

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE from Maryland Citizens for the Arts**

For More Information Contact:

John Schratwieser, Executive Director

410-467-6700 or 410-708-9751

Douglas Mann, Chair

410-225-2352

**Maryland Arts Day 2012**

**Many Voices, One Song**

On Wednesday, February 8, 2012, Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) will host the 14<sup>th</sup> Maryland Arts Day in Annapolis. According to Douglas Mann, Chair of MCA, “over 400 arts advocates and leaders from across the state will converge on the state capital to meet with legislators to emphasize the importance of public support of the arts and the critical role the arts play in an economically and culturally vibrant Maryland.” Details about the event can be found at [www.mdarts.org](http://www.mdarts.org).

The day-long session will begin with greetings and remarks from Maryland lawmakers including Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Speaker of the House Michael Busch and Department of Business and Economic Development Secretary Christian Johansson.

MCA will also present the “**Sue Hess Maryland Arts Advocate of the Year Award**” at Maryland Arts Day. The award is presented to an individual whose advocacy efforts have significantly increases support for and public recognition of the arts in Maryland. The **2012 recipient is Toby Orenstein**, Founder and Artistic Director of the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts in Howard County. Ms. Orenstein was inducted in to the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and in 2005 she was honored for Outstanding Service to Educational Theatre by the Maryland Theatre Association.

For more than 50 years, Ms. Orenstein has served the arts community of Maryland with a particular emphasis on using theatre to better the lives of children. As an arts educator and advocate, Toby was inspired by her early experiences in the Harlem, NY schools. Selected by Eleanor Roosevelt as one of 12 teachers to participate in the “All Day Neighborhood School Project” she worked to motivate and stimulate disaffected and under privileged youth to learn in a different way, through the arts. Toby was practicing “arts integration” long before the phrase was coined. “Toby’s work with CCTA is all volunteer, and her passion and commitment to the arts in Maryland truly shine through this labor of love and in everything she touches,” said Christopher West, MCA Trustee and Chair of the Sue Hess Award Committee.

The day’s **keynote speaker** is **Bashi Rose**. Mr. Rose is a Maryland theatre artist and filmmaker. He is also co-founder of Nommo Theatre/Film. His works have been produced in Baltimore, D.C., and New York City. He has conducted drama workshops in Hagerstown prison and several prisons in Jessup, Maryland under the auspices of The Friend Of A Friend Mentoring Program founded by Marshall “Eddie” Conway and Dominique Stevenson. In 2007 Bashi partnered with his wife, Sharayna Christmas-Rose (founder of Muse 360) to form a youth arts program, Dancing Many Drums (DMD), where Baltimore youth have the opportunity to learn about themselves and the African Diaspora using dance, theater, music and visual arts. To further their study they have traveled to Harlem, New York’s Schomburg Center for Black Research and Culture, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Puerto Rico.

**Performing at Maryland Arts Day** will be Piedmont blues singer and guitarist **Warner Williams** and his musical partner and harmonica player Jay Summerour. Recently recognized as a **2011 NEA National Heritage Fellow**, Warner Williams is a Takoma Park native who has been making music for more than 60 years. In “retirement,” Mr. Williams still brings the Piedmont blues to schools, blues clubs, and folk festivals.

Williams and Summerour began playing together during the early 1990s, sometimes calling themselves “Little Bit of Blues.” They have been featured in concerts, on television and radio, and at festivals across the country, including appearances on the National Public Radio series Folk Masters, at the National and Lowell folk festivals and on the National Mall during the American Roots Fourth of July celebration.

There will also be briefings on the state budget, communication training, and advocacy strategies, according to MCA Director John Schratwieser. “Participants will have the chance to meet with their representatives and convey their own message about the economic, cultural, educational and social impacts of the arts in their districts and across Maryland.”

**What: Maryland Arts Day**

**Where: Annapolis, MD – Miller Senate Building, President’s Conference Center West/East**

**When: Wednesday, February 8, 2012 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**Contact: Maryland Citizens for the Arts, [info@mdarts.org](mailto:info@mdarts.org), 410-467-6700**

**Photo Opportunities:**

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| <b>8:50 – 10:00 a.m.</b>       | <b>Elected Officials address conference</b>   |
| <b>10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.</b> | <b>Keynote Speaker Bashi Rose</b>   |
| <b>11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.</b> | <b>Advocates meet with Legislators in County Delegations Rooms in Lowe House Office Building</b>          |
| <b>12:45 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.</b>  | <b>Presentation of Sue Hess Maryland Arts Advocate of the Year award. Performance by Warner Williams.</b> |