



THE CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS CHIARTS NEWS

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“...seven years in, we have never been more committed to educating the arts and minds of Chicago’s scholar-artists.”

More from Executive Director José Ochoa on page 7

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Sandra Saucedo-Falagan

Sandra Saucedo-Falagan's daughter Sofia is in the inaugural cohort of ChiArts' Creative Writing Conservatory, in the class of 2018. Sandra holds a Master's in Education and is a Chicago Public School teacher in her tenth year, currently at Mary Gage Peterson Elementary School in the North Park neighborhood where she teaches fourth grade reading with a bilingual endorsement. Sandy has served on the Peterson Local School Council and participated in many of Peterson's parent groups, such as PTA, PAC, and Puentes, a parent group she founded to help bridge the communication gap between Latino parents and the rest of the school community. She served as Chair for the Peterson International Festival for three years and has since consulted in its planning. Sandra's professional relationships span from the Terra Foundation of Art Teachers Lab through DePaul University, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events of Chicago, and Columbia College of Chicago. Sandy and her husband are excited to have the opportunity to become more active in the ChiArts community.

New Members

ChiArts is excited to welcome four additions to the board of directors for the 2016 program year.



Carlos Azcoitia

Dr. Azcoitia is the Founding Principal of a new "Comprehensive Community School" in Chicago's Little Village Neighborhood. The school was the first in Chicago to include a pre-kindergarten through high school program in one building with the goal of 100% high school completion rate and 100% post-secondary graduation. Dr. Azcoitia received his Doctorate in Leadership and Educational Policy from Northern Illinois University. Currently, Dr. Azcoitia serves as Distinguished Professor of Practice in Educational Leadership at National Louis University. He was appointed by the Mayor to serve on the Chicago Board of Education and is Chair of the Board of Trustees at Northeastern Illinois University.



Blake Batterson

Dr. Azcoitia is a Steering Committee Member of the Coalition of Community Schools in Washington, DC and a Trustee of the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund. He is also a Board Member of the Ignatian Spirituality Center in Miami, a Family Retreat Center founded by his uncle, a Jesuit priest. His latest recognition is a street named in his honor in the school community which he served as Principal in the City of Chicago.

Blake has been involved with ChiArts in a variety of capacities since his first daughter, McKenna, joined ChiArts in 2010, and continues to be an active parent as his youngest daughter Hunter is a junior Dance scholar-artist this fall. Blake is the Principal Executive Producer of events and creative marketing services with his Chicago based company, B&B Business Media Productions, which he founded in 1995. As a Parent Representative, Blake is extremely interested in maintaining an effective line of communication between the board and the Parent Support Organization (PSO). He has been very active in assisting with a number of ChiArts video projects and has acted to help further the interests of ChiArts. Blake's long term goal is to assist ChiArts in bettering their marketing and communication efforts and to help build the ChiArts brand.



Evette Cardona

Evette Cardona is a native Chicagoan and a graduate of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, where she received the 2010 U of C's Leadership in Diversity Alumni award, the 2008 Elizabeth Butler award for outstanding professional success and achievement in social work, and where she teaches a course in philanthropy and public policy. In 2012 she was appointed the Vice President of Programs for the Polk Bros. Foundation where she began as a program intern in September 1997. She is also the vice-chair of the board of directors of the Donors Forum of Illinois. Evette has also been honored with numerous awards for her community work including the Center on Halsted's Human First award, ACLU/Chicago's John R. Hammel Award, Mujeres Latinas en Accion's Maria "Maruca" Martinez award, the Illinois Women's Bar Association's Women with Vision award, and numerous leadership awards. She was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 2002.

ChiArts Receives \$1 Million Gift from the Efroymson Family Fund



The Efroymson Family Fund has awarded a grant of \$1 million to The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts), the largest grant made yet in the school's history.

The Efroymson Family Fund's gift will enable ChiArts to enhance its outreach efforts, provide unique academic experiences for students, and build the schools' visibility to prospective students and stakeholders. This gift represents ChiArts' progression from a start-up school to a successful and sustainable public school model serving students from throughout Chicago's diverse communities.

"We are extremely grateful for this transformative gift, which will help build sustainability and visibility for ChiArts at this critical time in our school's growth," said José Ochoa, ChiArts Executive and Artistic Director. "With this support, the Efroymson Family Fund will ensure that ChiArts can continue to provide talented Chicago students from all 50 wards with an excellent tuition-free academic and artistic education."

The grant was made at the recommendation of Elissa Hamid Efroymson, who has served on ChiArts' board of directors since its start-up years. "The Efroymson Family Fund is an advocate for the arts and the role they play in developing skills like problem solving, critical thinking, and innovation," Elissa stated. "ChiArts is a school where all of its 'scholar-artists' are given an opportunity to advance these skills through intensive arts training and a college-prep curriculum. We have been truly impressed by its results these first six years and are thrilled to help build upon its future success."

ChiArts looks forward to reaching even more talented and diverse Chicago students — especially those who might not otherwise have the opportunity for pre-professional training in the arts — by growing its profile and outreach throughout Chicago. Additionally, program support through the Efroymson Family Fund will provide financial stability to sustain the school through its next phase of growth.

New Partnerships

ChiArts has been fortunate to forge two new and immensely valuable partnerships late this summer. The Chicago History Museum and Experimental Sound Studio have joined the ranks of ChiArts' community and arts partners.

The Chicago History Museum (CHM) shares Chicago's stories through exhibitions, programs, research, and publications, including *Chicago Authored*, an exhibition of the city's literary landscape featuring a collection of works by contemporary authors and classic writers and will someday showcase the work of a ChiArts creative writing alumnus (fingers crossed!). This spring, CHM will be the venue for ChiArts' *Kerfuffle!* spring benefit on Thursday, April 14th. ChiArts is thrilled to begin a long and fruitful relationship with the Chicago History Museum.

Experimental Sound Studio (ESS) is a non-profit, artist-run organization focused on sound in all its exploratory cultural manifestations. ChiArts music students have already visited ESS's full-service recording studio for a lesson on digital recording, and ChiArts is anticipating many more sessions to come.

ChicagoHistoryMuseum

Experimental Sound Studio

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Musical Theatre Performance
 December 10th & 11th
 ChiArts Auditorium

Winter Dance Concert
 January 28th-30th
 ChiArts Auditorium

Senior Recital
 February 3rd & 10th
 ChiArts Performance Hall

Music Showcase
 February 5th & 11th
 ChiArts Performance Hall

Visual Arts Sophomore Exhibition
 February 26th
 ChiArts Gallery

At ChiArts, scholar-artists strive to represent Creativity, Community, Humility, Integrity, Balance, and Perseverance in their academics, art, and personal character.

This academic quarter, for the first time, select students from each class were recognized by their teachers at a school-wide assembly for their demonstration of these Core Values.

"Seven years into the life of our organization, it is important to remind ourselves what ChiArts was built on," Interim Principal Michael Wang said. "It is easy to fall into a reductionist view of education based on test scores and behavior levels, but there is no metric for grit or compassion, and recognizing outstanding students for those essential characteristics re-focuses us on the founding principles of our school."

By honoring students for their character as well as their achievements, ChiArts hopes to instill in its scholar-artists a lifelong desire for excellence in that arena, viewing personal success and the designation of accolades not as the measure of a person's worth, but as the result of his or her strong character.

In addition to the six Core Values awardees, one student from each class was honored as a Scholar-Artist of the Quarter, an acknowledgment of his or her all-around stellar representation of ChiArts.



Lilly Madrigal ('19) and David Lopena ('18) receive honors at the Fall awards assembly.



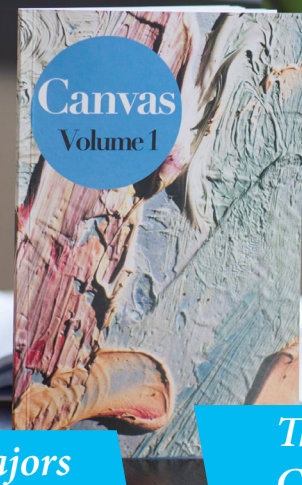
Creative Writing majors at rehearsal for their first reading on September 11th

Coming to a bookshelf near you!

The ChiArts Creative Writing program's first ever publication, *Canvas, Volume 1*, is now available. In September, the ChiArts community was treated to an official reading of the collection, which features fifteen original pieces by Creative Writing students written during the 2014-15 school year, including poetry, essays, and short story excerpts.

In its second year, the Creative Writing program, led by Department Head Ms. Tina Boyer Brown, has grown to five faculty members and students from three grade levels studying poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. Our writers have received instruction from several notable Chicago poets, NPR's Peter Sagal, and WBEZ's *The Afternoon Shift*, and have earned distinctions including Silver and Gold Keys from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and full scholarships to summer writing programs.

Canvas can be purchased at ChiArts performances throughout the school year.



The first edition of ChiArts' literary journal, Canvas.

The first performance of the 2015-16 school year was the Dance Conservatory's Senior Choreography Workshop, at which our dancers performed to a sold-out crowd of friends, family, and guests in the ChiArts Auditorium.

Seven senior dancers (Alexander Roy, Jordan Gasby, Ciara Benson, Nijah Hart, Mikayla Allen-Smith, Sara Torres, and Nia Lyons) with the mentorship of professional choreographers (Imani English, Laura Gates, Nina-Rose Wardanian, Alex Gordon, Diana Campos, Kody Jauron, Breanna Robinson, Rebecca Sparks, Jessica Miller Tomlinson, Shannon Johnson, and Tenley Dorrill), many of whom are staff and company members with one of our highly valued arts partners, Thodos Dance Chicago, assembled personal pieces and instructed over 60 of their classmates in their performance. The workshop is designed to reflect post-secondary dance environments--college programs and professional companies--in which dancers both instruct and are instructed by their peers and must develop a comfort level with both dynamics.

With names like "Grit," "Phenomenal Women," and "Amour," each piece was of its choreographer's creation, inspired by their passion for dance and their unique sense of the art. Only these dancers could have choreographed these pieces.



Dancers onstage at this year's Senior Choreography Workshop.



Ravyn Washington ('17)

Congratulations to Ravyn Washington (Vocal Performance, '17), this year's winner of the Andrew Bird Scholarship Competition!

The Andrew Bird Scholarship is an annual audition-based scholarship program co-sponsored by Foundations Of Music that provides one year of private music lessons to a ChiArts student. Applicants must audition and provide a personal essay detailing their inspiration to pursue music, and are judged by a panel of Chicago music educators and performers, including Andrew Bird himself.

Having received classical vocal training since the age of 11, Ravyn performs R&B, soul, jazz, and classical repertoire in equal measure. When she writes her own music, Ravyn's songs lean toward a "neo-soul" designation in the tradition of artists like Lauryn Hill and Erykah Badu.

Ravyn's award is well-deserved and ChiArts is excited to see her grow through this wonderful opportunity.



During August, auditions were held for this year's musical, SWEET CHARITY. For the first time ever, the musical's cast features students from every ChiArts conservatory. The cast consists of 50 students and the crew and orchestra are made up of dozens more. In all, over 100 of the school's 582 scholar-artists are taking part in the production. Neil Simon's SWEET CHARITY, with music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields follows Charity, a dancer-for-hire at a Times Square dance hall, exploring her life and romances.

During rehearsal, the cast was visited by renowned choreographer and current Roosevelt University faculty member Jane Lanier, who has worked alongside legendary director and choreographer Bob Fosse, who directed and choreographed the original Broadway production of SWEET CHARITY in 1966. She spent an entire evening with the cast (after teaching master classes with musical theatre students in the afternoon), providing instruction for several numbers and speaking individually to cast members.

The show's leads--Kendra Turner, Madison Pullman (both as Charity), and Naphtali Curry (as Oscar)--have qualified for Illinois High School Musical Theatre Awards. Held in June, the IHSMTAs bring together the best of the state's high school theatre performers, with an opportunity to perform at Chicago's Broadway Playhouse and a trip to New York City as the grand prizes.

Madison Pullman ('16) as Charity in ChiArts' SWEET CHARITY

This summer, six senior scholar-artists from the Visual Arts conservatory received full scholarships to attend the School of the Art Institute's Ox-Bow summer camp in Saugatuck, Michigan. This is the first year that ChiArts has partnered with Ox-Bow, and the students took full advantage of the opportunity, creating incredible work during their time in Saugatuck.

Our visual artists were treated to two week intensive courses, including Ox-Bow's Pre-College Landscape Drawing class, co-taught by E.W. Ross and Olivia Petrides, which draws upon the natural terrain of Ox-Bow. Students in the class implement a wide variety of media to explore drawing, design, composition and creativity, using the backdrop of Lake Michigan, rolling sand dunes, and wooded shorelines as their subject.

Fletcher Wells, Sabrina Velazquez, Alan Cortes, Cassie Romero, Daniela Perez and Lisa Bellisario each came away from the experience with greater understanding of the artistic process, completed pieces of work, and an appreciation for the peace and clarity of mind associated with two weeks in the outdoors (these are city kids after all!).

ChiArts and the Visual Arts Conservatory are grateful for the opportunity Ox-Bow and SAIC provided for these students and are excited to see how their time in Saugatuck will carry over to their final year at the Chicago High School for the Arts.



Fletcher Wells ('16) at Ox-Bow



*Executive Director
José Ochoa*

A Letter from the Director

Seven years. The doors of The Chicago High School for the Arts have now been open for seven years. Since the fall of 2009, ChiArts has been providing the future of Chicago's arts community with the education and training they need to fulfill their promise, to ensure that the Chicago arts community looks and feels like Chicago itself.

Culturally, seven years is a significant period of time in many ways. Many thinkers, social scientists, and researchers have dedicated their lives to studying a concept called the "Seven Year Cycle," an idea that posits that humans undergo mental and emotional transformations in seven year increments--that people are re-socialized over seven year periods.

At the age of 7, for instance, a person has reached the culmination of his first psychological life cycle--he has come to an understanding about where he fits in his world and what his relationship is to those around him and to his community--and is beginning another seven year shift, at the end of which he will be 14 and at an entirely different place in his life. Any evidence to the accuracy of this theory as it applies to people is inconclusive, but I find it eerily relevant to the first seven years of the life of ChiArts and to my hopes for the next seven years of ChiArts' life.

In seven years, ChiArts has come far. From two temporary locations to our permanent home straddling the Ukrainian Village and Humboldt Park neighborhoods. From a class of 150 to a full complement of students plus three classes of alumni. From four conservatories to five. From a smattering of arts and community partners to an entire fleet of dedicated, like-minded friends.

ChiArts now has alumni three years into professional dance careers, three years into degrees in vocal and instrumental performance, theatre, studio art, and academic fields as rigorous as human biology and computer engineering. In fact, the success of ChiArts' alums is represented all over these pages.

The logos that you see in the bottom corner of this page and in the corners of the pages signifying the ChiArts conservatories were designed by Ebonee Wilkins, a member of the first graduating class of The Chicago High School for the Arts in 2013. In seven years, ChiArts has matured as an organization, understanding ourselves and what we hope to achieve more thoroughly. To reflect this inward evolution, ChiArts asked Ebonee to update our outward representation, and she more than fulfilled our wishes. The new logo is still ChiArts, but with greater clarity and direction--a visual depiction of ChiArts at age 7.

Married folks refer to something called the "seven-year itch." It refers to the idea that at some point, the honeymoon phase is over, and partners find themselves less in love, less committed to one another, and hearts and minds begin to stray. At ChiArts, I think I speak for myself, the faculty and staff, board of directors, donors, and partners when I say that, seven years in, we have never been more committed to educating the arts and minds of Chicago's scholar-artists. We are looking forward to another seven years of success and seeing where we stand at age 14.

Sincerely,

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

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

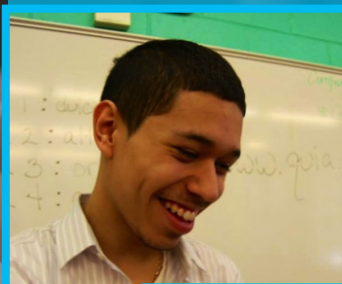
Alumnus Update

During his time at ChiArts, Louis Santiago (Vocal Performance, '14) was considered one of the school's most promising scholar-artists. As a Music Conservatory student, Louis was featured on WFMT's *Introductions* and placed as a finalist in the *Classical Singer Magazine* competition (for which he was flown to Texas to compete in the finals), as well as in the Schmidt Vocal Competition.

"ChiArts has been incredibly supportive.," he says. "When I was in the *Classical Singer* competition, I had a rough time finding enough money to continue on in the competition and [two ChiArts supporters]--as well as several academic teachers--helped me out."

In his classes, Louis was no stranger to solos and was continuously encouraged to pursue music by his voice teacher, Gaye Klopach. Upon graduation, however, Louis felt a sense of fatigue and exhaustion, causing him to rethink his musical aspirations. He explored careers in gaming and story writing, but his passion for music was too great for him to ignore.

Louis is now studying vocal performance at North Park University as a Presidential Scholar. He says that there are challenging days, especially when the egos and pride of competitive peers come into play, but Louis remains encouraged, humble, and hard-working--qualities that make him a true scholar-artist.



Louis Santiago ('14)

Faculty Spotlight

Adam Farcus joined ChiArts a few weeks into the semester as a Visual Arts instructor for Digital Media.

Mr. Farcus is a Chicago-based activist, artist, curator, feminist, and teacher. He was born and raised in the rural town of Coal City, Illinois. He received his M.F.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago, his B.F.A. from Illinois State University, and his A.A. from Joliet Junior College. He has exhibited his work at numerous venues, including Box13, Houston; Vox Populi, Philadelphia; the American University Museum, and A+D Gallery, Columbia College, Chicago.

Mr. Farcus has lectured on his work at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Performance Studies International 16 conference, among many others. From 2012 through 2015 he was also a co-curator, with Allison Yasukawa, for the Baltimore-based residential art space, Lease Agreement.



Adam Farcus