Letter from the Chair

I think the appropriate response is “WOW!” – what a year for the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA)! Thanks to your support and thousands of others, we have much to celebrate. My deepest thanks to the entire keep the momentum going, and to continue to strengthen the vibrant living cultural heritage of our country.

This has been a year of major transition for our organization. Julia Olin ended her tenure as executive director in October to assume the role of artistic director; we pay tribute to her remarkable 28 years of service and leadership at NCTA. Under her vision and guidance, the organization’s impact and influence has never been greater. Julia is succeeded by Lora Bottinelli, an accomplished arts administrator and folk-arts advocate, who built the Ward Museum in Salisbury, Maryland, into a major regional cultural destination and resource.

This year marked the 78th annual National Folk Festival in our new host city, Salisbury, Maryland. Despite rainy weather, the festival attracted over 63,000 visitors to this thriving community in the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula. City officials and townsfolk alike were thrilled with the outcome, which leveraged community infrastructure improvements and promoted civic pride throughout the region. Salisbury fielded more than 1,000 festival volunteers, demonstrating an extraordinary level of grassroots engagement in year one of the National’s three-year residency.

NCTA supported several other successful festival partnerships throughout the country in 2018. An estimated 175,000 visitors attended the Montana Folk Festival in Butte, Montana. The Lowell Folk Festival in Lowell, Massachusetts, brought 150,000 visitors in July and the Richmond Folk Festival in Richmond, Virginia, attracted a crowd of more than 210,000 in October. Audience enthusiasm and donations were at their highest level ever.

We continued our work with the National Endowment for the Arts in support of the National Heritage Fellowships ceremonies and with Maryland Traditions and the Maryland Tradition Heritage Awards program. Our nearly 50-year affiliation with the National Park Service remains strong, and our collaboration with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress has made it possible to digitize hundreds of hours of recordings from our vast archival holdings.

We’re eager to build on the year’s successes to further advance NCTA’s mission in the year ahead, and the board and staff will be working hard to increase organizational capacity. As the preeminent national organization dedicated to folk and traditional arts, the NCTA fills a unique need in the cultural life of our nation. I hope you will join me continuing to support this organization for years to come.

Sincerely,

Chairman of the Board
2018 Season Highlights

690,000+ Event attendees

1,600+ Artists presented
“We pulled off our community’s largest event in history. We shone a bright light...on our city, as we hosted the first of our National Folk Festivals. That event alone brought $20M in economic impact into our county, more than 25,000 out-of-towners, 63,000 revelers, and an unprecedented level of enthusiasm touching every corner of our community.”

Jake Day, Mayor - City of Salisbury
32nd Lowell Folk Festival

July 27-29, 2018
Lowell, MA

"I've had experience with lots of different festivals but this one I felt something special."

Neuza De Pina, Cabo Verde singer/festival artist - Boston, MA
14th Richmond Folk Festival

October 12-14, 2018
Richmond, VA

“Another record breaking year for us! Attendance topped 200,000 for the weekend, which included what appeared to be the largest audience for a single performance on Saturday to hear Mavis Staples.”

Lisa Sims, executive director of Venture Richmond

Photo courtesy NCTA
11th Montana Folk Festival

July 13-15, 2018
Butte, MT

“It brings the world to us, it’s everything!”

Katie Wilson, festival attendee - Bozeman, MT

Photo courtesy Montana Folk Festival
Masters of American Music

March 14, 2018
The Hamilton
Washington, D.C.

“To have such exceptional artists gathered here tonight in support of the NCTA’s work is both a profound honor and an affirmation of our mission – to create powerful, authentic experiences that inspire Americans to connect, to cultivate common ground, and to appreciate the richness and diversity of our nation’s complex culture.”

Julia Olin, NCTA Artistic Director
National Heritage Fellowships

September 26-28, 2018
Washington, D.C.

2018 National Heritage Fellows

• Feryal Abbasi-Ghnaim, Milwaukie, OR
• Eddie Bond, Fries, VA
• Kelly Church, Allegan, MI
• Marion Coleman, Castro Valley, CA
• Manuel Cuevas, Nashville, TN
• Ofelia Esparza, Los Angeles, CA
• Barbara Lynn, Beaumont, TX
• Don & Cindy Roy, Gorham, ME
• Ethel Raim, New York, NY

Photo courtesy Tom Pich
Maryland Traditions Heritage Awards

December 1, 2018
University of Maryland Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD

2018 Honorees:

People: The Sensational Royal Lights

Place: Curtis’ Coney Island Famous Weiners

Tradition: Stuffed Ham
National Park Service

Partnerships throughout the country, including:

- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Richmond National Battlefield Park
- Lowell National Historical Park
- New Orleans Jazz National Heritage Park
- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park

Photo by Keith Pantankar
Courtesy of Pretty Instant
NCTA Archives

The NCTA’s archive of original audio recordings dates from the 1930s, with a concentration of recordings from the 1960s to the present. The significance of the collection lies in its coverage of a broad range of traditional arts in music, dance, and narrative forms.

The NCTA continues to document its many current programs, the audio archive is growing at a rapid rate, with hundreds of hours of new recordings added each year.

In 2001, the NCTA entered into an agreement with the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress to acquire its rare and endangered archive of audio/video recordings, known as “The National Council for the Traditional Arts Collection.”
The NCTA Team

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El Cerrito, California

Andy Wallace  
Thomaston, Maine

Phil Wiggins  
Takoma Park, Maryland

Dwain Winters  
Bethesda, Maryland

**Organization Staff**

Lora Bottinelli, Executive Director

Julia Olin, Artistic Director, Director of Special Projects & Initiatives

Madeleine Remez, Senior Associate Director

Blaine Waide, Associate Director

James Lightner, Accounting & Finance

Amy Mills, Production Manager

Colleen Holroyd, Programming Coordinator

Dudley Connell, Audio Archivist

Ben Tungland, Production Coordinator

Wendy Wang, Logistics Associate

Maia Daniel, Production Assistant
Mission

The National Council for the Traditional Arts is the oldest folk arts organization in the nation, and the only one committed to producing live, multicultural traditional arts events and programs throughout the entire country. Since 1933, the NCTA has celebrated diversity and tradition-based creativity in American society through programs that provide powerful, authentic cultural experiences—inspiring people to connect, to cultivate common ground, and to appreciate the richness and diversity of our nation’s complex culture.

To learn more about our work, please visit Ncta-usa.org
Save the Dates

Maryland Heritage Awards
June 7, 2019

Montana Folk Festival
July 12-14, 2019

Lowell Folk Festival
July 26-28, 2019

National Folk Festival
September 6-8, 2019

National Heritage Fellowships
September 2019

Richmond Folk Festival
October 11-13, 2019