

PRESS RELEASE – Photo Available

January 28, 2009

Contact: Rochelle Barr Sartorius at (231) 767-7267 or rsartori@muskegonisd.org
Online: <http://www.artsmidwest.org/programs/amwf/artists> and
<http://www.artsmidwestworldfest.org/teachers/china/>

Local students/public to enjoy folk music/traditional instruments of Inner Mongolia

MUSKEGON: On Thursday, **February 12, An Da Union**, 14 young and dynamic musicians from Inner Mongolia, will perform for local kindergarten through 6th grade students from 10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. and 6th through 12th grade students from 1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Mona Shores Performing Arts Center in Muskegon. The group will close out their visit to Muskegon with a public performance at the Mona Shores Performing Arts Center on Saturday, **February 14**, at 7:30 p.m.

According to organizers An Da Union will bring power, excitement, and the haunting beauty of their homeland and culture to Muskegon. Audiences will feel the hoof beats of horses moving across the vast grasslands; the songs of unseen birds on summer mornings; and be carried back to a time when these songs and instruments--horse-head fiddles and three holed flutes among others--were played late into the evening in the camps of the great Genghis Khan. The main signing style performed by An Da Union is khoomii, commonly referred to as throat singing, a traditional type of Mongolian overtone signing, which replicates the sounds of nature. The award-winning group has been featured at the Kennedy Center Festival of China.

Tickets for the Saturday evening concert may be purchased at *Meyer Music* near the Lakes Mall, *Pic-N-Pac* on Henry Street, *North Shore Books* in North Muskegon, and *The Corner Girls: Jilly's and Sun, Wind, and Rain* in Downtown Muskegon for \$12 per adult and \$6 per senior/student. Tickets will be available at the door the night of the concert, or in advance by calling (231) 767-7267.

"It's a very rare opportunity for any community in the United States to host an ensemble from Inner Mongolia," says Rochelle Barr Sartorius, Arts Specialist for the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District. "The music this ensemble shares will be absolutely fascinating and so different from anything we have heard before." According to Sartorius, Muskegon typically does not have the resources to host international ensembles like An Da Union. Arts Midwest, a regional arts organization based in Minneapolis, offsets much of the cost and handles the coordination of Arts Midwest World Fest tours in order to offer communities throughout the Midwest this rich international arts experience. Muskegon is one of only 11 Midwestern cities to host the *2007-09 Arts Midwest World Fest*.

"Our goal is to make lasting impressions on the communities that host Arts Midwest World Fest," says Sylvia Kaufman, Chair of the Arts Midwest World Fest. "Our musicians do not simply perform one evening and leave. The ensemble will reside in the community for a number of days and perform at schools and at community venues, including workshops about their culture, music and language. To support the learning experiences for children, Arts Midwest has created comprehensive curriculum materials for various grade levels," added Kaufman.

An Da Union's visit marks the end of a two-year Arts Midwest World Fest partnership with Muskegon. Previous ensemble visits included Esta of Israel, Ilay of Somalia, and Los Utrera of Veracruz, Mexico. Arts Midwest World Fest is a global arts and education and outreach performing arts program designed to provide inspiring arts enrichment while instilling appreciation for diversity and encourages acceptance of others and their cultures. Arts Midwest World Fest is a program of Arts Midwest in partnership with its member state arts agencies: Illinois Arts Council, Indiana Arts Commission, Iowa Arts Council, Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, Minnesota State Arts Board, North Dakota Council on the Arts, Ohio Arts Council, South Dakota Arts Council, and Wisconsin State Arts Board.

An Arts Midwest initiative, the 2007-2009 Arts Midwest World Fest is generously sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, 3M Foundation, Verizon Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Risdall Marketing Group, Québec Delegation du Chicago, Canadian Consulate General – Minneapolis, The Consulate General of Israel to the Midwest, the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, The Muskegon Chronicle, Amstore Corporation, the Muskegon Jewish Community, and the Muskegon Rotary Club. The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities is honored to support the extended U.S. tour of China's An Da Union.”

###