

THE CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS CHIARTS NEWS

Issue 3, Spring 2016

“This is proof of our students’ passion and commitment; they complete a rigorous, exhausting school year of 9-hour days, homework, rehearsals, and exams, and then, when their friends are relaxing, they dive joyfully into weeks more of non-stop practicing, performing, and honing their talents.”

More from Executive Director José Ochoa on page 7.

IN THIS ISSUE

Kerfuffle! 2

Graduation 3

Academics, Creative Writing 4

Dance, Music 5

Theatre, Visual Arts 6

A Letter from the Director 7

Alumnus Feature 8

Kerfuffle! at the Chicago History Museum

April's fifth annual *Kerfuffle!* once again put on display all of what makes The Chicago High School for the Arts the home of the scholar-artist.

Held this year at the Chicago History Museum, *Kerfuffle!* 2016 featured the benefit's most interactive format to date. Rather than a traditional dinner and a show program, the evening unfolded in multiple segments, beginning with the world premiere of "We Are ChiArts," a new short film about the school (more on that below).

After the film screening, *Kerfuffle!*'s 300 guests were free to explore the museum's second floor, where they found an array of student works on display and were able to interact with ChiArts students as they flexed their artistic muscles. Guests chatted with visual artists at their easels as they touched up their most recent works, gathered around the Steinway for piano duets, mingled near the bar as the jazz ensemble provided the perfect ambience, and commissioned poems by ChiArts creative writers on a subject of their choosing, tapped out on typewriters in true authorial fashion.

Next, guests settled into their seats in the dining area and enjoyed food, drinks, and over an hour of pop-up student performances of all types, including classical singing, instrumental pieces, traditional dance, vocal jazz standards, and a choral flash mob. As they ate, attendees were able to meet student ambassadors and hear firsthand the impact ChiArts has had on their young academic and artistic lives.

As guests filed out, they were treated to one final show by junior vocalist Ravyn Washington. Ravyn performed four original songs--each in an R&B style that is part Erykah Badu, part India Arie, and completely her own.

Having the opportunity to share our school with Chicago's arts leaders for the fifth time was an immense honor, terrific fun, and, as an added bonus, a major financial success. Thanks to the generosity of our guests and the Chicago arts community, ChiArts surpassed its fundraising goal for *Kerfuffle!*

Plans are already underway for next year's *Kerfuffle!* and ChiArts is looking forward to another night of fun in support of the most dedicated and deserving young artists in the city.

See you next year!



"We Are ChiArts" is screened for the first time ever in the Robert R. McCormick Theater at the CHM.

"We Are ChiArts" can be watched now on ChiArts' official Facebook and YouTube pages. Pop some popcorn, grab a tissue, and check it out!



Above: Senior Mykhaylo Vuchastyy discusses his work with a *Kerfuffle!* attendee. Below: Executive & Artistic Director José Ochoa congratulates Siyan Brown on a fantastic vocal performance.



"We Are ChiArts" Debuts at *Kerfuffle!*

This past winter, ChiArts commissioned Green River Films to produce a new promotional film to be premiered at *Kerfuffle!* Made possible through the sponsorship of State Farm, "We Are ChiArts" tells the story of the school through the experiences of six outstanding scholar-artists who share their dreams, passion for the arts, and journeys to enrollment at ChiArts.

The film's screening started the evening off on an emotional high note, setting the tone for ChiArts' most successful *Kerfuffle!* yet.

The Class of 2016 Graduates at the Harris Theater

On June 2nd, the graduates of The Chicago High School for the Arts' fourth class of scholar-artists received their diplomas in the presence of friends, family, ChiArts supporters, and their classmates.

The Class of 2016 holds a special place in the history of ChiArts. As Executive Director José Ochoa stated in the ceremony's opening remarks, this class "made us whole." When this class arrived at ChiArts--in the fall of 2012, at the second temporary facility on 35th street in Bronzeville--the school reached full enrollment of 9th through 12th grade students. With this group, ChiArts became a school in the way that others are, with freshmen who look up to seniors, deep-seated student body traditions, and a strong culture that trickles down from the school's upperclassmen to its fresh faces.

The evidence of that culture's impact on this group of students is apparent in their intimacy, an attribute to which Principal Michael Wang made reference in his address to the graduates. Mr. Wang listed dozens of students by their name and defining characteristic, eliciting whoops and hollers and giggles with each student's description. For the assembled, it was like watching a 120 person inside joke made public--each of these students knew each other in ways that only they could, having shared a four-year experience unique to them. ChiArts' Class of 2016 was a special group of loving individuals, and their passion was matched only by their incredible academic and artistic record.

The Class of 2016 achieved a graduation rate of 92% and boasted an 88% rate of enrollment at four-year colleges and universities--our highest thus far. In addition, this group received acceptances to over 450 academic and artistic institutions, and a full 100% of students who applied to college were accepted. In this class, nine students were awarded a Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas, a student became the first Ivy League attendee in ChiArts history, and 40% of the graduates will be the first generation of their family to attend college.

Artistically, this class was equally outstanding. Students in this class earned YoungArts recognitions, a spot on GRAMMY Camp's High School Jazz Octet, over 100 Scholastic Art awards, seats in ILMEA All-State Ensembles, semifinalist and finalist recognition in the Chicago August Wilson Monologue Competition, membership in the Thelonious Monk National Performing Arts High School Jazz Sextet, and much more.

Take a bow, Class of 2016. ChiArts could not be more proud of your accomplishments.



Kalif Brown-Stokes receives his diploma. Kalif will major in Jazz Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana in the fall.



Left: The Class of 2016 greets friends and family before commencement.
Top Right: Valedictorian Kendall Munson addresses her fellow graduates. Kendall will study Speech Pathology at Chabot College in the fall.
Bottom Right: Graduates of the Theatre Conservatory celebrate.

Year End Academics Recap

As the 2015-16 school year wraps up, ChiArts looks back at the myriad academic successes of the year.

Since August of 2015, ChiArts has achieved the following:

- Rated a 1+ school by CPS' School Quality Rating Policy program. This is the highest possible rating, and is based on factors like test scores, college preparedness, school culture. The 1+ rating is an improvement of two grades from last year.
- Ranked in the top 5.3% of high schools nationwide by *U.S. News & World Report* based on ChiArts' state test scores, academic performance of disadvantage students, graduation rate, and college preparedness. This ranking puts ChiArts ahead of roughly 18,000 other high schools in the United States.
- 9 graduates of the Class of 2016 received a Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma. These students earned a score of 18 or higher on the ACT and passed literacy tests from the Office of Language and Cultural Education. Eight of the 9 graduates earned their seal for Spanish; one graduate's seal was for literacy in Polish.
- The Class of 2016 received acceptances to over 450 post-secondary institutions and 100% of students who applied to college were accepted.



Casey Street (left) and Devyn Berkowitz show off their achievements at the end of year awards ceremony in June.

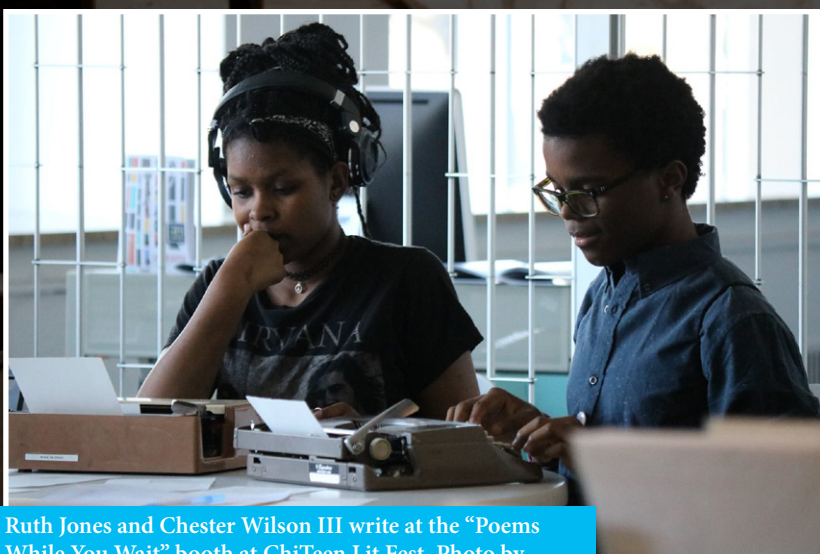
Creative Writing Featured at ChiTeen Lit Fest

The Creative Writing program was a prominent participant in April's ChiTeen Lit Fest at the Harold Washington Library Center and Columbia College.

Leading up to the event, three of ChiArts' writers--Ace Hobfoll, Ysobel Gallo, and Haley Cao--were named "Writer of the Week" by the festival and had their work featured online and shared on social media.

All weekend long, our writers manned the "Poems While You Wait" booth (like at this year's *Kerfuffle!*) where they composed poems for guests based on a subject of the guest's choosing. Topics ranged from race in society to the ocean, giving the poets an opportunity to demonstrate their talents and unique perspectives to a new and varied audience.

ChiArts faculty member Kenyatta Rogers and students Daniela Mauleon, Jupiter Dandrige, and Ace Hobfoll were on hand as featured guests and had the opportunity to perform a reading of their work for the festival's attendees.



Ruth Jones and Chester Wilson III write at the "Poems While You Wait" booth at ChiTeen Lit Fest. Photo by Lesley Etherly.

Junior Dancers Leap Out to Trainee Programs

Two of ChiArts' most accomplished dancers, juniors Alexander Roy and Kayla Taylor, have accepted invitations to join trainee programs at professional companies and have left ChiArts to officially begin their careers in dance.

Alex and Kayla achieved success this spring by reaching the finals of the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) international ballet competition--one of the world's most prestigious ballet programs--held this April in New York City. Prior to Alex and Kayla, ChiArts had never had students advance to the finals of YAGP. They competed alongside dancers from nations all across the globe, including China, Korea, Brazil, and Australia and were able to connect with dancers of all ages, levels, and origins.

Alex will begin the Joffrey Ballet Trainee Program for the 2016-17 season in September and study on a full tuition and housing scholarship--a remarkable achievement considering that he began training in ballet only three years ago when he started at ChiArts as a novice dancer. Kayla is joining Boston Ballet's second company for a two-year training program to bridge the gap between her formal training and her professional career.



Alex and Kayla dance at an event held at Beverly Arts Center prior to competing at YAGP in April. Photo by Nancy Wong.

Music Conservatory Continues Success with ACT-SO Gold and Baldoceda Scholarship

Two Music Conservatory students distinguished themselves this spring by earning notable recognitions in their field.

Sophomore vocalist Maya Barber won a gold medal for her performance of "Se tu m'ami, se sospiri" at the NAACP regional ACT-SO Awards in May. The ACT-SO awards are a nationwide, yearlong program designed to stimulate high academic and cultural achievement among African-American students. More than 260,000 students have participated since the program began. Maya moves on to the national competition in Cincinnati this July, where she will continue to make ChiArts proud.

Jenayah Lewis, a sophomore violinist, was named the Carlos Baldoceda Memorial Music Enrichment Award winner. The Baldoceda Award is a scholarship underwritten by the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation for a Chicagoland musician between 14 and 25 to be put toward instruction, equipment, programs, or materials that further the winner's musical pursuits.

These awards put a nice bookend on a school year that saw the Music Conservatory place 15 students in ILMEA District Ensembles, place 5 students in ILMEA All-State Ensembles, win 19 CPS Piano Showcase awards, win a YoungArts Merit recognition, and have a student named a Posse Scholar, among a host of other achievements.



Above: Maya Barber, NAACP ACT-SO regional gold medal winner. Below: Jenayah Lewis, Carlos Baldoceda Memorial Music Enrichment Award Winner.



Joshlyn Camille and Drew Richelle Perform in House of Blues Showcase

On April 21st, sophomore Musical Theatre major Joshlyn Lomax (“Joshlyn Camille”) and junior vocalist Drew Gawron (“Drew Richelle”) earned an opportunity to perform onstage at the House of Blues by participating in the Bringin’ Down the House showcase hosted by the House of Blues Music Forward Foundation.

The showcase’s mission is to support the growth of young artists by connecting them with like-minded musicians, building their self-confidence, and teaching them new skills. The Chicago showcase featured six local teen artists and groups who applied and auditioned for a chance to play to the packed House of Blue crowd.

Drew played solo, performing original acoustic country music songs on her guitar and piano.

Joshlyn was backed by her band, Coco Butter, which featured fellow ChiArts scholar-artist Isaiah Horne on bass. Their set was coached and choreographed by ChiArts Music Conservatory faculty member Greta Pope, who connected Joshlyn with her bandmates and acts as her private vocal teacher.



Above: Joshlyn Camille takes the stage at the Bringin’ Down the House teen music showcase. Below: Drew Richelle plays an original piece during her set.



4 Visual Artists to Attend Anderson Ranch Summer Workshops

This summer, ChiArts will once again send four visual artists on full scholarships to Anderson Ranch Arts Center for summer workshops.

Christian Martinez (Photography), Anieya Cauthen (Photography), Steven Jones (Drawing/Painting), and Guadalupe Campos (Drawing/Painting) will travel to Colorado for two weeks in June for classes taught by Anderson Ranch’s talented faculty. These four students combined for 8 Scholastic Art Award recognitions this school year, and ChiArts is excited to see how the expert instruction at Anderson Ranch can enhance their award-winning talents.

At Anderson Ranch, students receive instruction in small classes with almost unlimited studio time, optimizing access to instructors and materials and allowing students to work when inspiration and creativity strike.

In past years, students have made excellent work during their time at the ranch, and we expect much of the same this summer!



Anderson Ranch scholarship awardee Guadalupe Campos in her painting class at ChiArts.

A Letter from the Director

Summer is here, and the absence of classes in session can be felt throughout our building. In the span of a week, ChiArts said goodbye to its faculty, its scholar-artists, and another group of graduates (our 4th!) who have contributed so much to the culture and legacy of our school.

If one was to walk through our empty halls today, it would be difficult to imagine that, for nine months of the year, they echo with the sounds of song, dance, and creativity in action. It's quiet now, but that doesn't mean that the work has stopped.

In the main office, the academic team is revising and considering curricula to provide our students with the most comprehensive college preparatory education possible. The counseling department is hard at work, making sure that our fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth classes of graduates will improve on this year's stellar 92% graduation rate and attend the universities and programs that will help them fulfill their promise. Our five conservatory heads are seeking out the best and brightest teaching artists in the city to provide the caliber of instruction for which ChiArts is known. The development and finance teams are securing donations, building our base of supporters, and meticulously allocating funds to ensure that ChiArts remains tuition free and operating to its fullest potential. And all over the building, arriving early and staying late, our indispensable maintenance staff guarantees that the classrooms, studios, and facilities are safe, clean, and in tip-top shape for our scholar-artists.

We're working hard this summer, and so are our students. At Marwen, Merit, DanceWorks, Anderson Ranch, here at ChiArts, and at arts organizations across Chicago and beyond, scholar-artists are taking advantage of their free time with summer intensives and camps to continue developing their artistic abilities, with the goal of returning to class in August fully prepared to engage with ChiArts' curricula. This is proof of our students' passion and commitment; they complete a rigorous, exhausting school year of 9-hour days, homework, rehearsals, and exams, and then, when their friends are relaxing, they dive joyfully into weeks more of non-stop practicing, performing, and honing their talents.

It is hard work to be ranked in the top 5.3% of U.S. high schools, given a top rating by CPS, and named an Exemplary School by the Arts Schools Network all in the same year, but our staff and students relish the challenge to improve on ChiArts' successes, and we will continue to strive for excellence.

At ChiArts, there is no rest for the weary, and we wouldn't have it any other way.

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



arts schools network
exemplary school
2016 - 2018

Alumni Spotlight

This summer, three ChiArts alumni are working as counselors at the first-ever ChiArts Summer Camp.

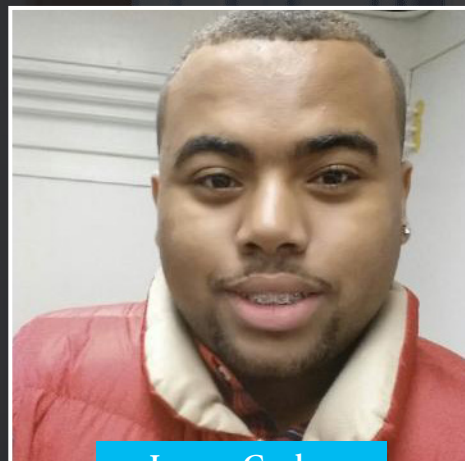
Each members of the Class of 2015, Lamar Gayles (Visual Arts), Greer Hutchison (Dance), and Moises Salazar (Visual Arts) will be teaching fun and interactive lessons to burgeoning grammar school-age artists.

Lamar has continued his arts education at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota on a full-tuition scholarship from the Posse Foundation, where he majors in Art History and Studio Art with a Teaching Licensure. At St. Olaf, he has worked as an Art Collection Assistant for the Flaten Art Museum, installing artwork across campus and researching the acquisition of new pieces for the museum.

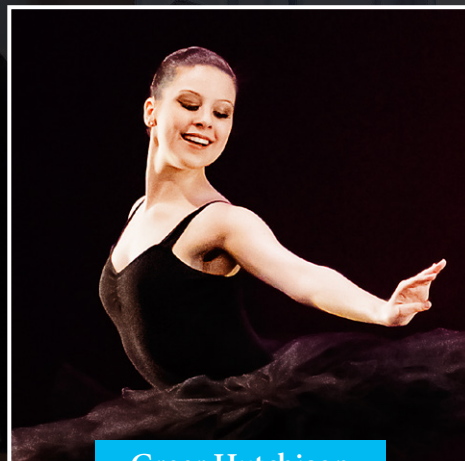
While at ChiArts, Greer earned an Anthony Quinn Foundation Scholarship to continue her dance instruction at Hubbard Street Dance's Summer Intensive. She is now a Contemporary Dance student at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where she will begin her second year in the fall and continue studying the fundamentals of contemporary dance and ballet technique.

Moises is currently a student of Fine Arts at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. While at ChiArts, he was a YoungArts finalist in Visual Arts, an honor bestowed on only 25 high school students nationwide. During his first year at the School of the Art Institute, Moises worked as an Artist Intern at 6018North and had his artwork included in the *Terrain* exhibition at the gallery.

There are still spots available in each of our counselors' camp sessions, beginning July 11th! Register your child at summeratchiarts.weebly.com and give them an excellent learning opportunity with brilliant young artists.



Lamar Gayles



Greer Hutchison



Moises Salazar

The Chicago High School for the Arts
2714 W. Augusta Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60622
www.chiarts.org

For more news, follow ChiArts on
Facebook and Twitter: @ChiArtsHS

To support ChiArts with a donation, visit
chiarts.org/support or contact ChiArts
Director of Development Jessica Ramirez
at jramirez@chiarts.org.