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PRESS RELEASE



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The North Carolina Folk Festival and JM International Announce Partnership to Bring Global Musical Exchange Program to the NC Folk Fest in Greensboro

Greensboro, N.C., May 10, 2023 — The North Carolina Folk Festival and JM International (JMI) - a Belgium-based global network of nonprofit organizations that provide opportunities for young people to engage with music - announced a partnership to bring the international folk music exchange program, *Ethno*, to Greensboro during the NC Folk Fest (September 8-10, 2023).

Ethno is one of JMI's 14 international musical exchange programs that convene young musicians in collaborative and educational activities that foster cultural understanding through music. *Ethno* is present in over 40 countries and is JMI's premiere program dedicated to folk, traditional, and world music.

Ethno USA, the only *Ethno* convening scheduled in the United States in 2023, will convene around 40 young musicians from across the globe in Greensboro for a week-long residency. Each *Ethno USA* participant will teach a folk or traditional song from their home country to the other participants in a peer-to-peer, collaborative learning environment through workshops and jam sessions. The residency will culminate in three performances for the public that will showcase original and newly arranged songs created during the residency. Two of the public performances will be featured on stage at the NC Folk Fest in September.

“Core values of welcoming and supporting people from diverse backgrounds are imbued into the spirit of the Greensboro community and into our presentation of the NC Folk Fest each year,” said Amy Grossmann, President & CEO of the North Carolina Folk Festival. “This partnership with *Ethno USA* is a natural and fitting extension of our shared values to promote cultural understanding through the arts, and we are thrilled to build on that community spirit.”

Ethno USA participants are selected through an online application process. Young musicians from across the globe - including the United States - between the ages of 21 and 30 are eligible to apply. More information about application requirements and deadlines can be found at www.ethno.world/usa.

A goal of the worldwide *Ethno* program is to inspire musicians through these residency interactions, to deepen their musical interests, and to strengthen a global network that supports their careers. Through *Ethno*, musicians gain a greater understanding of each other's cultures; using music as a powerful tool that fosters inclusion, understanding and acceptance.

“*Ethno* has a successful track record of bringing people together to cooperate, collaborate and learn from each other. For so many participants, *Ethno* is a life-changing program. Musicians learn how to coexist in harmony, solve and dissolve their differences, and co-create something much larger than themselves, something that they can be proud of. The learnings and takeaways reverberate for years”, said Suchet Malhotra, Program Director of *Ethno*.

Hala Maimoun, a 2022 *Ethno* participant from Jordan, says of her experience in the program, “Honestly, our language is one. Not Arabic, not English, not Spanish - it's just music. So when you speak the same language and you feel each other through the same language, you build a family.”

Ethno USA public performances will take place on Thursday, September 7 (location TBA), and at the NC Folk Fest on Friday, September 8 and Saturday, September 9.

More information is available at www.ncfolkfestival.com/ethno-usa.

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About the North Carolina Folk Festival: The North Carolina Folk Festival's mission is to honor, celebrate, and share the meaningful ways communities express their creativity and cultural traditions through music, dance, food, crafts and other folk arts to enhance appreciation

of diverse traditions and contribute to community vibrancy and inclusivity. Our signature event, the annual NC Folk Fest, is one of the fastest-growing destination events in the Southeast, attracting people from across the U.S. to downtown Greensboro each September. The festival is a FREE admission, three-day event featuring performing groups representing a diverse array of cultural traditions from around the world on multiple stages, including continuous music and dance performances, a makers marketplace, regional and ethnic foods, festival merchandise and more. The 2023 North Carolina Folk Festival will take place in downtown Greensboro September 8 through 10. Additional information is available at www.ncfolkfestival.com.

About JMI: JMI is the world's largest youth-music non-profit organization with members in over 70 countries worldwide. JMI was established in Brussels, Belgium in 1945 with the goal to enable young people to develop through music across all boundaries and borders. JMI's network of 40,000+ annual musical activities outreaches 7 million young people, using the power of music for social change. Additional information is available at www.jmi.net.

About Ethno: Ethno is JMI's program for folk, world and traditional music. Founded in 1990, it is aimed at young musicians (aged 16-30) with a mission to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage. Present today in over 40 countries, Ethno engages young people through a series of annual international music camps, as well as workshops, concerts and tours. At the core of Ethno is its democratic, peer to peer learning approach whereby young people teach each other the music from their countries and cultures. It is a non-formal pedagogy that has been refined over the past 33 years, embracing the principles of intercultural dialogue and understanding. Ethno provides a unique opportunity for young people from across the globe to come together and engage through music in a manner that is characterized by respect, generosity and openness. Additional information is available at www.ethno.world and www.ethno.world/usa.