NEWS FROM TCA: MAY 2017

Texas Commission on the Arts
Investing in a Creative Texas

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2008 Texas State Musician Shelley King performed at the Sealy Area Historical Society's annual Spring Fest in April as part of her TCA rural tour, which provided six free performances to audiences in Austin, Colorado, DeWitt, Gonzales, and Lavaca counties. Photo by Pat Vykoukal.

Legislative Session Update

Photo: Texas Legislature Online

Texas' 85th Legislative Session is rolling along. On April 6, the Texas House of Representatives debated their version of the State budget, House Bill 1. The debate left TCA's upcoming budget as it had been introduced in House Bill 1. To summarize, both House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 1 reduce TCA's proposed budget by excluding the funds designated for Cultural District Project grants. As well, both budgets reduce TCA's arts education grants budget, with the Senate's budget subtracting an additional $723,917 (total for the biennium). The proposed cuts would reduce TCA's budget by 28% (HB 1) or 34% (SB 1). In short, the Senate budget currently proposes a cut of $5.7 M while the House budget proposes a cut of $5 M over the biennium.

A conference committee made up of five members each of the House and Senate is now

working on reconciling the differences between HB 1 and SB 1 and will submit the revisions to each chamber for approval. Senate members of the conference committee are Jane Nelson (Chair), Juan Hinojosa, Joan Huffman, Lois Kolkhorst, and Charles Schwertner. Representatives on the conference committee are John Zerwas (Chair), Trent Ashby, Sarah Davis, Larry Gonzales, and Oscar Longoria. You can use this page to follow the progress of each bill. Since the Texas Legislature meets biennially, it will make decisions on two years' worth of State budgeting, including TCA's budget for fiscal year 2018 (September 1, 2017-August 31, 2018) and fiscal year 2019 (September 1, 2018-August 31, 2019). The Legislative Session will end on May 29, 2017.

Free Professional Development Webinars

Participants in K Space Contemporary's Dia de los Muertos event. Photo: Debbie Noble

TCA's next live professional development webinar will be offered **June 21** and will cover the **Secret Power of Special Events and Festivals**. Special events are a great way to increase your organization's visibility and generate revenue for your programs. Presenters **Michelle Smythe** and **Cheryl Votzmeyer** of K Space Contemporary in Corpus Christi will share their experiences developing an event that has grown exponentially over the last few years. To help jump start ideas for your own community, TCA staff will provide additional examples of great events across the state. A webinar invitation will be sent out in early June.

If you missed the **Building Audiences through Strategic Marketing** webinar we offered with the Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau's **Kim Phillips** on April 19, good news! All of our new professional development webinars are recorded and available on our Professional Development Vimeo page for free.

Texas Poetry Out Loud Winner Wins National Poetry Ourselves Competition

Theo Cai, Texas' 2017 Poetry Out Loud winner, competed in the national contest in Washington, DC, on April 25. The national competition starts with a day of three semi-finals broken up by region. The top three competitors in each semi-final move on to the next day's event: the national finals. The Poetry Out Loud recitation contest is a national project of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. High school students memorize poems and perform them in competition, mastering public speaking skills, building self-confidence, and learning about their literary heritage along the way. The Texas Commission on the Arts conducts the program at the state level.

Theo, who is completing his senior year at the Hockaday School in Dallas, recited Li-Young Lee's "The Gift," Ada Limon's "What It Looks Like to Us and the Words We Use," and Charlotte Brontë's "On the Death of Anne Bronte" in the semi-finals. Ultimately, Georgia's Samara Elán Huggins took the top prize of $20,000 and bragging rights as the 2017 Poetry Out Loud national winner.

This year, state Poetry Out Loud winners were invited to submit original written or spoken-word poems in a contest called Poetry Ourselves. Theo was named the winner in the written category and received an award commemorating his achievement. Congratulations to Samara,

Theo, and the other students who represented their states on the national stage.

Thank you, Arts Create Evaluators!

Since April 27, TCA has been holding a series of nine discipline-specific panels in Austin to review and score applications to the Arts Create grant program. Panel meetings will continue through May 25. Panels are composed of arts administrators from across the state. We're extremely grateful for the time and expertise that the evaluators give to this important process.

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