



A program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts

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## **youngARTS™ FINALISTS ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE WHITE HOUSE!**

### **The Presidential Scholar in the Arts Semi-Finalist Nominations Are In!**

**MIAMI (April 14, 2009)** – Forty six youngARTS™ Finalists have just been named Semi-Finalists to become **Presidential Scholars in the Arts**. These exceptional students have qualified for the final round of considerations, which is an extraordinary achievement. The Commission on Presidential Scholars, a division of the U.S. Department of Education, has the daunting task of narrowing the list down from the original 60 nominees to the 46 Semi-Finalists. In the end, 20 talented artists will ultimately be named Presidential Scholars in the Arts and will be honored at the White House as well as show their artwork at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in June. The final list of the 20 youngARTS Finalists, to be named Presidential Scholars in the Arts, will be officially announced on Monday May 4, 2009.

For now, it is a distinct honor for these students to be selected as Semi-Finalists. This outstanding achievement comes as a direct result of their participation in the prestigious youngARTS Week. The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA), through its youngARTS Program, is the sole nominating agency for this division of the U.S. Department of Education and the Presidential Scholars in the Arts. Each year, NFAA begins with more than 6,000 applicants to its youngARTS Program and through a rigorous adjudication process ultimately nominates 60 youngARTS Finalists for consideration by the Commission on Presidential Scholars, from which these students have received the remarkable recognition as Semi-Finalists.

Christina DePaul, the President and CEO of youngARTS says, "I am thrilled to witness their success. This is an incredible honor for our talented youngARTS

Finalists and just the beginning for these students; they have proven without a doubt that they are the very best in the nation.” The students selected as Presidential Scholars in the Arts stand toe to toe with the most brilliant minds in our country. They represent the leaders of the future and the **top one percent of student artists in our nation**. The President himself is expected to honor all the Presidential Scholars at a **White House** ceremony which will include the Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

youngARTS celebrates and rewards exceptional student artists from across the U.S. in the performing, literary and visual arts. In order to be considered for the Presidential Scholar in the Arts distinction, student artists must be named a Finalist in the NFAA’s youngARTS Program.

Inclusion in the Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 45<sup>th</sup> 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. This year, over 3,000 students are eligible for the program’s academic component, based on outstanding scores on the SAT or ACT exam. Of these, 121 will be selected as Presidential Scholars.

**The list below includes all the youngARTS Finalists who have been named Semi-Finalists for consideration to become Presidential Scholars in the Arts:**

Holden M. Brown, Cinematic Arts, Mandeville, LA  
Georgianna K. Gyzen, Cinematic Arts, Irvine, CA

Ernest F. Baker II, Dance, Opa-Locka, FL  
Jeniffer L. Criss, Dance, Dallas, TX  
Vidya Govind-Thomas, Dance, Schaumburg, IL  
Daniel Mitra, Dance, Woodstock Valley, CT  
Nathaniel D. Trasoras, Dance, Downey, CA

Kathryn L. Davis, Jazz, West Linn, OR

Gi-Young Hwang, Music/Instrumental, Brea, CA  
Andrea C. Jarrett, Music/Instrumental, Saline, MI  
Benjamin R. Lash, Music/Instrumental, Evanston, IL  
Emily G. Levin, Music/Instrumental, Centennial, CO  
Yuqing Meng, Music/Instrumental, Madison, NJ  
Leann N. Osterkamp, Music/Instrumental, Boulder, CO  
Christopher S. Pell, Music/Instrumental, Bronx, NY  
Nathaniel P. West, Music/Instrumental, Columbus, OH  
Allen Yueh, Music/Instrumental, Bridgewater, NJ

Joshua A. Arky, Voice, Brooklyn, NY  
Julian A. Cook, Voice, Chicago, IL

Eryn A. LeCroy, Voice, Belle Mead, NJ  
Miles D. Mykkanen, Voice, Bessemer, MI  
Nicole D. Rood, Voice, Pelham, NY

Julia A. Kellman, Photography, Palisades, CA  
Annie M. Wentzell, Photography, Ocean Springs, MS

Adam A. Anderson, Theater, Laxahatchee, FL  
Rachel A. Clausen, Theater, Moorehead, MN  
Nicholas C. Druzbaniski, Theater, Marietta, GA  
Olivia K. Harris, Theater, Dallas, TX  
Steven L. Johnson, Theater, Rockford, IL  
Emily B. Koch, Theater, Sherman Oaks, CA  
Khadijah A. Rolle, Theater, Hialeah, FL

Priscilla S. Aleman, Visual Arts, Miami Lakes, FL  
Peter C. Ferguson, Visual Arts, Fairfield, PA  
Becca E. Goodman, Visual Arts, Owings Mills, MD  
Meagan C. Jenigen, Visual Arts, Richmond, VA  
Diana S. Lozano, Visual Arts, Greenacres, FL  
Jasmine Y. Nones-Newman, Visual Arts, Miami, FL  
Jordan E. Pemberton, Visual Arts, Tecumseh, MI  
Thomas Sho Rust, Visual Arts, Chesterfield, MO

Celia D. Bell, Writing, Baltimore, MD  
Monica L. Fleisher, Writing, Kirkwood, MO  
Ryland N. Marsh, Writing, Brooklyn Park, MN  
Jasmine Y. Miller, Writing, Nashville, TN  
Kevin A. Morrell, Writing, New York, NY  
Neha R. Parthasarathy, Writing, Simpsonville, SC  
Emily S. Reit, Writing, Coronado, CA

**For information about how to register for the 2010 NFAA youngARTS program, please call 1-800-970-ARTS (2787) or visit [www.youngARTS.org](http://www.youngARTS.org).**

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**About NFAA and youngARTS™:**

youngARTS™, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA), identifies the nation's most talented high school seniors and other 17 and 18-year olds in nine disciplines in the performing, literary and visual arts. Based on the belief that the arts can be sustained only if they are continually renewed and refreshed by the vigor and perspective of young artists, the program offers unique educational opportunities, scholarships and awards to exceptionally talented artists. Since 1981 NFAA has facilitated over \$80 million in college scholarships and gifted over \$6

million in awards. NFAA is the exclusive nominating agency to The Commission on Presidential Scholars in the Arts; a select few receive their awards at the White House each summer. Alumni include Broadway actors, award-winning playwrights, authors, musicians, vocalists and visual artists. Additionally, Educate America has designated NFAA as a "Best Charity in America." For more information, please visit [www.youngARTS.org](http://www.youngARTS.org).

**About Presidential Scholars:** A complete list of candidates will be available on the program's web page at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/awards.html> (case sensitive).

Semifinalists will be announced early April and Scholars in May. News media without Internet access may call 202/401-1576 for a list of candidates by state. For more information about the student(s), contact the student(s) directly. The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

### **About the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

As the nation's performing arts center, the Kennedy Center's impact and responsibility extends far beyond its doors—it reaches across America and into the future. Nowhere is this goal more truly achieved than in the Center's education programs. For more than 35 years, the Kennedy Center Education Department has provided quality arts experiences for students, teachers, families, and the general public throughout the United States. In the past year, the Center's education programs have directly impacted more than 11 million people. The mission of the Education Department is to foster understanding of and participation in the performing arts through exemplary programs and performances for diverse populations of all ages that represent the unique cultural life and heritage of the United States. For more information, visit the Center's web site at [www.kennedy-center.org/education](http://www.kennedy-center.org/education).