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SONES DE MEXICO ENSEMBLE AWARDED A \$30,000 NEA GRANT

National Endowment for the Arts awards more than \$30 Million across nation, including \$30,000 to Chicago-based Sones de México Ensemble for “Beyond the Music: A Musical Geography of Mexico” a touring, lecture/demo series

CHICAGO —For its first major grant funding round of fiscal year 2017, the National Endowment for the Arts announced more than \$30 million will be awarded to nonprofit organizations and individuals across the country for grants in the areas of Art Works, Art Works: Creativity Connects, Challenge America, and Creative Writing Fellowships. These grants cross all artistic disciplines, reach 48 states as well as Washington, DC, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and also support partnerships between the arts and non-arts sectors.

The funding for 2017 includes an Art Works award of \$30,000 to Sones de México Ensemble to help fund the multi-state *Beyond the Music: A Musical Geography of Mexico* lecture and demonstration series. The Art Works category supports the creation of work and presentation of both new and existing work, lifelong learning in the arts, and public engagement with the arts through 13 arts disciplines or fields.

“The arts are for all of us, and by supporting these projects, the National Endowment for the Arts is providing more opportunities for the public to engage with the arts,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “Whether in a theater, a town square, a museum, or a hospital, the arts are everywhere and make our lives richer.”

Juan Días, co-founder and Executive Director of Sones de México Ensemble, said, “We’re very happy that the National Endowment for the Arts has renewed their support for the cultural and educational efforts of Sones de México.” He continues, “With *Beyond the Music*, we’ll be able to foster a deeper appreciation of the culture, not only among Mexican-American communities, but with the wider population across the United States. In a time when immigrant communities feel

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under threat, our program reinforces pride and promotes cross-cultural understanding and exchange.”

A Musical Geography of Mexico will offer lectures and demonstrations of folk music and traditional dance from the various geographic regions of Mexico in a manner that is engaging, entertaining and informative. The program will be presented in both English and Spanish to reach as wide an audience as possible in several U.S. states.

About Sones de México Ensemble: The group is Chicago’s premier folk music organization specializing in Mexican ‘son,’ a genre encompassing the roots of mariachi music and other regional styles, including *huapango*, *gustos*, *chilenas*, *son jarocho*, and more. The ensemble was formed in 1994 and soon incorporated as a non-profit organization to keep the tradition of Mexican ‘son’ alive in its many regional forms. As a performer and recording artist, they have developed and popularized many original arrangements of Mexican traditional tunes. Its original work has experimented cross-culturally with symphonic, Irish, folk, blues, C&W, jazz and rock, though never abandoning its roots in Mexican son.

The group has released six CDs: *¡Que Florezca! (Let it Bloom)*; *Fandango on 18th Street*, the GRAMMY® nominated *Esta Tierra Es Tuya (This Land is Your Land)*; *Fiesta Mexicana* (a children’s album); *¡Viva la Revolución!*; and *13 B’ak’tun*.

The organization is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with a commitment to teaching. The mission of Sones de México Ensemble is to promote greater appreciation of Mexican folk and traditional music and culture through innovative performance, education, and dissemination.

For more information, visit www.sonesdemexico.com

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