



THE CHICAGO
HIGH SCHOOL
FOR THE ARTS[®]
CHIARTS[®]
NEWS

Issue 2, Fall 2015

“This is an opportunity about which ChiArts could not be more thrilled--to offer enrollment to one of Chicago’s most highly rated high schools to an even greater number of this city’s deserving youth is a blessing, and a dream come true.”

More from Executive Director José Ochoa on page 7.

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Fall Salon 2015 at the Arts Club of Chicago

On October 15th, a group of ChiArts Directors, donors, and friends gathered at the Arts Club of Chicago for the Fall Salon, an evening of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, student performances, and conversation, hosted by event co-chairs and ChiArts Directors Mirja Haffner and Elissa Hamid Efroymson to reunite the ChiArts community of supporters for the first time during the 2015-16 school year and promote Creative Circle, the ChiArts individual-giving community. Members of Creative Circle are among the organization's most dedicated donors, who contribute annual support to ensure the sustained future of The Chicago High School for the Arts.

Students from a variety of disciplines were represented at the event, performing a classic guitar piece, pop covers, a number from ChiArts' production of SWEET CHARITY, a poem reading, and a full set of jazz tunes as guests mingled in the Arts Club's Salon.

Executive & Artistic Director José Ochoa began the evening by introducing ChiArts to new supporters, relating to them the history of the organization from the conception of the school's mission in 2003 and the first day of class in September 2009 to the relocation to its permanent home in Humboldt Park during the summer of 2014. Event co-chairs Mirja Haffner and Elissa Hamid Efroymson spoke about the mission of ChiArts, its dedication to diversity, and the accomplishments its students and staff have achieved together.

To add more intrigue to an already exciting night, a camera crew and reporter from WBBM-TV were on hand to cover ChiArts' outstanding saxophonist Isaiah Collier as part of a story on his talent and unfortunate theft of his instrument (which has since been replaced).

The Chicago High School for the Arts and its Board of Directors were excited to have this opportunity to introduce the organization to new minds while enjoying the company of old friends and the talent of Chicago's scholar-artists.



Above: Fall Salon co-chairs and ChiArts Directors Mirja Haffner (left) and Elissa Hamid Efroymson. Below: Student performers Victor Roa (left), Makele Clemmons, Ariya Hawkins, and Arianna Zielinski.



Cynthia Mufarreh
ChiArts Board of Directors

BMO Harris Bank's Cynthia Mufarreh Joins Board of Directors

Cynthia Mufarreh joined the ChiArts board in the fall of 2015 and currently serves as Chief Administrative Officer to the Chief Executive Officer of U.S. Retail and Business Banking at BMO Harris Bank. She comes to her current role from a previous special assignment at BMO Financial Group, where she was part of a hand-selected leadership team working on an end-to-end brand revitalization strategy for the company, globally. Cynthia's commitment to doing the right thing – paired with a commitment to bold execution that drives outcomes – extends to her civic life in Chicago. In 2013, she co-chaired the Young Women's Leadership Charter School's annual fundraiser to record results – positioning the school to achieve new contribution levels to the operating income. This year, Cynthia has been tapped to serve on the committee of "Four Stars" – St. Jude Children Research Hospital's largest annual fundraiser in Chicago. She also serves on the Grant Park Music Festival's Board as a Trustee and a champion of their diversity initiative. Cynthia works, lives, and laughs in Chicago. She's a passionate advocate for making Chicago a leader in national inclusivity for women and people of color.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Junior Jam Exhibition Opening
April 29th, 5:30 PM
ChiArts Gallery

Improv Jam
May 4th, 5:30 PM
ChiArts Black Box Theatre

Dan J. Epstein Foundation Funds New Programs for ChiArts Scholar-Artists

Youth America Grand Prix

The Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) dance competition is arguably the most respected dance competition open to dancers ages 9-19. Held in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, France, People’s Republic of China, and Japan, the YAGP reaches nearly 7,000 dance students of various economic, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds annually. Artistic Directors from the top companies serve as judges for the YAGP and professional dancers and directors lead masterclasses throughout the duration of the 3-day local competition and 8-day finals competition, held in New York from April 22-29. Participating dancers will have an opportunity to earn scholarships to summer intensives, take master classes, workshops, and audition classes, and be offered professional dance contracts based on their performance.

Four ChiArts dance majors have been training to compete in the Youth America Grand Prix. David Riley (senior), Megan Chiu (senior), Kayla Taylor (junior), and Alex Roy (junior) were selected by ChiArts dance faculty for rehearsals twice a week after school to prepare for this prestigious program, and Alex and Kayla will progress to the New York finals in April..

Chicago Philharmonic Mentorship Program

The Chicago Philharmonic’s six-week mentorship program allowed students to hear, be coached by, and play alongside professional string, wind, and percussion players from the Chicago Philharmonic Society.

Students worked with seventeen Chicago Philharmonic musicians in a total of five interactions including three sectional master classes, one side-by-side rehearsal, and a final performance in which Chicago Philharmonic musicians performed alongside ChiArts musicians. During the rehearsals and master classes, Philharmonic musicians assisted students individually with repertoire, tone, technique, ensemble skills, practice methods, and instrument maintenance, as well as model appropriate rehearsal practice and expectations in sectionals divided by instrument group. More than fifty students were selected in all: 1 bass player, 3 cellists, 5 violists, 16 violinists, 6 percussionists, 3 flutists, 1 oboist, 4 clarinetists, 3 trumpet players, 4 trombonists, 1 tuba player, and 5 saxophonists.

The program culminated in the ChiArts Auditorium with a joint performance in which Philharmonic musicians played alongside ChiArts students. The goal of the program was to increase students’ musical abilities and overall confidence and comfort level.



Junior dancers Alex Roy and Kayla Taylor will participate in Youth America Grand Prix in New York City in April.



ChiArts musicians learned from and played alongside Chicago Philharmonic Society players.

Curtain Call: Dance
May 5th & 6th, 7:00 PM
Benito Juarez

Creative Writing Spring Reading
May 12th, 6:30 PM
ChiArts Black Box Theatre

Curtain Call: Acting
May 13th, 7:00 PM
ChiArts Auditorium

Senior Named 2016 Posse Foundation Scholar

The Class of 2016’s DaQuan Williams, a Music Conservatory voice major, was selected to be a Posse Foundation Scholar for the 2015-2016 school year.

The Posse Foundation chooses a high-achieving group of high school students from urban environments to be members of a “posse” that attend college together, serve in leadership capacities on their campuses, and graduate with high rates of success. Posse focuses on students with exceptional academic and leadership potential who may be ignored by traditional college selection processes and groups them with like-minded peers from multi-cultural backgrounds who can be their support system and teammates during their college experience.

In addition to DaQuan’s remarkable achievements as a student leader, he also ranks in the top five percent of his class academically and was one of the seventeen ChiArts scholar-artists accepted to the Illinois Music Education Association’s District Ensembles (more on that on page 5), participating in Chorus.

DaQuan is the sixth Posse Scholar from ChiArts. In the past, ChiArts Posse Scholars have gone on to study at Pomona College, Middlebury College, St. Olaf College, Oberlin College, and Denison University. DaQuan and his posse will be the seventh Chicago posse to attend Oberlin College. They will enroll in the fall of 2016 with four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

ChiArts is lucky to have students of DaQuan’s character. The entire community is excited to see what he achieves next.

Creative Writing Student Reads for Local Organization

On December 4th, Creative Writing sophomore Jupiter Dandridge read selections of his poetry at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), an organization dedicated to building family-supportive communities that encourage parents to develop their leadership skills to strengthen their communities.

Jupiter’s reading--which took place at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen, elicited rave reviews. Ellen Schumer, the Executive Director of COFI, said that “attendees of the celebration enjoyed Jupiter’s presence and the powerful reading of his poem.”

ChiArts was thrilled for Jupiter to share his work with the community, particularly for an organization with such a noble cause.



Jupiter Dandridge reads for COFI’s 20th Anniversary Celebration.

Dance Junior Named Brand Ambassador for Retail Store

Leah Fleming, Dance '17, was named a brand ambassador for Chicago Dance Supply (CDS), a retail store in the city specializing in dance equipment and apparel.

Leah will be representing ChiArts as her home school as she is featured in print ads, participates in special community events, and acts as a spokesperson for young dancers in Chicago. For ChiArts, this is a first, and we are thrilled that Leah will be representing us so well.

“This school has opened up a lot of windows for me,” she says. “At ChiArts, we are held to a high standard, and I kind of like being pushed like that. I like the challenge.” This year, Leah has performed in both the Senior Choreography Showcase and the Winter Dance Concert.

The role of a CDS ambassador is to “celebrate community through courage, collaboration, and commitment.” Chicago Dance Supply’s mission is to inspire creativity, learning, and leadership while promoting dance in Chicago.

Leah Fleming (front, center) performing at the Dance Conservatory’s Curtain Call in May 2014.



DANCE THE CHIARTS CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

17 Music Students Accepted to ILMEA District Ensembles

In October, a host of ChiArts’ Music scholar-artists auditioned for the Illinois Music Education Association District ensembles. These groups represent the best student musicians, divided by region and style of play.

Seventeen ChiArts musicians were selected out of all the participating music students of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs for several of the District 1 ensembles: Choir, Band, Orchestra, Jazz Combo, and Jazz Ensembles 1, 2, 3, and 4.



Junior Jared Draper was selected for ILMEA District 1’s Jazz Ensemble and performed at District 1’s Festival in Downers Grove, IL.

These students had the opportunity to learn from and perform alongside their peers from around the city and take part in the District Festivals in November before audiences of music educators from the area.

Each of these students had the opportunity to audition for the All-State ensembles, and five of them (Ricardo Rangel for Band, Reeve Julian for Chorus, DaQuan Williams for Chorus, Isaiah Collier for Jazz Band, and Kalif Brown-Stokes for Jazz Band) were selected to participate and perform in the State Festival in Peoria in January.

MUSIC THE CHIARTS CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Theatre Majors Perform at Freshman Preview

Freshman Theatre majors had their first opportunity to perform as ChiArts scholar-artists at this fall's Freshman Preview on Friday, December 4th.

The Theatre students beginning an Acting major presented a demonstration from their Movement I class displaying the yoga techniques they had learned to deepen body awareness onstage. This was followed by an ensemble-based improvisation performance in which they focused on making strong character choices and being mindful of scene partners and motivations in scenework.

The Musical Theatre students began their stage time with an aria by Antonio Caldara entitled *Come raggio di sol*. The next piece they performed was a group *a cappella* scene that the students devised themselves, followed by a dance number to the theme from *Fame*.

Together, these pieces represent the variety of coursework with which Theatre majors engage and hold in equal measure. It is just as important at ChiArts for a student to be instructed in classical style repertoire and healthy vocal and body habits as it is to create and perform contemporary work. Each of these elements aids in developing well-rounded artists with diverse talents and interests.



Freshman actors rehearse for Freshman Preview 2015.



Bryant Giles (left) presents his portfolio to a college representative during ChiArts' Visual Arts Portfolio Day in October.

7 Visual Artists' Work Shown at All-City Portfolio Exhibition

ChiArts senior visual artists had a total of 10 pieces included in the Chicago All-City Portfolio Exhibition in December at the Leroy Neiman Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Seven artists--Bryant Giles, Sophia Perez, Daniela Perez, Paola Martinez, Mykhaylo Vuchastyy, Christopher Molina, and Jesus Valencia--had work accepted into the program, making them eligible for college scholarships for high-achieving high school student-artists.

Their work represented a range of media, from photography to charcoal, chalk, colored pencil, marker, and oil pastel drawings to watercolor paintings to three-dimensional foam and joint compound sculptures, demonstrating the variety of skill the Visual Arts Conservatory fosters and the range of talent ChiArts instructors share with their students.

A Letter from the Director

This fall, as the ChiArts community battled back-to-school mania—establishing routines, balancing hectic schedules, and attempting to keep up with the demands of life at ChiArts—we were given a brief moment to appreciate the hard work that has gone into building a truly special place for Chicago’s young artists. Amidst the marathon of lessons, exams, auditions, rehearsals, and performances, The Chicago High School for the Arts took a breath to celebrate being named a top school in Chicago by CPS’s School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP).

Officially, ChiArts was rated a “1+” school by SQRP—a system which considers a number of factors to determine the efficacy and success of Chicago’s public schools, including student test score performance, student academic growth, closing of achievement gaps, school culture and climate, attendance, graduation, and preparation for post-graduation success. A 1+ rating is the highest possible rating that can be achieved in SQRP, and for ChiArts it represents an improvement of two grades from last year’s evaluations.

This is a monumental accomplishment for ChiArts, and coming on the heels of the high rankings by U.S. News & World Report from last school year, it is a reminder that the long days and nights, arduous commutes, and demanding coursework is all paying off. ChiArts scholar-artists are achieving higher than ever before.

This wonderful news dovetails nicely with a recent request from CPS for ChiArts to increase its enrollment for the 2016-17 school year. Due to the capacity of our building, Chicago Public Schools has suggested an enrollment bump of forty students next year, allowing us to provide pre-professional arts training and a comprehensive college preparatory education to dozens more of Chicago’s high school artists next year.

This is an opportunity about which ChiArts could not be more thrilled--to offer enrollment to one of Chicago’s most highly rated high schools to an even greater number of this city’s deserving youth is a blessing, and a dream come true.

None of this could have been possible without the sweat and care of every member of this community. Please take a break from your hectic, busy, non-stop work of supporting this school to reflect, to appreciate, and to take a bow.

Sincerely,


José Ochoa
Executive & Artistic Director
The Chicago High School for the Arts



José Ochoa
Executive & Artistic Director,
The Chicago High School for the Arts

The mission of the Chicago High School for the Arts is to provide artistically gifted, diverse Chicago high school students intensive pre-professional training in the arts, combined with a comprehensive college preparatory curriculum.

Alumni Spotlight

Class of '13 alumnus Joel Ross of the Music Conservatory has continued on the path of success he began as a member of the inaugural class of The Chicago High School for the Arts in 2009.

At ChiArts, Joel was a YoungArts Finalist for Jazz and performed alongside several notable musicians, including Herbie Hancock. After graduating in 2013, Joel was named a Brubeck Fellow and began studying Jazz Performance at the University of the Pacific's Conservatory of Music.

He has since transferred to the New School for Jazz in New York City, where he has excelled, performing in the NYC Winter Jazzfest and making a splash with his group, "Joel Ross' Good Vibes."

Recently, New York Times jazz critic Nate Chinen described Joel as a "bright young vibraphonist on his own rocketlike trajectory," who he will be "keeping [his] eye on."

Joel continues to make ChiArts proud.

Joel Ross performs with his group, "Joel Ross' Good Vibes" at the NYC Winter Jazzfest. (Photo by Benjamin Norman for the New York Times.)