These collections encourage a cosmopolitan view of the world and promote a historically accurate understanding of the fluidity of culture.

As Indian economic historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has written, "…a national culture that does not have the confidence to declare that, like all other national cultures, it too is a hybrid, a crossroads, a mixture of elements derived from chance encounters and unforeseen consequences, can only take the path to xenophobia and cultural paranoia." And in the world and time in which we live, encyclopedic museums can play an important role in countering such dangerous tendencies. ■

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U.S. Preservation Laws

A Legal Framework for Preserving Cultural Heritage

Patty Gerstenblith

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, photo by Massimo Catarinella, 2008

Mesa Verde, located in Colorado, was home to the Ancestral Pueblo people and is now a U.S. National Park.

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The United States has an extensive body of laws that protect the rights of those who create cultural and intellectual works, from the tangible forms, like sculpture and architecture, to less concrete products of the imagination such as music and dance. These laws also establish a framework for preserving these works for the benefit of future generations.

PRESERVING TANGIBLE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

- **The Antiquities Act of 1906:** authorizes the U.S. president to declare the as protected "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest" national monuments.
- **The National Park Service:** created in 1916, it protects a wide variety of natural and human-made sites across the United States. Thanks to the work of the National Park Service, the United States has some of the world's most extensive and best-protected national parks, among them natural sites like Yellowstone in Wyoming and Yosemite in California and human-made sites like Mesa Verde in Colorado.
- **The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966:** establishes the National Register of Historic Places and limits development and construction that affects buildings, historic districts and other sites significant in the history, architecture, archaeology and culture of the United States.
- **The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979:** protects artifacts and archaeological sites on federal lands by requiring a permit for the excavation and removal of artifacts.

• **The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990:** provides for restitution to Native American tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations of human remains and associated funerary artifacts discovered after 1990 on federally owned or managed lands. By protecting artifacts used in religious practice, this statute also helps to preserve intangible cultural values and traditions.

U.S. LAWS PRESERVING WORLD CULTURES

The United States participates in international efforts to preserve world cultures.

• **The Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act of 1983:** implements U.S. ratification of the 1970 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The 1983 act prohibits the import into the United States of cultural property stolen from foreign museums, or from other religious or secular institutions. It also authorizes the U.S. president, through the U.S. Department of State, to restrict the importation into the United States of archaeological artifacts of "cultural significance" that are more than 250 years old and of rare and/or culturally significant ethnographic materials.
• **The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966:** parts of this act implement the 1972 UNESCO Convention on World Heritage by conditioning U.S government-supported overseas construction on the assessment and mitigation of potential adverse consequences to cultural heritage sites.
• **The Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation**: administered by the U.S. Department of State, this fund authorizes U.S. ambassadors to nominate cultural preservation projects for funding. It has added more than 640 projects in some 100 countries over the past decade. The fund has restored historic buildings; conserved museum collections; and documented traditional craft techniques and folklore, including music and indigenous languages.

SAVING INTANGIBLE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. federal government also has launched initiatives tailored to preserve intangible forms of culture.

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Lomax Collection

The U.S. Library of Congress Archive of the American Folk Song (under the American Folklife Center) has been preserving American folk music since 1928. Pictured here from 1935 are American folk musicians Gabriel Brown and Rochelle French.

The Archive of American Folk Song: established at the U.S. Library of Congress in 1928, the archive collects and records American music made from the 1890s to the modern era. In 1978, the Archive became part of the American Folklife Center.
• **The U.S. Library of Congress' American Folklife Center:** created by the U.S. Congress in 1976, the center preserves tangible and intangible culture including "language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry [and] handicraft." The center also preserves voices and music from a diversity of regions and ethnic groups, including Native American song and dance, English ballads, personal accounts of former slaves and stories told in different American dialects.
• **The National Endowment for the Arts:** established in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Arts offers grants to artists and other creators to encourage and promote visual art, music, dance and storytelling, among many other forms of cultural expression. ■

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Additional Resources

Publications and websites on preserving cultural heritage

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Carlton, Jim. "In Alaska, a Frenchman Fights to Revive the Eyak's Dead Tongue." *Wall Street Journal* (10 August 2010)
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*http://www.travelweekly.com/article3_ektid117098.aspx?terms=*preservation+hall**

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WEBSITES

U.S. Government

National Endowment for the Arts
http://www.nea.gov

National Park Service
http://www.nps.gov

North Dakota Council on the Arts
www.nd.gov/arts

U.S. Department of State
Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation
http://exchanges.state.gov/heritage/afcp.html

U.S. Library of Congress
American Folklife Center
http://www.loc.gov/folklife

U.S. Library of Congress
National Book Festival
http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/

International Organizations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/

UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00206

UNESCO World Cultural Heritage
http://whc.unesco.org

Research and Advocacy Organizations

Archives of Traditional Music- Indiana University
http://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/

Core of Culture (preserving dance)
http://www.coreofculture.org/

Breath of Life Workshop (preserving indigenous California languages)
http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~survey/activities/breath-of-life.php

Endangered Language Alliance Project
http://endangeredlanguagealliance.org/main/about

Endangered Language Fund
http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/about.html

Linguistic Society of America
Committee on Endangered Languages (CELP)
http://www.lsadc.org/info/lsa-comm-endanger.cfm

Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages
www.livingtongues.org/

Marygrove College
African American Literature and Culture Society (AALCS)
http://aalcs.marygrove.edu

Myaamia Project (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma)
www.myaamiaproject.org/

National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.preservationnation.org

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
http://www.folklife.si.edu

Smithsonian Folklife Festival
http://www.festival.si.edu

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
http://www.folkways.si.edu

Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA)
www.ssila.org

University of California, Berkeley
Yurok Language Project
http://www.linguistics.berkeley.edu/~yurok

University of Hawaii
Language Documentation Training Center (LDTC)
http://www.ling.hawaii.edu/~uhdoc/

World Arts West
San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival
www.worldartswest.org

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ENGAGING THE WORLD

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

http://america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs