



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

# NEARTS

A GREAT NATION DESERVES GREAT ART



## Connecting Young People to the Arts

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# Connecting Young People to the Arts

## The NEA and Arts Education

**The situation of arts education** in the United States is serious. When schools drop the arts from their curricula, more and more children are left without the transformative power of the arts.

Arts education offers enormous benefits to this country's students, helping them to develop their creativity, ingenuity, and innovation. As NEA Chairman Dana Gioia said in his commencement speech at Stanford University, "The real purpose of arts education is to create complete human beings capable of leading successful and productive lives in a free society."

The National Endowment for the Arts has been addressing the need for arts education for more than 40 years. Projects funded by the NEA connect young people to the arts in profound ways, and often for the first time. These projects engage students in arts training and appreciation classes as well as explore other academic

subjects through a study of the arts. The students learn about the arts, but, more important, they learn to think critically and act creatively.

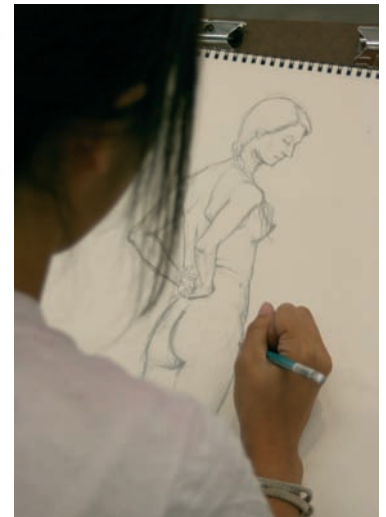
The projects featured in this issue represent a fraction of the hundreds of arts education opportunities the Arts Endowment supports each year in communities nationwide.

The NEA also supports professional development opportunities to train teachers how to best incorporate the arts into their classroom curricula. In fact, next March, the NEA and the Illinois Arts Council will convene a three-day education leaders institute, in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Arts Alliance, to give school leaders, legislators, policy makers, educators, and scholars a forum in which to discuss arts and education.

In addition to Learning in the Arts grants, the NEA also includes stellar arts education components in National Initiatives programs, such as NEA Jazz in the Schools, a component of NEA Jazz Masters; Poetry Out Loud, a national high school recitation program; and Shakespeare for a New Generation, which brings professional theater productions to students throughout the country.

In the following pages, we introduce you to some of the exceptional programs that are making a difference for students and their communities.

*Sarah Bainter Cunningham, Ph.D.*  
*Director, Learning in the Arts*



**Drawing from life is an essential component of the curriculum at Ryman Arts, part of the Los Angeles-based organization's Saturday studio classes. Photo courtesy of Ryman Arts.**



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#### ON THE COVER:

**Laney Canant (front center) takes a guitar lesson during Alabama Blues Project's summer music camp. Photo courtesy of Alabama Blues Project.**



# Learning in the Arts

## NEA Grants Support Outstanding Arts Education Programs

**The support of arts education programs** is a core mission of the National Endowment for the Arts. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 alone, the NEA awarded more than \$5 million in Learning in the Arts grants to support outstanding arts education programs across a range of disciplines. These projects take many forms, from in-school residencies by performing arts companies to summer camps offering immersion in the visual arts or creative writing to weekly after-school music lessons in classical or blues music. As NEA Chairman Dana Gioia expressed in his introduction to *Imagine! Introducing Your Child to the Arts*, an NEA resource to help parents and teachers share the arts with children, “What we have learned about arts education can be stated simply: the arts matter profoundly and should be introduced into the lives of children at the earliest possible age.” (You can obtain a copy of *Imagine!* at [www.arts.gov/pub/pubArtsed.php](http://www.arts.gov/pub/pubArtsed.php).)

In a separate funding category, for the last four years the NEA has supported arts learning through Summer Schools in the Arts grants. These projects offered rigorous, challenging arts education activities, lasting from just a week to the full 12 weeks of the average school’s summer vacation. In FY 2007, the NEA supported 25 such projects, with a distribution of nearly \$700,000 in federal grants. Through these programs, young artists were able to learn everything from how to produce and perform a play or musical to how to capture their own life experiences on film.

While many of the arts education programs supported by the NEA focus primarily on children and youth, the NEA also supports professional development projects for educators. These projects include the Children’s Dance Theatre University of Utah, in which kindergarten to 6th-grade teachers learn and practice dance skills side by side with their students, and the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County’s ACT 3 project, which works with teams of teachers, artists, and school administrators to build school capacity for



implementing standards-based arts instruction into their curricula.

It is important to note that the students and educators who participate in NEA-supported arts education programs are able to learn from and collaborate with professional artists, an opportunity that most likely would not be viable without the NEA’s support. In the following pages, *NEA Arts* profiles just a few of the arts learning opportunities that NEA funding has made possible: ASCAP’s partnership with the Manhattan School of Music for a summer classical music camp; Missoula Writing Collaborative’s in-school creative writing residencies; Ryman Arts’s Saturday studios; Alabama Blues Project’s after-school blues camp; and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago’s whole school dance program.

# How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall?

## ASCAP and Manhattan School of Music's Summer Music Camp



Since 1999, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) has partnered with the Manhattan School of Music to offer a free music camp for students who attend New York City's public schools. A FY 2007 Summer Schools in the Arts grant of \$35,000 from the NEA to the ASCAP Foundation provided scholarships for 125 talented students to attend a music camp their families could not otherwise afford.

The ASCAP Foundation, the nonprofit arm of an organization that manages music copyrights, was founded in 1975 with a bequest from Jack Norworth, who wrote the all-American anthem "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." The foundation supports a range of projects, including several awards for jazz and classical composers, test runs for new musicals, and more than 40 music education programs, including the summer music camp.

Colleen McDonough, director of the ASCAP Foundation, explained that the camp gives students a chance to experience daily life at a music conservatory. For five weeks each summer, they receive private lessons, perform in ensembles, and attend concerts. Students also get to choose from several other arts electives such as acting, visual arts, and Latin jazz band. All these experiences are crucial if these public school prodigies are

**ASCAP and Manhattan School of Music summer campers participate in daily symphonic band rehearsals. Photo by R. Andrew Lepley.**

going to compete with students who have had access to conservatory training from a young age.

"This camp is really a springboard for many of these students to think about whether they want to go on to become professional musicians, vocalists, or composers," McDonough said. "This is an immersion in the arts, and this is an opportunity for them to live their art. These kids don't normally hang out five days a week with other kids who love playing music."

Not every summer camper will pursue a full-time career in music, but many appear headed that way. Camp Director Rebecca Charnow said the camp's success can be gauged by how many students arrive as fifth-graders and continue attending the camp until they graduate from eighth grade.

"Our return rate is so high," Charnow said. "Almost everyone who is eligible comes back." As high school students, more than 50 former campers have been able to continue taking lessons in the Manhattan School's pre-college division through various scholarship programs. Ten former campers have gone on to study in the school's undergraduate conservatory.

# The Power of Words

## Missoula Writing Collaborative's Writing Residencies

**Founded in 1994**, the Missoula Writing Collaborative (MWC) provides in-school creative writing residencies to 150–250 elementary, middle, and high schoolers each year. In this interview excerpt, MWC Artistic Director Sheryl Noethe and Administrator Megan McNamer discuss MWC's impact on the student writers and their communities. For the complete interview with Missoula Writing Collaborative, please visit [www.arts.gov/features/index.html](http://www.arts.gov/features/index.html).

**NEA: How did the Missoula Writing Collaborative begin?**

**MWC:** We began in 1994 with support from the Charles Engelhard Foundation. Since then we have grown—mainly through word of mouth from teachers and principals—from five school residencies in Missoula, Montana, to our current fifteen, located in Missoula and surrounding rural areas, including the Flathead Reservation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. This year we were invited to mentor efforts by the Pacific Writers' Connection to reestablish a writers-in-the-schools program in Honolulu, and we've begun initial planning for our own pilot residency in Alaska (dependent, as always, on funding).



Excited fourth-graders wait to share their work at a reading at the Missoula Art Museum, the culmination of a Missoula Writing Collaborative writer residency. Photo by Jason Seagle.

**NEA: In addition to improved writing skills, what do you think students gain from working with the resident writers?**

**MWC:** The students join the fellowship of literature and contribute to it, they make better connections with others, and they define themselves in much more positive ways. They belong. They matter. They are someone of worth.

They also get to know people who have chosen to make creative writing their life's passion and, whenever possible, their life's work—which usually means opting for a definition of success that is not based on money. We don't discourage the idea of power when encouraging kids to write. Words are powerful. We just hope that the students reached by our program will get a broad view of what it is that might really, finally, be worth pursuing. We think it is a great thing when students get a glimpse of the private promise of their lives.

**NEA: How do you think the writing residencies affect the community in general?**

**MWC:** Our public poetry readings and our anthologies of student work are very popular and valued. . . . Our work extends into the community via children at risk, homeless populations, group homes, detention centers. We make people aware that their children are the most valuable resource.

**NEA: How important is NEA funding to MWC?**

**MWC:** NEA funding opportunities have helped us move into rural communities around Missoula, including the Flathead Reservation. And they have inspired us to think broadly, even daringly, so that when a new idea emerges we are less likely to say, "We can't do that," and more likely to say, "Let's see if we can put it together." Our NEA grants have been a huge endorsement, liberating us to become more creative in our ideas about the teaching of creative writing.



# Drawing Positive Conclusions

## Ryman Arts's Saturday Studio Classes for Young Artists



**Ryman Arts students benefit from the opportunity to work with peers who are as dedicated as they are. Photo courtesy of Ryman Arts.**

**On any Saturday** from September to May, you may find a focused group of teenagers rendering a still life in an University of Southern California art studio or sketching taxidermied animals at the nearby Natural History Museum. These students are just a few of the approximately one thousand students who have taken part in Ryman Arts's signature Saturday studio classes for high school students since 1990.

Launched with 12 youth artists, today the program annually serves approximately 300 students from 80 Los Angeles-area high schools. During each nearly four-hour session, the apprentice artists work on different drawing techniques with a master teaching artist and a teaching assistant, often a program alumnus. Each semester also features visiting artists and field trips to sites such as the Norton Simon Museum of Art at Pasadena, which opened early to allow the students to

draw from its Old Masters collection. "It's really phenomenal, you know, to be sitting there almost alone [drawing a Degas] and talking about it with your teacher," said Executive Director Diane Brigham. The young artists also receive college and career counseling, including portfolio and resume reviews and career days featuring guest speakers from various creative industries.

Brigham suggested that the students also gain vital life skills through the program. "I think the young artists in this program develop really strong work ethics. They develop a kind of self-discipline that generates self-confidence."

The program doesn't end at high school graduation. Alumni are invited to networking events and can participate in professional development workshops. One notable alumnus, Oscar Magallanes, a graphic designer for the City of Los Angeles, serves on Ryman's Board of Directors and is Chair of the Alumni Association. Brigham said, "Oscar has been so articulate about how [Ryman Arts] completely turned around his life. He grew up, as he describes, in the barrio and felt like he had no options. But he was pretty good at art, and in his case a school administrator said, 'Let's get you back into school and get you in a program that's going to capitalize on your skills here.' So he got involved with us, and now he's on our Board and he has become quite successful."

Brigham stated that the NEA's support not only allows the program to be offered free of charge, but also helps to provide the students with free art materials. "[The students receive] these tackle boxes that have their basic art supplies. And there's always somebody who bursts into tears. One of our summer interns explained why: 'I can't tell you what it is like to get something that has your name on it that is only yours. I am not using a pencil or a paintbrush that 300 other kids at my high school use, and it's down to the nub. This says that you respect me.'"

# School for Blues

## Alabama Blues Project's Music Programs

**The Tuscaloosa-based** Alabama Blues Project (ABP), a 2004 Coming Up Taller finalist, nurtures approximately 80 nascent blues players each week throughout the school year. Working with children and youth ages 8–18, ABP provides after-school training in four areas: guitar, harmonica, drum, and voice. Each year ABP also presents in-school residencies—to the local community and beyond—and a week-long intensive blues summer camp.

Performance is an integral part of the ABP class experience; students study and perform in bands at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Assistant Director Rick Asherson said, “We give a final presentation to the parents and local community where we have

arts funding from the National Endowment for the Arts because they help us bring in other artists. One of our missions at the Alabama Blues Project is not to take our teaching artists, particularly folk artists, for granted.”

Like the teaching artists, ABP's students come from diverse segments of the community. The program, however, has resonated particularly with at-risk students. Executive Director Debbie Bond said, “We'd be in schools and teachers would comment, ‘You are reaching kids that we can't reach.’ . . . I think our kids that were having problems and had some heavy things that they needed to express and wanted to express were drawn to the music and found an outlet.”

Asherson added, “Playing blues music is one of the rare opportunities where difficult kids are allowed to showcase themselves. They can express themselves emotionally in a way that's appropriate and can be entertaining. To my mind, the program is equally comprised of music and bringing the blues and arts to our children with the support of the life skills and trying to introduce a very positive element into their lives.”

The life skills curriculum is a key component of the ABP classes. Asherson explained, “We're very fortunate to have on our staff [a harmonica player] who's

also a licensed, certified social worker, who deals specifically with troubled youth. We take about 20–30 minutes each week, and he'll introduce and talk about a different topic with the kids, issues like anger management, resolving disagreements, and being positive about other people's achievements. It's all perfect because the kids then move toward playing together as a group. We try to encourage all our instructors and youth workers to really pay attention in the life skills formal presentation because there are always a million opportunities to bring those lessons out in practice.”



**A young vocals student performs at the Alabama Blues Project after-school Spring Camp Open House, where children perform in front of a public audience of their friends, family, and other members of the community. Photo courtesy of Alabama Blues Project.**

15 drummers and 10 harmonica players and it's a tremendous organized chaos. . . . But it works surprisingly well and sounds great.”

Alabama Blues Project depends on the help of 15–20 teaching artists, many of whom are visiting blues musicians. NEA support makes this program component possible. Asherson explained, “We really appreciate the



# Expressing Themselves in New Ways

## Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's Whole School Dance Program



Since 1997, world-renowned Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (HSDC) has partnered with Chicago K–8 public schools for in-school dance education residencies and professional development workshops. These programs have since evolved into whole school dance programs, which Kathryn Humphreys, HSDC Director of Community and Education Programs, described as “residencies and partnerships that focus not just on the unit of study in the classroom, but on each partner investing in the students’ total learning.”

HSDC works with an average of 25 schools each year, which are selected through a rigorous application process that includes site visits and a demonstrated commitment to the program by each school’s administrators and faculty. Although HSDC has previously hosted master classes and residencies for schools outside

**A Hubbard Street Dance Chicago teaching artist leads a fourth-grade classroom in a movement activity as part of the MIND (Moving In New Directions) residency program. Photo by Todd Rosenberg.**

of Chicago, this year the company is also piloting a whole school dance initiative with five K–5 schools in Oak Park, a nearby Chicago suburb. Humphreys credited NEA funding as crucial to the expansion. “Both HSDC and Oak Park School District are committed to the project, but it is the NEA’s funds that truly allow us to make it such a major project for the district, serving six classrooms at five of the district’s eight elementary schools. Without the NEA’s support, this would be a smaller pilot project.”

Each residency lasts approximately ten weeks and includes in-school dance classes and performances. In



opening sessions, students learn the form's basic elements—body, energy, space, and time—and become comfortable with movement. While each residency is unique, the program does have an overarching goal. “The common thread is the presence of the choreographic process as a learning tool,” Humphreys said. “In a typical class, halfway through the residency, you see students in groups of four or five engaged in problem-solving around a choreographic assignment. Perhaps they had written or read poetry in the previous class, and they are now working on translating images from those poems into movement ideas, which will then be formed into a dance over the course of the next few classes.”

HSDC's school program also includes ongoing professional development workshops for classroom teachers, who meet three times during the residency year to learn the vocabulary, concepts, and processes of dance education. These workshops also provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences with peers at other HSDC schools. Humphreys said that the in-class residencies are also a

vital professional development tool. “We're all learning together, and it's really the classroom sessions with their students where the teachers truly see how [dance education] can move learning forward. [In one evaluation, the teacher reported] ‘I feel that this workshop taught me a great deal about how to allow my students to become creators and performers. . . . It made me feel creative and energized about teaching again.’”

Despite the program's measurable success, Humphreys is frequently asked to define the purpose of dance education. “For me, it's very simple. Dance education provides a language, one that allows students and teachers to express themselves in new ways, to think through ideas differently. Just as a teacher participating in a

**“I feel that this workshop taught me a great deal about how to allow my students to become creators and performers.”**

residency may suddenly recognize that a difficult student can communicate and lead effectively, so will that student realize that he has something to say and an effective way to communicate his ideas. . . . Perhaps, more importantly for me, his teacher will see something



**Seventh-grade students participate in a Hubbard Street Dance Chicago education residency in Chicago public schools. Photo by Todd Rosenberg.**

in him that she perhaps would not have otherwise, a capacity for creativity and leadership, for working within a group rather than working to disintegrate it.”

Humphreys added that, ultimately, the goals of the dance education program are akin to those of educators in other subject areas. “We see great value in allowing students to experience and understand the creative process, and its parallels with other learning and elements in their own lives so that they can express themselves and become literate and informed adults.”

# Poetry Out Loud National Finals

## Connecting with Great Poets Past and Present

**This past spring**, the Lisner Auditorium at DC's George Washington University resounded with odes, sonnets, and ballads, among other poetry forms, as 51 teens from the 50 states and the District of Columbia competed for the title of 2007 Poetry Out Loud National Champion. A joint project with the Poetry Foundation and the nation's state arts agencies, the NEA's Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high school students across the country.

chaperones. The finals were again administered by the Baltimore-based Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and Southwest Airlines joined as a sponsor, supporting travel to DC for state champions and their chaperones and awarding each finalist with two roundtrip airline tickets.

Hometown favorite Amanda Fernandez, a senior at Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, DC, eventually took top honors with dramatic, poignant, and commanding recitations of poems by Wilfred Owen, Anne Sexton, and legendary DC poet Sterling A. Brown. Fernandez received a \$20,000 college scholarship, and

she is excited to use her platform to get more young people involved in poetry. "People are going to hear about the prize money and become interested in the contest aspect, all without even knowing that they are immersing themselves in an once-in-a-lifetime experience with poetry that will stay with them forever." Now a first-year acting major at New York University, Fernandez continues to make time for poetry. "Everyday I write poetry. In order to develop [my writing] and myself I have to read it and read about it."

Fernandez offers several pieces of

advice to aspiring competitors, "Be about the work. If you are there for the money and the fame, the judges will see it, and the work onstage won't be truthful. Be real. If you are connected to a poem, go for it. Follow the guidelines about not overdramatizing a piece and understand the messages and themes and so on. But do not memorize the longest poem of [the Poetry Out Loud anthology] and repeat it verbatim just to win the money or show off your amazing amount of memory. It shows. You don't have to be an actor. Just to be a human being connecting to other human beings is a message, the message of a great artist, a great poet."



**Poetry Out Loud National Champion Amanda Fernandez speaks with judge Garrison Keillor after the contest. Photo by James Kegley.**

The 2007 class of Poetry Out Loud state champions competed in three regional semifinals before the top twelve advanced to the contest finals, reciting before a capacity crowd and a distinguished group of judges including radio personality and author Garrison Keillor and 2006 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Jackson Hille. As part of the two-day event, the high-schoolers also greeted members of Congress at a Capitol Hill breakfast and toured the nation's capital with their



## An Interview with Alanna Rivera, Poetry Out Loud Virginia State Champion

**Although seniors** took the top prize in both the 2006 and 2007 Poetry Out Loud National Championships, the freshman and sophomore state champions proved themselves fierce competitors, including Washington-Lee High School sophomore Alanna Rivera, the third-place finalist. Rivera, who lives in Arlington, Virginia, spoke with the NEA about her participation in the program. (Read the complete interview with Rivera at [www.arts.gov/features/index.html](http://www.arts.gov/features/index.html).)



**NEA: What's your favorite memory from the National Finals?**

**ALANNA RIVERA:** My favorite memory from the National Finals was meeting Garrison Keillor. He inspired me to wear my favorite sneakers.

**NEA: Has the program increased your interest in poetry or in performing?**

**RIVERA:** When I was younger I used to write poems but was so unsatisfied that I sort of defenestrated poetry all together. I started out thinking that I was doing this all for the sake of performing, but I ended up reestablishing my relationship with poetry. I like it again, but I don't love it, because we still don't know each other that well.

**NEA: Out of the three poems you recited at the National Finals, which one carries the most meaning for you?**

**RIVERA:** "Conversation" by Ai carried the most meaning for me. I love that poem because when I read it for the first time, it was like listening to my voice for the first time. Even before I knew what it all meant I felt something, I saw mist and curiosity rising from the page, we

2007 Poetry Out Loud Virginia State Champion Alanna Rivera. Photo by James Kegley.

began breathing the same air, and we were one. I will always love that poem, even if my relationship with poetry does not work out in the end.

**NEA: You said in your Poetry Out Loud bio that you participate in jazz band and marching band. Did your knowledge of music affect the way you delivered the poems?**

**RIVERA:** In jazz you learn the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the musicians, though sometimes it takes you a while to hear them. I think poetry is a lot like that. Reciting a poem is like a jazz solo: you're allowed to play your heart out, but you have to respect what the composer was feeling when he gave you those twelve or sixteen bars. You play for yourself, but you also play for the people who couldn't be there to voice their opinions, and you tell everybody what they had to say. My musical background helped me in understanding that I was no longer the musician, I was the musical instrument.

# Jazz as History

## NEA Jazz in the Schools

**The NEA established** the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships in 1982 to honor those musicians who, throughout their lifetimes, have made a significant and lasting impact on the field of jazz. The NEA Jazz Masters initiative also has a substantial educational component: NEA Jazz in the Schools. Produced in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center and supported by a grant from the Verizon Foundation, NEA Jazz in the Schools is a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and toolkit for use by high school teachers to explore American history through jazz. Launched in 2006 as an online resource, the NEA Jazz in the Schools toolkits have since benefited 4.6 million students, with millions more benefiting from the program's online version.

Structured to meet national curriculum standards in a range of subjects, units range from an introductory lesson on the birth of jazz—

The Advent of Jazz and The Dawn of the 20th Century—to the closing unit, which explores what makes jazz an uniquely American musical form. The curriculum exposes students to a comprehensive range of jazz styles and musicians, from early

bandleader Louis Armstrong to bebop giant Charlie Parker to contemporary vocalist Cassandra Wilson. The curriculum also features a timeline of notable events in jazz history, which can be viewed comprehensively or filtered in terms of culture, technology, music,



history, and geography.

In fall 2006 Kimberley Santino, a teacher at Ward Melville High School in Long Island, New York, piloted the NEA Jazz in the Schools curriculum with her Regents level history class. “I tried to organize a field trip for my kids to Jazz at Lincoln

Center, which is how

I hooked up with the education department. The NEA was then given my name and information and I became a teacher to pilot the program, which was great!”

Santino reported two significant aspects of the

NEA Jazz in the Schools curriculum: it easily fit into her existing history and government curriculum and it appealed to students with a range of learning styles and interests. “I used the lessons on the history of jazz—how [jazz] is important to American culture, how it laid the groundwork for rock and roll and hip hop. My students love doing research, listening to music, and being on the computer. NEA Jazz in the Schools has those attributes and much more.” She looks forward to using additional NEA Jazz in the Schools lesson plans with her classes this fall. “I knew my students would enjoy it, I just did not know how much. I was very pleased with the outcomes and excellent results from the student’s research. I absolutely will use the curriculum in the future—it is a fantastic way to get all students involved and it offers something for all of the many interests my students have.”



# The Bard Lives!

## Shakespeare for a New Generation

**Five years after** Shakespeare in American Communities debuted, theater companies and arts educators across the country are still giving this NEA National Initiative rave reviews. It all began in 2003, when six NEA-supported professional theater companies set out to perform the Bard's plays in all 50 states. That list has since grown to more than 60 companies who have performed before more than a million people on school campuses and military bases.

In summer 2004—under the umbrella of Shakespeare in American Communities—the NEA launched Shakespeare for a New Generation, a program that brings the Bard to American schoolchildren who have limited access to the performing arts. Approximately 35 theater companies receive the \$25,000 grants each fiscal year. Companies craft their grant proposals based on their local needs. Some theaters send out touring productions to rural areas, others bus students in free of charge, and a few combine school visits with trips to a theater.

Since Atlanta-based Georgia Shakespeare seeks to serve students in a four-state area, the theater invests its entire grant in sending a troupe of six actors to tour schools in rural Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. For education director Allen O'Reilly, theater doesn't get more fulfilling than presenting *Macbeth* to Native-American students at Cherokee High School in Canton, Georgia. The students watched, mesmerized, as the troupe of actors staged *Macbeth* with a simple set of fabric scrims and a live soundscape of eerie chanting. O'Reilly said, "From all reports, *Macbeth* was our best-received school tour yet. Kids love the combat and they love the supernatural elements."

In the spring of 2008, the theater plans to tour a traveling version of *Romeo and Juliet* set in New Orleans. O'Reilly suspects students in the South will relate to the teenage lovers whose families are divided by grief and strife.

Alabama Shakespeare Festival (ASF), one of the nation's top five Shakespeare theaters, in 2004 toured



Joanna Mitchell and Jason Loughlin in Georgia Shakespeare Festival's production of *Macbeth*. Photo by Stacey Colosa Lucas.

*Macbeth* to 13 U.S. military bases. ASF used its 2007 Shakespeare grant to offer 1,000 children both a trip to the theater and a pre-performance visit from two company actors. No campus was more grateful than Alma Bryant High School in Irvington, Alabama. Most of the students there are the children of Vietnamese immigrants who, prior to the hurricanes of 2005, made their living fishing on the Gulf Coast. Although the students are still learning English as their second language, they gamely read through scenes in *Henry IV* when the actors visited their school. A few weeks later, the students traveled four hours by bus to the festival grounds in Montgomery. They came wearing custom made tee-shirts emblazoned with the words, "The Bryant Bards."

# Training the Trainers

## Helping Teachers Integrate Art into the Classroom

**Concentration**, self-confidence, imagination, communication—all these are invaluable qualities nurtured and developed in children by the arts. Recognizing this vital connection, the NEA provides support to projects that train classroom teachers to successfully incorporate the arts into their curricula.

During 2005 and 2006, the NEA awarded 16 grants for Teacher Institutes—five-day summer workshops hosted by arts organizations and designed to train educators to incorporate and deepen arts learning in their classrooms. Presented in partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Western States Arts Federation, the institutes engaged more than 400 teachers in immersion programs in a range of artistic

The NEA has continued to support arts-based professional development programs through Learning in the Arts grants. In FY 2007 Seattle Repertory Theatre received a grant of \$75,000 to support Bringing Theatre into the Classroom (BTiC), a partnership project with Seattle Children's Theatre designed to help K–12 teachers integrate theater into their curricula.

BTiC begins with a weeklong summer workshop for approximately 40 educators at which each participant receives a sourcebook of individual lesson plans aligned with the state-mandated theater arts curriculum. Working with teaching artists, participants cover performing arts elements that can be used in the classroom, such as movement, oral history, and playwriting. Each teacher then chooses a teaching artist to visit his or her classroom for a weeklong residency following the workshop. After observing the classroom, the teaching artist collaborates with the teacher to plan and instruct classes that incorporate the arts elements learned over the summer.

Through the summer workshop and follow-up residency, teachers gain confidence in the practical application of arts learning techniques to their classrooms. For instance, Kindergarten teacher Jennifer Blankenship always had read multiple versions of *The Gingerbread Man* to her students. After a

BTiC session on adaptation, Blankenship decided instead to have her students write their own version. Through this added element she noticed her students had an increased understanding of the story elements, points of view, and vocabulary.

Overall, teachers have noticed that, after incorporating concepts learned during the BTiC sessions into their curricula, their students not only have a greater grasp of theater skills and knowledge, but the students' participation, enthusiasm, self-esteem, and ability to understand text have increased. In short, they're learning and having fun.



**Bringing Theatre into the Classroom** participants work on integrating tableaux into their lesson plans. Photo by Scott Koh, Seattle Repertory Theatre.

disciplines. At Maine's Portland Museum of Art, for example, middle and high school teachers studied Winslow Homer's seascape *Weatherbeaten* in seminars ranging from a discussion of the influence of special locations on Homer's work to a lecture on *Weatherbeaten* from a local artist's point of view. By the end of the institute, each teacher was able to create a five-day curriculum unit based on an artwork of their choosing.



## In The News

# 25 Years Honoring Master Folk Artists

On June 29, 2007, NEA Chairman Dana Gioia announced the 25th-anniversary class of NEA National Heritage Fellows, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts, during the Ralph Rinzler concert at the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, DC.

The Rinzler Concert was an especially fitting background for the announcement as this year's concert honored Bess Lomax Hawes. An influential advocate, educator, and producer, Hawes served as the NEA's first Folk and Traditional Arts Director, founding the National Heritage Fellowship program in 1982. Hawes was unable to attend the concert, but was praised for tirelessly promoting the folk arts. Three NEA National Heritage Fellows offered musical entertainment: Piedmont blues guitarist John Cephas (performing with longtime accompanist Phil Wiggins on harmonica); Celtic musician Liz Carroll; and fiddler Michael Doucet.

The NEA created a special 25th-anniversary publication on the NEA National Heritage Fellowships program, highlighting 70 of the 327 recipients of the award and including a special DVD-Rom with biographical information, photos, music, and videos of all the Fellows from 1982 to 2006, created by the Dallas, Texas-based nonprofit, Documentary Arts. Copies of the publication can be obtained free of charge at [www.nea.gov/pub/pubFolk.php](http://www.nea.gov/pub/pubFolk.php).

The June Heritage anniversary activities also included a weeklong exhibition of 36 portraits by Tom Pich, a freelance photographer who has traveled the country photographing Heritage Fellows since 1991. Members of Congress admired Pich's photos, which were displayed in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building. Senators Edward M. Kennedy (Massachusetts), Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), and Norm Coleman (Minnesota)



**Chairman Gioia, NEA National Heritage Fellow Martin Goicoechea, and Senator Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming) holding Tom Pich's portrait of Goicoechea at the reception celebrating the program's 25th anniversary. Photo by Tom Pich.**

hosted a reception to celebrate the anniversary and honor past fellows, many of whom were present.

Pich returned to Washington on September 18, when the 2007 NEA National Heritage Fellows received their awards at a Capitol Hill ceremony, with the celebration continuing at a banquet at the Library of Congress. Later that week, a capacity crowd packed the Music Center at Strathmore in Bethesda, Maryland, for the annual NEA National Heritage Fellows Concert. Biographies of and interviews with the 2007 NEA National Heritage Fellows can be found on the NEA Web site at [www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/NHFIntro.php?year=2007](http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/NHFIntro.php?year=2007).

The NEA National Heritage Fellowship program is presented with support from the Darden Restaurants Foundation and the Darden family of restaurants including Red Lobster and Olive Garden.

# Leading The Way

## Coming Up Taller Recognizes Outstanding Arts Ed Programs



In the past decade, the Coming Up Taller program has distributed more than \$1.2 million in federal funding to arts and culture organizations serving children and youth. These annual awards recognize nonprofit organizations that offer outstanding arts education programs to at-risk and underserved youth.

The list of 2006 finalists included the Greater New Orleans Youth Orchestra, the only full-sized student symphony in southern Louisiana; Shakespeare in the Courts, a Lenox, Massachusetts-based theater troupe for juvenile offenders; and the Snow City Arts Foundation, a Chicago nonprofit that offers creative writing, music, and visual arts workshops for hospitalized children.

In addition to a \$10,000 cash award, two leaders from each finalist organization receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the annual Coming Up Taller leadership conference. The conference is prior to the awards ceremony and hosted by a different city each year. The three-day event gives

youth arts leaders a chance to network, discuss fundraising ideas, and brainstorm marketing strategies.

Established by the NEA in 1998, today the Coming Up Taller program is a joint initiative of the NEA, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH), the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Time Warner and GMAC provide additional private funding. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Americans for the Arts also provide program assistance.

PCAH recently announced the 2007 semifinalists for the Coming Up Taller Awards. The 50 semifinalist organizations hail from 27 states and the District of Columbia. In January 2008, 15 of those organizations will be named Coming Up Taller finalists. One leader and one student from each winning organization will be invited to attend a White House reception and awards ceremony with Mrs. Laura Bush, the program's honorary chair.

**Members and alumni of the Richmond Boys Choir, semifinalists for the 2007 Coming Up Taller Awards, celebrate the choir's 10th anniversary in June 2006. Photo by Addie Jones.**

This year's list of semifinalists includes the Richmond Boys Choir, founded by artistic director Billy Dye in 1996 to offer an arts-focused after-school program to youth in Virginia's capital city. Over the last decade, Dye has mentored dozens of young men coping with much more than just a changing voice. "It's about building a richer human being through personal development," Dye said. His choir boys—whom he refers to as, "the gentlemen"—learn to read music and tie their own neckties. In addition to music and performance training, the choristers also receive academic enrichment, including tutoring services. The choir has sung for Queen Elizabeth II and James Earl Jones, and if named Coming Up Taller finalists, they hope to perform for the First Lady.



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