

# CADENCE

the NEWSLETTER of

PO Box 2721  
1000 CS Amsterdam  
THE NETHERLANDS



AMERICAN VOICES ASSOCIATION

[www.americanvoices.org](http://www.americanvoices.org)

fall 2000

## Re-inventing American Voices

AN UPDATE

Many of you have been closely following and involved in American Voices' transformation from a not-for-profit organization primarily funded by the former United States Information Agency to one funded by foundations and corporate sponsors. It has now been one year since we began this process and we are happy to report that we are bringing more quality American music programs than ever before to a wider range of countries and continents.

“Bringing more programs than ever before to a wider range of countries and continents.”

Despite some learning experiences in the course of developing our new *modus operandi*, we are busier than ever and expanding the geographic range and artist roster accordingly. Also important to our growth has been the opening of our new office in Gouda, The Netherlands and the addition of Liz Smailes to our team as Project and Public Relations Manager.

The beginning of 2001 found us on the path of the ancient Silk Road bringing Bernstein to Baku and Ives to Ashgabad. Other highlights include Kurt Weill Centennial Year programs on tour in Germany and a series of concerts and choral workshops in Bosnia. The year also ushers in a period of significant geographic expansion to Central and South America, Africa and Southeast Asia.

We are more enthusiastic than ever about our work together with American Embassies, music festivals and ministries of culture throughout the world and looking forward to the artistic and organizational challenges ahead. If you would like to be part of our effort to bring quality American programming to your part of the world please let us hear from you.

John Ferguson  
Artistic Director  
[americanvoices@wxs.nl](mailto:americanvoices@wxs.nl)

*Artistic Director with young audiences in Turkmenistan*



## Artist-in-Residence News

A significant part of American Voices' re-invention has been the focus we are giving to establishing annual Artist-in-Residence programs around the world. Our experience over the past 8 years



*American Opera in Tashkent, Daniel Washington and John Ferguson*

has made us aware of the importance of combining our performing skills with educational activities and donations of music scores and materials wherever possible.

We are currently working on establishing a program of annual projects in over 15 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. These Artist-in-Residence programs feature American Voices artists in 5 days of gala concerts, masterclasses, workshops and teacher-training as well as the donation of scores and educational materials.

In 2001 we will be taking follow-up residency programs to Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Bosnia, Kuwait and Germany. We will also be initiating the first programs of this kind in China, India and Latin America.

In addition to our delight at meeting so many fine and dedicated young musicians and cultural institutions, our sponsors have been quite enthusiastic about the opportunities these programs offer for associating their company with high quality American cultural programs.



*CoCo York sings the Blues in Baku*

## Introducing Liz Smailes

PROJECT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER

The development and expansion over the past two years has created the need for additional personnel to handle project management and fundraising aspects. In bringing Liz Smailes on board, American Voices has found a Project and Public Relations Manager with the ideal combination of a business and arts background.

While studying for a Masters Degree in English, Economics and Politics at Freiburg University, Germany, Liz always had one foot in the professional world to finance her studies. As such, over the past





seven years Liz has gained experience in the public relations departments of product marketing, book publishing, the Fraunhofer Research Institute for Solar Energy in Freiburg, in addition to teaching English as a foreign language.

A native of York, England, her interest in American culture was awakened during her year in Philadelphia teaching piano and violin to children as well as being

actively involved in the Philadelphia arts scene.

Since March 1999 Liz has established a flourishing working relationship with American Voices, an organization in which all her personal interests are united: music, business and cultural exchange. Having lived abroad for eight years and presently still residing in Germany, Liz is well aware of the importance of intercultural experience as a forum for dialogue and common understanding. American Voices is thrilled to have Liz contribute her skills and dedicate her interests to our association. ●

## Artist and Project Updates

### AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC PROJECTS

Baritone and choral conductor **Ira Spaulding** has recently led a series of enthusiastically received choral workshops featuring American choral repertoire. In Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, Germany he and **John Ferguson** worked with over 70 high school music teachers and 100 high school students during a three day period for the American Cultural Days Festival of the Leucorea Foundation at the University of Halle. Other choral programs included working with choirs and young professional singers in Bosnia. Similar programs are currently being arranged for 2001 in Lithuania, Moldova, Kuwait and Oman.



### DONATIONS OF AMERICAN MUSIC SCORES

As part of its concerts and educational activities, American Voices is continuing with its donations of basic collections of American



Donation Ceremony - Budapest Municipal Library

music scores to Conservatory, national and municipal libraries around the world. These scores serve as a much-needed resource allowing music students and faculty to pursue their interests in

American music after our teaching and performing programs in their country have come to an end.

Recent donations include The National Conservatory of Ashgabad, Turkmenistan and the Music Academies of Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Smaller donations have also



been made in Oman and Kuwait. Upcoming donations include Tunisia, Syria, El Salvador, Honduras and Bolivia. Since 1997, American Voices has arranged the purchase of over a dozen such collections in cities ranging from Budapest to Tashkent.

### UPPING THE ANTE: MUSIC INFORMATION CENTERS:

In follow-up projects in 2001 in Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and elsewhere, AV plans to donate not only supplementary American music scores, but also materials for a Music Information Center providing access to the wide world of music to students and faculty of these conservatories. Planned materials include a computer with Internet access, music publishing software, educational CD-Roms and reference materials.

### COPLAND CENTENNIAL LECTURE FOR EXPO 2000



American Voices guest artist, **Dr. Howard Pollack** of the University of Houston presented an Aaron Copland Centennial Year lecture and concert on June 17<sup>th</sup> at the American Academy in Berlin in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy. Dr. Pollack is the celebrated author of the definitive Copland biography *Aaron Copland - The Life of an Uncommon Man*.

Aaron Copland, 1900-1992

Other Copland Centennial activities include performances of his *Old American Songs* in Latin America and the Middle East in September and October. His piano music will be featured on concert tours in Asia in November.

### DANIEL WASHINGTON AND ISABELLE GANZ ACCEPT FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Mezzo-soprano **Isabelle Ganz** has been appointed to the voice faculty of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. Baritone **Daniel Washington** has joined the music faculty of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor as Assistant Dean. Both artists will continue to collaborate with American Voices from their new American home bases.



Daniel Washington



Isabelle Ganz

## Recent Press

"A classic performance, with a stylish presentation. His virtuoso approach to the entire piece (*Rhapsody in Blue*) left no doubt that this was an expert at work: one who knows American music thoroughly and has it in his blood. A sovereign performer."

Altmark Zeitung, Germany John Ferguson, pianist

"A beautiful voice that also keeps its shine in the highest registers. She immediately had the complete attention of the audience."

Saarbruecker Zeitung, Germany Rosalie Becker, soprano

## The Fourth Kuwait Jazz Festival

AN EVALUATION FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY

On April 29, American Voices, in its trio configuration of soprano Kathryn Magestro, baritone Kurt Ollmann and pianist and musical director John Ferguson, closed out the Fourth Kuwait Jazz Festival to an audience of jazz enthusiasts. April 30 saw an

unprecedented 220 mostly-Kuwaiti audience delight to a concert of American Broadway music in the garden of the American Ambassador's residence. It was *some enchanted evening*...

Although much of this music is at least somewhat familiar to Kuwaiti ears, it is extremely rare to be treated to a live performance of it in Kuwait. In the Kuwaiti



“It was *some enchanted evening*”

context, such programs also send the important message that Americans seek to engage Kuwaitis at the personal level and are willing to share with them the best of American culture.

American Voices is an excellent vehicle for presenting American music in countries that rarely hear it live. It is

virtually a *musiciens sans frontieres*, where accomplished artists, otherwise used to being pampered and fussed over, check their egos at the door in favor of their shared mission of showcasing American music abroad, often in parts of the world where divas are usually loath to tread. A typical audience for such an event is 80 - 100; this concert saw 220 in attendance. ●

## Introducing New Artists

Our success over recent years has not only attracted the interest of cultural institutions around the world, but also an enthusiasm for our mission by established America-based performing artists. As a result, we are pleased to announce the following additions to our existing artist roster:



## Kurt Ollmann

BARITONE

Kurt Ollmann came to prominence singing Riff on the Deutsche Grammophon recording of **West Side Story** under Leonard Bernstein. He has sung **Pelléas** at La Scala under Abbado, the Count in **Figaro** at the Opera Theater of St. Louis, and **Don Giovanni** in the original Peter Sellars production at Pepsico Summerfare. He

has also sung at the Vienna State Opera, the Rome Opera, Brussels' La Monnaie, the Seattle Opera and the Washington Opera. He sang Leonard Bernstein's **Songfest** under Mr. Bernstein's direction in Rome, and in a televised production from the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

**From The New Yorker**

"Mr. Ollmann was compelling: fully in character, singing with radiant strength of purpose and clarity."

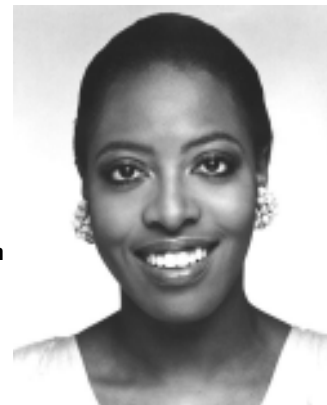
A dedicated representative of American music, his discography features an eclectic mix of American works ranging from Gershwin's **Oh Kay!** with soprano Dawn Upshaw to the songs of Paul Bowles and Carly Simon's opera **Romulus Hunt**.

Kurt Ollmann has performed for American Voices in Kuwait and in Latin America. Upcoming projects will find his impressive talents on tour in Greece and Lebanon.

## Charlae Olaker

SOPRANO

Charlae Olaker, a native of Chicago, is the recipient of numerous scholarships, prizes and awards, including **First Prize in the Y.W.C.A. Annual Vocal Competition (New York)** and as sole vocal winner of the **Artist's International Competition**, under whose auspices she was presented in her New York recital debut at **Carnegie Recital Hall**.



As a champion of American music, she has toured with composer Philip Glass in his Ensemble in **The Photographer** and in **Einstein on the Beach** at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. She has also been acclaimed for her performances of **Porgy and Bess** at the Spoleto Festival in Australia, and the Goetz Friedrich production in Berlin.

**Dortmunder Zeitung**

"Sopranos who can sing so high with such supreme confidence, and fill it with warmth and soul, are rare."

Charlae Olaker has been a celebrated guest soloist in American Voices' Gershwin Centennial programs in Germany and Luxemburg in 1998. Upcoming projects include performances at the Ripon Festival (U.K.) and in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf region in 2001. ●



# American Voices on Tour

<http://www.americanvoices.org/schedule>

## SEPTEMBER:

**Ripon International Festival, UK 'Broadway and the Blues'**  
American Voices UK debut with Charlae Olaker, soprano, Ira Spaulding, baritone and John Ferguson

**Latin America** - Artist-in-Residence programs in the Honduras, El Salvador and Bolivia, *Variations on America* with Kurt Ollmann, baritone and John Ferguson, pianist



## OCTOBER:

**Middle East/ Gulf** Saudia Arabia, Bahrain, Tunisia, Malta and Syria, with Ira Spaulding, baritone and John Ferguson, pianist in *Variations on America* including a special Copland tribute for his centennial year

## NOVEMBER:

**Slovakia** American Artist-in-Residence program in collaboration with InterArtists and the Music Information Center of Slovakia, Nov. 13-17 John Ferguson, pianist

**Malaysia and Japan** Artist-in-Residence program, *Variations on America* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and concert tour of Japan Nov. 20th-December 11<sup>th</sup> John Ferguson

## DECEMBER:

**Greece** Concerts and masterclasses in Athens featuring Kurt Ollmann and Kathryn Magestro

**Lebanon** - Artist-in-Residence program in Beirut featuring a Gala performance with the National Symphony Orchestra



Azerbaijani musicians...

## 2001

### FEBRUARY:

**Silk Road Tour** *Broadway in Central Asia* American Artists-in-Residence bringing the first performances of American Broadway to Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia. Also featuring concert performances of *West Side Story* with young professionals and students

### MARCH:

**Bosnia** Encore of American Choral Project with Ira Spaulding in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar

### APRIL:

**Kuwait** - Porgy and Bess with Charlae Olaker and Ira Spaulding

### MAY:

**China** - Artist-in-Residence programs in Beijing and Shanghai

### JUNE:

**Amsterdam** - Porgy and Bess with Ira Spaulding

We would like to thank our sponsors who have made all of these programs possible. Without their commitment to supporting quality American performing arts programs abroad these programs and projects would not be possible. **Our sincerest thanks go to:**

**ExxonMobil** - Turkmenistan

**Unocal Khazar** - Azerbaijan

**Chevron** - Kuwait

**Citibank** - Latin America

**Lufthansa Airlines** - Kuwait, Baku and Ashgabad

**KLM** - Oman

**American Airlines** - Latin America

**Radisson/SAS Hotels** - Oman and Kuwait

**Sheraton Grand Turkmen Hotel** - Ashgabad

**Hotel Inter-Continental** - Tegucigalpa

**Marriott** - San Salvador

**Wizard.com** - Seattle

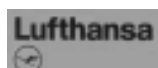
**ExxonMobil**

**UNOCAL KHAZAR**



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American Voices is a non-profit organization devoted to the better understanding of American culture through music. In repertoire ranging from Broadway and jazz to contemporary composers and opera, American Voices performs over 100 concerts, masterclasses and workshops annually in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

Board of Advisors:

**Jaye Escudero**

**Janet Garvey**

**Frances Richard**

**Leonard Slatkin**

### Contact Information:

**John Ferguson**, Artistic Director American Voices

Graaf Florisweg 22 2805 AL Gouda The Netherlands

tel/fax +31 182 678 683 fax mail +31 842 110 584

e-mail [americanvoices@wxs.nl](mailto:americanvoices@wxs.nl) <http://www.americanvoices.org>

**Liz Smiles**, Project and Public Relations Manager

tel/fax + 49 761 319 6652

e-mail: [americanvoices@gmx.de](mailto:americanvoices@gmx.de)