

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE ARTS



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NATION'S BEST YOUNG ARTISTS TO BE HONORED BY THE WHITE HOUSE!

20 YoungArts Finalists Named U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts, Winners to Perform at Prestigious John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Exhibit at Smithsonian American Art Museum

MIAMI (May 2010) Twenty of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts' (NFAA) YoungArts finalists have just been named **U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts**. After anxiously waiting for nearly three months to hear the results, these exceptionally talented students officially have been named U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts – the highest honor bestowed on the nation's graduating high school seniors – by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, on behalf of the President of the United States. Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 46th year, is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Each year 141 Scholars, including up to 20 Scholars in the Arts, are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

Dedication and commitment to their academics, combined with brilliant artistic abilities has helped these 20 YoungArts finalists prove that they are not only the top student artists in the nation, but also dedicated learners and an inspiration to others. The newly named U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts will be honored in Washington D.C. during National Recognition Week in a highly anticipated **White House sponsored** ceremony in June, alongside the 121 academic scholars. The artists will exhibit their artwork at the Smithsonian American Art Museum on Sunday, June 20, and perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on Monday, June 21.

This outstanding achievement comes as a direct result of their participation in the prestigious national YoungArts Program. YoungArts is the sole nominating agency for the arts track of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Each year, YoungArts begins with more than 6,000 applicants to its YoungArts Program and, through a rigorous adjudication process nominates 60 YoungArts Finalists for consideration by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, from which 20 are ultimately named U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

"I am so proud of the 2010 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts" Christina DePaul, YoungArts President and CEO says. "They are truly talented in both their artistic and scholastic abilities. These are the future leaders of our nation, the next generation of great American artists and it is an honor to be supporting these amazing students."

From Florida to Texas and New York to South Carolina, these 20 remarkable student artists represent 10 states and nine artistic disciplines including Cinematic Arts, Photography, Dance, Jazz, Music, Theater, Voice, Visual Arts and Writing. Each took their own unique path to receiving this honor but their dedication to academic and artistic excellence and a strong support system of family, teachers and friends is the common thread binding them together.

Added DePaul, "We, as a nation, benefit from the progressive thinking of our artistic leaders. Whether our U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts choose to embark on a traditional career in the arts or choose something else entirely, the creative skills and innovative thinking that a lifetime spent in the arts fosters will be critical not only to their individual success but to that of our nation in the years to come."

The 2010 class of U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts joins an illustrious fraternity which includes Tony Award nominated dancer and choreographer Desmond Richardson, American Ballet Theatre Executive Director Rachel Moore, novelist and National Book Award Finalist Allegra Goodman, Grammy Award nominated violin soloist Jennifer Koh, OBIE Award-winning actress Donna Lynne Champlin and acclaimed visual artist Kevin Berlin.

The performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is **FREE** and open to the public. To reserve your tickets call the Presidential Scholar line **after June 5** at 202.401.0961. General public tickets can be picked up at the U.S. Presidential Scholar will-call table in front of the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on Monday, June 21 about an hour and half before the 7:30 p.m. show time. Tickets not picked up by 7:15 p.m. will be released on a first-come, first-serve basis.

2010 Presidential Scholars in the Arts:

Matthew Brailas: Austin, TX, Westlake High School

Luke Celenza: Bedford, NY, Fox Lane High School

Bobby Chen: Newton, MA, Phillips Academy

Austin Goodwin: Plano, TX, Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual & Performing Arts

John Goss: Bellaire, TX, Kinkaid School

Uchechi Kalu: Orangeburg, SC, South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities

Kelley Katzenmeyer: Durham, NC, North Carolina School of the Arts

Blaine Krauss: St. Petersburg, FL, Gibbs Senior High School

Robert Moore: Porter, TX, High School for the Performing & Visual Arts

Phoebe Nir: New York, NY, Fieldston School

Sean Plumb: Los Angeles, CA, Loyola High School

Jake Ross: Greenville, SC, South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities

Ida Saki: Plano, TX, Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual & Performing Arts

Michael Silberblatt: Coronado, CA, Coronado High School

Austin Taylor: Plano, TX, St. Mark's School of Texas

Michael Taylor: Arlington, TX, Home Schooled

Erica Vlahinos: Castle Rock, CO, Douglas County High School

Alexander Vollmer: Marietta, GA, Pebblebrook High School

Connor Watumull: Dallas, TX, St. Mark's School of Texas
Lauren Williams: Northbrook, IL, Chicago Academy for Arts

Photos and bios are available upon request. Interviews can be facilitated.

For information about how to register for the 2011 YoungArts program, please visit www.youngarts.org or call 1-800-970-ARTS (2787).

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About YoungArts

YoungArts is the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). It is the signature national organization that recognizes and supports America's most talented 17-18 year olds in the visual, literary and performing arts. YoungArts is the sole nominating agency for Presidential Scholars in the Arts. The foundation provides emerging artists with financial support and life changing experiences with internationally renowned artists. YoungArts alumni go on to become leading professionals in their fields. Alumni include Emmy nominated actress Vanessa Williams, three-time Tony Award nominee Raúl Esparza, star of HBO's *Entourage* Adrian Grenier and Warner Brothers Recording Artist Josh Groban. For more information, visit www.youngarts.org