



## Arts Midwest World Fest

### Manhu ▪ China

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#### Promo

Discover the folk sounds of rural China right in your own backyard. Share the ancient melodies and captivating instruments of Manhu, lively musicians from a remote landscape of small towns, quiet lakes, and forests made of stone. Experience this exciting American debut and connect to an age-old culture made modern.

#### Additional

Hailing from the Stone Forest of Yunnan Province in southwestern China, Manhu brings to life the traditions of the Yi people, an ethnic minority group with a rich musical history. Playing the *hulusheng*, a mouth organ made from dried gourds, and even an ordinary leaf used as a reed, Manhu shares instruments and songs that are well-known in their homeland but rarely seen on an international stage. The ensemble has performed throughout China, but this is their first international tour.

### Ondekoza ▪ Japan

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#### Promo

Hear the thundering sounds of taiko drums with the world-famous ensemble Ondekoza from Japan. Fusing incredible athleticism, pounding rhythms, and peaceful melodies, their performances will leave you inspired and energized. Experience an unforgettable creative force that has captivated audiences across the globe.

#### Additional

Formed in 1969, Ondekoza are masters of the world-renowned art of taiko drumming. In a performance that is as much dance as drumming, the thundering taiko style must be experienced live. At the foundation of Ondekoza's style is a unique combination of physical fitness, running, and drumming—a philosophy called *sogakuron*, where “running and drumming are one, and a reflection of the drama and energy of life.” They demonstrated this principle in 1975 in Boston, where after completing the Boston Marathon, Ondekoza immediately ran onstage for a full concert performance. Ondekoza members live together in Japan, running and drumming at the base of Mt. Fuji.



## Arts Midwest World Fest

### Sofi & the Baladis ▪ Israel

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#### Promo

Experience one family's remarkable story through the heartfelt melodies of Sofi and the Baladis. Journey through time to explore ancient Samaritan songs and a timeless search for balance, understanding, and belonging. With a unique blend of cultures and styles, this soulful ensemble will connect you to the heart of Israel.

#### Additional

Sofi and the Baladis, a five-member ensemble led by singer Sofi Tsedaka, features soulful and richly textured performances of an array of musical traditions that lie at the heart of Israel's diverse and historic cultures. The group's multi-lingual concerts present new interpretations of songs from the ancient Samaritan community as well as compelling vocal and instrumental work from mid-20th century Arabic composers. Their music transcends genres and moves easily from deeply spiritual to an upbeat and rhythmic style that captivates and brings audiences to their feet. The commentary Sofi provides throughout the concert tells the moving and powerful story of the Samaritan Tsedaka family and their search for balance as they navigate the pathway between their Jewish and Arab identities.

### Unni Boksasp Ensemble ▪ Norway

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#### Promo

With joyous fiddles and bright vocals, the Unni Boksasp Ensemble introduces audiences to warm sounds from the heart of Scandinavia. Explore the folk music of Norway with this lively band as they breathe fresh life into traditions shared across generations. Bring your family and friends and prepare to tap your feet, learn a new tune, and connect to the roots of Norwegian culture.

#### Additional

Unni Boksasp is a warm and imaginative singer who draws you easily into the heart of Norway. Over the years, Unni has delved into the deep traditions found across her homeland, studying music and dance with renowned singers and folk arts departments in Norway and beyond. Her fresh arrangements of folk songs and original compositions have earned wide acclaim: she was a Norwegian national champion of traditional singing in 2010 and 2011 and won a Norwegian Grammy Award and Norwegian Folk Music Award for her 2010 album, *Karamello*. The purity of Unni's voice, her ability to connect with an audience, and the vitality and joy of the entire ensemble ensures you are in for a treat.