

Mid-Year Report. July, 2007

In the first six months of this year, The Fund has undertaken multiple engagements; their geographical spread, breadth of topics, and the diversity of audiences they attracted reflect our ever-widening interests. As our audiences become more sophisticated, topics that are far beyond our original focus on management training have been added to our repertoire.

We began the year with Fund representatives meeting in Bucharest with the Romanian Ministry of Culture to plan our third regional museum conference. In partnership with the Ministry "Enriching Museum Experiences: A Symposium on Museum Education and Marketing", will take place from October 23-26. The National Museum of Art in Romania agreed to be the third partner to the Ministry and The Fund for the conference, which hopes to draw representatives from more than fifteen countries. Getty Foundation has once again generously funded the conference, which will focus on the visitor and the visitor experience.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was the site of our first seminar of the year, which focused on advocacy and obtaining arts patronage from local businesses. Twenty-six young arts managers from around the country came to Sarajevo for four days for what they deemed highly useful discussions. We are in discussions with various organizations on future projects including two seminars for 2008.

In April, we held the first of three Russian museum seminars scheduled for this year, seminars that are part of our long-term cooperation with the State Russian Museum. The focus of the seminar in Volgograd was on the visitor experience in museums. This was a novel and highly appealing topic for forty-five attendees who stayed for four days, participating in a series of activities and discussions focusing on knowledge and learning in museums.

In June we had a team in Yekaterinburg, Russia's third largest city, to work on audience development with a hundred leaders of the theatre community; we discussed programming, marketing techniques and fundraising. Over the years we have also conducted museum and music consultations in that city and this year we were asked to plan return visits in those disciplines. Possible future programs include sending an expert in volunteer management for orchestras to the Sverdlovsk State Academic Philharmonic and one or more U.S. orchestra trustees to discuss the responsibilities and challenges of trusteeship with their leaders. The idea of a conference of the leaders of Museums of Conscience, to be centered on the Gulag Museum outside Perm, is also on the table for further discussion.

Two Fund consultants were invited to Tbilisi, Georgia for curatorial advice on issues related to the organization and implementation of the recently-formed Georgia National Museum, and to conduct a seminar for museum docents. As a

result of feed-back, we are exploring the possibility of translating and distributing select books on best museum practices for our Georgian colleagues. Arts institutions in Georgia are long-term clients of The Fund and in this connection we would like to congratulate Rusiko Matsaberidze, long-time co-organizer of Fund activities in Tbilisi, on the success of the first New Orleans Days, held in April. The unique culture of New Orleans was presented to lay foundation for a Sister Cities program with Tbilisi. Ms. Matsaberidze declared in an email that, as The Fund's "pupil", she is grateful for our continuous support and encouragement. We, in turn, are proud of her success in organizing such a large, international event.

For our initial seminar in Yerevan, Armenia, attended by thirty-four representatives of museum and cultural organizations, we led discussions on mission statements, meeting visitor expectations, developing new audiences, programming, obtaining financial support, and the mechanics of grant writing. We have requests for further work there with both museums and the theatre community. We have also received an offer to translate The Fund's primary text "*Managing for Money*" which will soon be posted on our website in Armenian.

Our design and architectural consultations with the Political History Museum in St. Petersburg continue. Results include dramatically altering the course of renovations to their historic building. The Museum is rethinking options on ways Russian history is told—for the first time the museum can make interpretative decisions independent of government dictates, so the question they are asking themselves is "How do we tell our history?" Fund consultants have been honored and challenged to explore these questions with them.

By virtue of The Fund's reach and expertise, we are able to maximize our knowledge and our connections in productive ways. For examples:

At our request, two former Country Directors for The Fund in Hungary forged a partnership with the Russian State Museum and organized a conference for regional Russian museum directors in Budapest. In April, forty leaders from major museums benefited from exchanges with leaders of Budapest museums, an entirely new experience for both sides.

Recently we put Jeffrey Meyer, Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic, in touch with Evgeny Artemov director of the Political History Museum and as a result they are planning a chamber music series at the museum, something the museum had long hoped for.

On the home front, Hugh Southern, our Director of Programs, continues to make invaluable contributions by helping select and deploy our many consultants. With Monika Jansen's guidance, we have been broadened our reach electronically. Last winter, she undertook moderating our online discussion board, initially for participants of our conference in Bucharest, but also as an on-going communications forum for all our seminars to enable participants and faculty to further discussions. Over the years with the help of Charles Turner, we have built the usefulness of our website www.fundforartsandculture.org. It is now updated regularly with information on trips, consultants and links to related topics. It contains a variety of supplemental materials including the ever-popular Fund Handbook, *Managing for Money*, available in six languages, and a text on grant writing.

To our regret, two of our board members resigned this spring. Bob Jones, our Vice Chairman since 1991, decided his extraordinary responsibilities in tackling the debts he inherited as head of the Opera Pacific need his full attention. Garrett Mitchell, our Assistant Corporate Secretary, has also tendered his resignation after a short time on our board. And Dorsey Davidge, our Executive Assistant, resigned in June to seek full-time employment. She will be greatly missed.

The Fund would like to congratulate Graham Beal, Director of the Detroit Institute of Art and Fund consultant, for nearing the completion of a six-year renovation and reinstallation project that will add 30% more gallery space, add amenities, and streamline the floor plan, and make the DIA more accessible to the public with labels in plain English, interactive displays, and kid-friendly features. Our consultants Staples and Charles have been deeply involved with this project. Its enormity—and success—certainly shows that our consultants practice what they preach!

We are enormously grateful to all our consultants – it is they who, by giving so generously of their time and talents, make The Fund what it is.

Jillian Poole