

Exhibition Description

Listen to America's music and hear the story of freedom. It's the story of people in a New World, places they have left behind, and ideas they have brought with them. It is the story of people who were already here, but whose world is remade. The distinct cultural identities of all of these people are carried in song—both sacred and secular. Their music tracks the unique history of many peoples reshaping each other into one incredibly diverse and complex people—Americans. Their music is the roots of American music.

The music that emerges is known by names like blues, country and western, folk, and gospel. The sounds are as sweet as mountain air, and as sultry as a summer night in Mississippi delta country. The instruments vary from fiddle to banjo to accordion to drum. Yet all the instruments merge, as do the rhythms, melodies and harmonies, producing completely new sounds—new music. The musics merge because this is America. New waves of music ride ashore in the hearts and heads of new immigrants and they create still new sounds from what they have brought with them and what they find here. And nothing expresses the tensions—or the triumphs—of this journey into democracy quite like the music that it spawns.



The main beat of the exhibition is the on-going cultural process that has made America the birthplace of more music than any place on earth. The exhibition provides a fascinating, inspiring, and toe-tapping listen to the American story of multi-cultural exchange through historic images, instruments and artifacts, and audio components. The story is full of surprises about familiar songs, histories of instruments, the roles of religion and technology in music, and the continuity of musical roots from the earliest spirituals to the latest hip hop CD.

Sample Humanities Programs and Local Activities

New Harmonies offers nearly endless opportunities for communities to collect and celebrate their music traditions. As museums showcase local music they will no doubt collect antique instruments, sheet music, program bills, and oral histories or photo essays of area musicians and family musical traditions. The exhibition will inspire concerts and sing-a-longs, radio programs featuring music and interviews with musicians, film and reading discussion programs, and even music writing contests.

**Curators**

New Harmonies has been organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and curated by Robert Santelli.

Funders

New Harmonies is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

Contents and Crates

Free-standing exhibition with audio and interactive components, banners and instruments and artifacts mounted in cases. Requires 800 square feet. The exhibition travels in 19 crates. Weight to be determined.

Availability to State Humanities Councils

Exhibitions available for tours beginning March 2009 (council participation begins Spring 2007)

New Harmonies Resources Provided

Administrative Resources

- State coordinator manuals featuring program development strategies, sample budgets/contracts and other support materials. Provided in hard copy format and also available online at www.museumonmainstreet.org for easy access and for quick distribution of updated information;
- Museum on Main Street listserv for state council coordinators and national organizers providing answers to project questions and opportunities for networking and project development;
- Experienced MoMS team members assigned to each state to provide advice and assistance in all areas of program development and tour coordination.

Workshops and Meetings

A state council MoMS coordinator must agree to attend and/or host the following workshops and meetings. Out-of-town travel expenses are covered by MoMS.

- National MoMS Orientation Workshop — for first-time state council staff members to meet with Smithsonian project directors two years in advance of the tour (state council coordinators that have completed a MoMS tour are not required to attend);
- National *New Harmonies* Meeting — state council staff member to meet with project organizers, exhibition curator, and other state councils one year in advance of the tour;
- State Program Workshop — MoMS/Federation personnel co-host a program planning workshop for all in-state participating venues and partners;
- State Installation Workshop — MoMS/Smithsonian personnel co-host a workshop at the site of the exhibition's tour opening for all in-state participating venues.

Public Relations/Marketing

- Full participation in national publicity efforts by the Smithsonian;
- Smithsonian web page, at www.museumonmainstreet.org, featuring each state's rural itinerary and homepage links to each state humanities council;
- Project press kit: national press release, digital press images, and news releases for local use;
- Two multi-colored outdoor banners featuring state council name (one to use to promote the exhibition at the host site and one to use as a backdrop at exhibition concerts and events)
- Full color promotional poster with state council logo (50/venue and 50/state council, total 350) and postcards (500/venue and 500/state council; total 3,500)*
- Promotional flyer to announce educational programming or events (250/venue, total 1500)*

Fundraising Resources

- Foundation proposal template;
- As required, letters of support from SITES, exhibition curator, Federation;
- Sample press clippings and testimonials from previous participating humanities councils;
- Opportunities to provide underwriting credit on exhibition's title panel.

Education Materials

- Full-color, take-away exhibit brochure featuring state council credit (1,000/site, 500/council, total of 6,500)*
- Teacher's guide (available online at www.museumonmainstreet.org)
- Docent training guide (30/site, 20/council use, total of 200)*
- Local Exhibition Support Manuals featuring program development strategies, local exhibition development guidelines, exhibition script, and installation instructions. Provided in hard copy format and also available on-line (1 per local site and 1 for state coordinator)

Gift Shop Materials

- Discount pricing on CDs from SI Folkways upon request

*quantities based on a six-venue tour