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

National Endowment for the Arts awards more than \$27.6 Million across nation, including \$30,000 to Chicago-based Sones de Mexico Ensemble for “A Musical Geography of Mexico” a touring, lecture/demo series

CHICAGO —In its first 50 years, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded more than \$5 billion in grants to recipients in every state and U.S. jurisdiction, the only arts funder in the nation to do so. Today, the NEA announced awards totaling more than \$27.6 million in its first funding round of fiscal year 2016, including an Art Works award of \$30,000 to Sones de México Ensemble to help fund a multi-state *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.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “The arts are part of our everyday lives – no matter who you are or where you live – they have the power to transform individuals, spark economic vibrancy in communities, and transcend the boundaries across diverse sectors of society. Supporting projects like the one from Sone de Mexico Ensemble offers more opportunities to engage in the arts every day.”

Juan Díes, co-founder and Executive Director of Sones de México Ensemble, said, “We’re very happy that the National Endowment for the Arts continues to support the cultural and educational efforts of Sones de Mexico.” He continues, “With *A Musical Geography of Mexico*,

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we'll be able to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture, not only among Mexican-American communities, but with the wider population across the United States.”

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. It is expected that the program will be presented in as many as 12 different 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.

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