NEWS FROM TCA: MARCH 2019

Texas Commission on the Arts
Investing in a Creative Texas

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Ariel-Lynn Warren is Texas' 2019 Poetry Out Loud champ! Photo: Amanda Klaus

2019 Texas Poetry Out Loud Winner Named

On Saturday, February 23, 2019, the Texas Commission on the Arts held the state finals competition of the Poetry Out Loud national poetry recitation contest in Austin. The Poetry Out Loud recitation contest is a national project of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. This exciting program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. High school students memorize poems and perform them in competition. At the Texas state finals, 31 high school students from across Texas competed for a chance to represent the state at the national contest in Washington, D.C. in late April. The winner of that competition will receive a $20,000 scholarship.

The Poetry Out Loud state finals competition was graciously hosted by the Bullock Texas State History Museum. The students, each having first won their school competition, were evaluated on qualities such as articulation, evidence of understanding, accuracy and overall performance. Internationally renowned poet Naomi Shihab Nye served as master of ceremonies for the event. The judges for the competition, Charlie Clark, Laurie Ann Guerrero (2016 Texas Poet Laureate), Becka Oliver, and Ebony Stewart, are Texas poets, writers, and/or theater artists.

After two rounds, the field was narrowed to five finalists: Ariel-Lynn Warren, a junior at Lewisville High School in Lewisville; Julia Mehavier of San Antonio's Northeast School of the

Arts; Michael Lukowicz, who attends St. Mark's School of Texas in Dallas; Azucena Valdez, a student at the Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design in San Antonio; and Brianna McCain, a student at Uplift Peak Preparatory High School in Dallas. Ultimately, Ms. Warren won the 2019 Poetry Out Loud state final. As state champion, she will receive $200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. where she will compete at the national level. Additionally, her school will receive $500 for the purchase of poetry books and materials. The Texas runner up was Julia Mehavier. She will receive $100, while her school will receive $200 for the purchase of poetry books and materials. We congratulate all our 2019 participants, their teachers, and their families.

Texas Legislative Session Update

Since our February newsletter went out, the **House Appropriations Committee** met. In that March 4 meeting, TCA's first two Exceptional Item requests were approved for inclusion in the budget for House Bill 1. As a reminder, those Exceptional Items are:
-Exceptional Item #1 - Restore Cultural Districts Project (CDP) Grants Base-Level Funding; TOTAL: $5,000,000 over the biennium.
-Exceptional Item #2 - Arts Healing Grants for Active Service Members and Veterans; TOTAL: $500,000 over the biennium.

The Senate Finance Committee has started meeting but has not yet taken action on TCA's Exceptional Item requests or base appropriation request.

Legislation to Watch

As described above, TCA has two requests pending in this legislative session that could have fairly immediate impact on upcoming grants, so be prepared to act.

Cultural District Projects
TCA has requested $5 million in this program across the next two years. If these funds are secured, TCA will be taking applications for this grant program by **June 17, 2019**. Here are those grant guidelines.

Arts Healing Grants for Active Service Members and Veterans
TCA has requested $500,000 in this program across the next two years. If these funds are secured, TCA will be taking applications for this grant program by **July 15, 2019** as a subset of the Arts Respond Project Health and Human Services priority area. Remember these grants are most competitive when you have a solid partnership in place, as demonstrated by letters of support, so plan ahead now! Here are those grant guidelines.

Grantee Spotlight: Kimbell Art Museum

In the current legislative budgeting process, TCA is requesting funds to re-activate the Cultural District Project grant program, which is currently suspended due to lack of funds. TCA is hopeful that the 2020-2021 budget will allow the agency to support quality arts experiences

that attract visitors to designated cultural districts and result in significant economic impact for those Texas communities.

Photo: Forest Roberson

The Cultural District Project grant program was active during fiscal years 2016 and 2017 (September 1, 2015-August 31, 2017). During that time, TCA distributed 37 grants to organizations in Texas cultural districts. One of those was a $450,000 grant given to the Kimbell Art Museum to support bringing *Monet: The Early Years* to the Fort Worth Cultural District to attract visitors. It was the first-ever exhibition devoted to the young genius of Claude Monet, featuring work from the artist's early years, for a special look at how this Impressionist master started out.

The Kimbell Museum engaged the renowned firm, Audience Research & Analysis, to conduct an economic impact study assessing visitor impact during the exhibition. The results were truly impressive. The 15-week exhibition had a total of 100,547 visitors, with an average of 1,105 per day. 67% of visitors resided outside of Tarrant County, coming from as far away as Australia. 76% of visitors surveyed said the exhibition was a primary reason for being in Fort Worth. **Attendees spent a total of $10.8 million locally** as part of their visit to *Monet: The Early Years*, which included hotel, dining, shopping, transportation, and services. The exhibition and the spending related to it supported 117 total jobs.

Of course, this is not an isolated incident. Research by the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism shows that **the average cultural tourist stays longer and spends more than a general tourist**: the average daily spending for arts & culture tourists is $116.96 as opposed to $102.20 for non-culture tourists.

Governor Abbott Appoints Two New TCA Commissioners

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Sean Payton and Deborah "Debbie" Gray Marino to the Texas Commission on the Arts for terms set to expire on August 31, 2021 and August 31, 2023, respectively.

Sean Payton of Killeen is a pastor and serves as the Chaplain of the Texas State Guard. He was trained in classical piano performance and plays percussion with the Gospel Travelers and the Devine Messengers. He is on the board of the Arts Committee for the City of Killeen and is a member of the Military Order of Foreign Wars. Commissioner Payton was honorably discharged from the United States Army and received a degree in theology from the American Bible Institute and Seminary. He was previously appointed by Governor Abbott to serve on the Governor's Committee to Support the Military.

Deborah "Debbie" Gray Marino of San Antonio is the senior vice president, corporate relations for SWBC. She is a member of the Spurs Sports and Entertainment non-profit Silver and Black Give Back and is chair elect of the United Way-Women United Committee. She also serves on the executive board for the Witte Museum and is the vice chair for the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and a past member of the Commission on the Status of Women-San Antonio and the Texas Education Agency Accountability Policy Advisory Committee. Commissioner Marino received a Bachelor of Science in journalism from Texas A&M University. She was previously appointed by Governor Abbott to the Texas Health Services Authority Board of Directors.

TCA looks forward to welcoming Commissioners Payton and Marino at our March 26 Commission meeting.

Welcome, Lindsey!

Lindsey Reynolds

March 1 marked the first day of work for TCA's new program assistant, **Lindsey Reynolds**. Lindsey graduated from UT Austin in May 2018 with a degree in Art History and a special focus in Museum Studies. There she interned at the Blanton Museum of Art and spent a month studying abroad in Guatemala. In the months since graduation, she has begun writing exhibition reviews and artist profiles for Sightlines Magazine and adopted a dog. A native San Antonian, she frequently makes trips down I-35 to visit family and keep an eye on the local art scene.

Free Professional Development Webinar: Preparing for the Worst

Join us on April 17 for our next free professional development webinar, **Preparing for the Worst**. We all hope for the best, but sometimes the worst does happen. Whether the threat is a natural disaster, financial uncertainty, or unexpected changes in leadership, it is important for organizations to create contingency plans before an emergency hits. In this webinar, the team at **Houston Ballet** will share how they prepared for and recovered from the destruction of Hurricane Harvey. You'll hear from Houston Ballet's Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Development Officer, and Director of Marketing and Public Relations, on how they navigated insurance claims, developed communications plans, and reimagined, rescheduled, and reticketed the 2017/18 performance season. They will take questions following the presentation. The webinar will be held at 2 PM Central Time. Register for the webinar now to reserve your spot!

James Nelson has been the Executive Director of Houston Ballet since 2012 and served as the General Manager for 12 years before that. **Cheryl Zane** has served as Chief Financial Officer at Houston Ballet for 30 years. **Angela Lane**, Chief Development Officer, is a Certified Fund Raising Executive who previously worked at the Red Cross in support of disaster fundraising. **Angela Lee**, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, has influenced and managed a staff that serves as the front line of customer interaction.

If you missed the February 20 webinar, **A Community Foundation Insider Tells All** with **MariBen Ramsey**, or if you'd like to see what else we've offered over the years, we have good news! All of our professional development webinars are recorded and available online for free.

Upcoming TCA Application Deadlines

TCA has two upcoming application deadlines. As always, the TCA staff is happy to discuss your goals and eligibility to determine which programs are right for you. You may also request that a TCA staff member review your application and provide feedback. Ideally, these requests

would be made at least two weeks before the application deadline. For your assistance, TCA has recently recorded a **Grant Writing Basics** webinar with Humanities Texas, available here.

Grant Program: Arts Create
This program provides multi-year operational support to arts organizations with established cash budgets over $50,000. Applicants write their grant for a one-year period, and if funded, will provide an update for the second year. Depending on the availability of funds, the organization's award amount will be the same for two fiscal years.
Support dates must be: Between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020
Application deadline: Midnight on March 1 or March 15. Note: deadline varies depending on organization classification. Your specific deadline will be shown in your online account with TCA.
Application form: Online
Resources: Grant guidelines, contact TCA staff, links to recorded webinars about the application process were sent to eligible account holders.

Grant Program: Arts Respond Performance Support
This program provides professional artist fees to Texas nonprofits, schools, colleges, and units of government for hiring an artist from the Texas Touring Roster to do a performance. These applications are funded based on a percentage of contracted fees.
Activity dates must occur: Between June 15, 2019 and August 31, 2019
Application deadline: Midnight on May 1, 2019
Application form: Online
Resources: Grant guidelines, contact TCA staff

Catching Up with Young Master Vijay Meunier (Music, 2010)

Since its inception in 2002, the Young Masters grant program has supported 328 Texas high school students' studies in the arts. We're using this month's newsletter to share an update from one of our Young Master alumni.

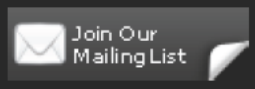
Vijay Meunier

In 2010, **Vijay Meunier** was named a Young Master in music for classical guitar by the Texas Commission on the Arts. The Young Masters grant funding he received helped him attend the Classical Minds Guitar Institute in Houston, the Guitar Foundation of America Festival and Competition in Columbus, GA, and the 20th Annual International Guitar Symposium in Iserlohn, Germany in his first year of the Young Masters program. For his second year of funding, he returned to the Classical Minds Guitar Institute and attended the Le Domaine Forget International Music Academy in Saint-Irenee, Quebec, Canada.

Vijay writes, "Receiving the Texas Young Masters award during my formative years as a music student helped me get acquainted with the international community of classical guitarists as I traveled to New York City, Canada, and Germany. The work I did at these seminars gave me lasting inspiration that solidified my decision to pursue a career in music, and many of the people I met became lifelong friends and colleagues. Additionally, **my studies at the Iserlohn Guitar Festival in Germany led to my meeting and forming a relationship with Bruce Holzman, who would soon accept me into the prestigious classical guitar studio at Florida State University.**"

After completing his undergraduate degree in Florida, Vijay moved back to Austin and is

currently pursuing a master's degree in music from the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. As well, he works as a professional teacher and performer for the Orpheus Academy of Music and AllRhythms, a nonprofit that offers music education classes to low income school districts and communities, as well as special programs and performances for the public to entertain and promote world music to the Austin area. TCA is proud to have been a part of Vijay's early development as an artist, along with our partners at the Texas Cultural Trust.



Texas Commission on the Arts

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