

# ASPIRATIONS

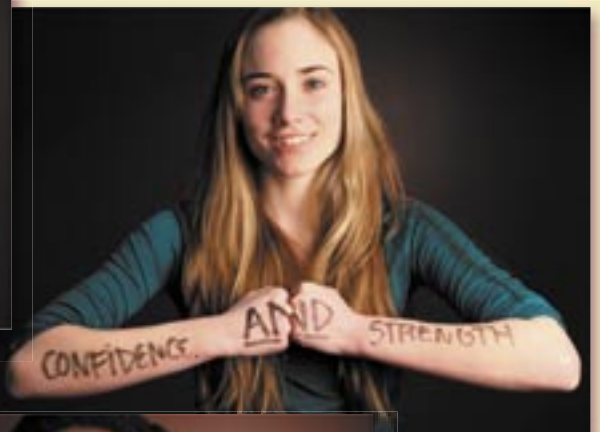


A publication of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Institute, the non-profit support organization of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts

## WHAT DOES



## NOCCA MEAN?



JULY 2011



Photographs Robert X. Fogerty

Dear Friends of NOCCA,

In February, photographer Robert X. Fogerty came to NOCCA to capture portraits of students. He asked them to express in writing on their hands and arms what NOCCA means to them.



Some students' answers centered on their training: NOCCA means safety in *expression, growth, change, energy, passion*. More often, however, their answers expressed much deeper beliefs: NOCCA means *my future, my life, my home, my heart, happiness, everything*.

Everyone at NOCCA is deeply honored to be part of such a generative environment which springs from the mentorship between master and apprentice. Beginning in August, we will find out what NOCCA's educational model will mean not only to arts but to academics. We will also find out what NOCCA's professional-level instruction will mean to the region's culinary arts industry.

NOCCA's history is rich and special. Every young artist and master teacher who has walked through its doors has contributed to this important new chapter, as has each donor who has believed in NOCCA's ability to use creativity to break boundaries. We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress.

Sincerely,

Debbie Marx  
President

Sally Perry  
Executive Director



Dear World series Photographer Robert X. Fogerty at NOCCA.

The mission of The New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Institute, a non-profit organization, is to provide support and advocacy for the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. The NOCCA Institute provides access to excellence in the arts for students, faculty and the community-at-large. NOCCA is an agency of the State of Louisiana that provides the highest quality arts-training for high school students.

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## CULINARY ARTS JOINS NOCCA'S OFFERINGS



By the fourth day of the summer session, *everyone* from NOCCA was in the kitchen. (It was pastry day!) It hasn't taken long for Culinary Arts to become part of NOCCA's heart and soul.

We ~ NOCCA, The NOCCA Institute, Chef Emeril Lagasse and the Emeril Lagasse Foundation (ELF) ~ have dreamed about this moment for the past five years. In March, our dream became reality with the ribbon-cutting on the new Emeril Lagasse Foundation Culinary Arts Studio at NOCCA. Thirty-two students have successfully auditioned into this fall's inaugural class.



The new curriculum, designed with Johnson & Wales University, is rich, layered, intense and unique, just like the region's cultural heritage. "If any city and state in the country is going to have the first comprehensive high school culinary arts-training conservatory, it should be New Orleans and Louisiana," believes NOCCA President and CEO Kyle Wedberg. "And now we do."



The program is led by Chef Dana D'Anzi Tuohy (at left in black chef's hat), who joins NOCCA after serving as Director of Culinary for Emeril's Las Vegas restaurants since 2007. A native New Orleanian and graduate of Benjamin Franklin High School and Johnson & Wales University, Dana oversees a program that will provide high school students with aggressive, professional culinary training over four years. She will be joined by Chef Frank Brigsten as Master Chef-in-Residence who will teach once a week.

The curriculum will cover core skills; history; regional, national and international cuisine; nutrition; kitchen and house management; critique and communications skills; creative and personal aesthetics; presentation; real-world applications and expectations; and a thorough understanding of excellence in the culinary arts.

"Culinary is a unique art," explains Chef Dana. "Students must learn to take an idea from inception to plate, always with an eye towards the ability to *consistently* execute and teach the recipe. Moreover, food is personal and immediate. It is important to learn to balance your own creative vision with what the customer wants. My goal is for students to be not just technically strong, but giving, aware, and possessing enough creative confidence to become the next great chef."



"Emeril is passionate about seeing more young people like NOCCA's Culinary Arts students enter and succeed in this field. Education, mentorship, creativity, self-discipline and pride are the core values he has brought to all of his enterprises," says Kristin Shannon, Executive Director of ELF. "It is why this project and partnership with NOCCA is a perfect pairing."

NOCCA's first-of-its-kind Culinary Arts program will link intensive culinary instruction with other arts; with math, science and the humanities; and with a visiting chefs program unprecedented anywhere. What a recipe for success!

The development of the Culinary Arts program is made possible by Emeril Lagasse Foundation, Macy's, Gustaf W. McIlhenny Family Foundation, Selley Foundation, Target, Galatoire's Foundation and the New Orleans Food and Wine Experience.

L to R: Joel Dondis, Kristin Shannon, Chef Emeril, Leah Chase and David McCelvey interview student Janeé Taylor during the *Dish That Makes A Difference* recipe contest, which raised \$45,000 at Emeril's restaurants nationwide.

# CREATING A NEW MODEL

Visiting master artists tell students: build on your strengths. NOCCA's great strength is its approach to teaching. Louisiana's great strength is creativity.

As an *arts-training school*, we approached the development of a new *academic curriculum* with a clean sheet of paper, without preconceived notions about how and when content might be delivered. And we had the opportunity to develop a new way of teaching academics at a time when New Orleans, Louisiana and the nation are seriously addressing education reform.

With input from leading thinkers across the country and a very deliberate design phase, we are poised to find out what NOCCA's successful model of education in the arts means to the full spectrum of learning. We call the program the **Academic Studio**.

## Breaking Boundaries

One of the Academic Studio's most important dynamics is a curriculum which is integrated on multiple levels. We began this effort with a desire to support arts-training through academics. For instance, we wanted to help Media Arts students understand sound waves and Culinary Arts students understand changes in states of matter as required early on in their arts-training.

During the process, though, the design team, led by Dr. Robbie McHardy, came to realize they would have the rare opportunity to "reinvent the wheel." They sought to break boundaries.

Connecting arts to academic training was just the first step. The designers, including San Francisco's Exploratorium, mathematicians from University of Texas Austin and University of Melbourne, Australia, and historians from Harvard to Stanford, endorsed breaking boundaries *within* academic



Photographs Robert X. Fogerty

subjects. For instance, rather than teach the Social Studies subjects of geography, world history, American history and civics in separate years, the new curriculum will reflect how historians approach their work ~ by studying *all* of these subjects during a specific time frame. "This approach," says Dr. McHardy, "is supported by recent brain research indicating context best enables learning."

## Human's Place in Time and Space

Social Studies domain partner, Dr. Michael Wallace, realized early on that the arc of human history ~ which he believes reflects a maturation process rather than a progressive process ~ mirrored the maturation of young artists. His curriculum structure examines human interaction as it expands and intensifies over time, from deep history to the present.

As the design team shared their work, the social studies chronology became the framework for integrating learning *across* academic subjects. As a result, first year students will delve into the history, geography, culture, literature, art, languages, scientific and mathematic discoveries from early civilizations to 1400 CE.

Academic Studio faculty have also inte-

grated teaching: math and science will be taught together, and English, history and world languages will be taught together. Such a sophisticated program and ongoing curriculum development has required an unprecedented level of collaboration. Yet the faculty and director, who hold five doctorates among them ~ as well as our other design partners ~ have never been more excited.

## Goals

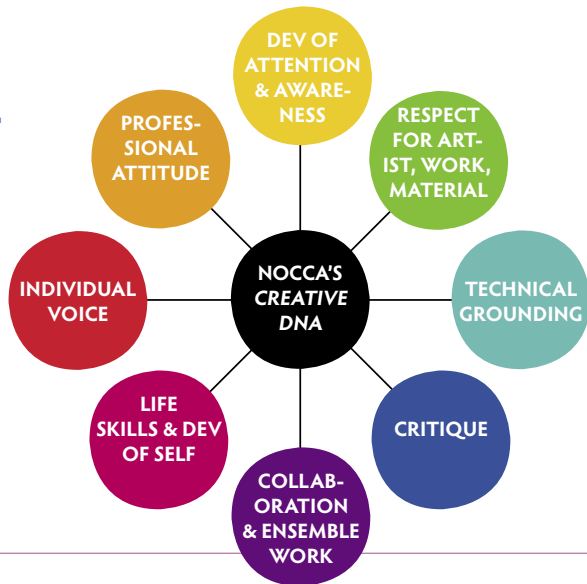
"We want students to see themselves as active intellectuals, as contributors to the world of ideas" says English faculty member Dr. Spree MacDonald.

"It's not just about getting students into and funded for college," emphasizes NOCCA President and CEO Kyle Wedberg. "it is about making sure all of our students have the tools they need to excel in both arts and academics."

"A broad, deep and meaningful education is critical to NOCCA's young artists" concludes Sally Perry, Executive Director of The NOCCA Institute. "But it is also essential to the success of young people in the 21st century. Can an arts conservatory create an innovative academic curriculum at the high school level? Yes, we can. Can NOCCA's powerful creative spirit change education? Definitely."

# HOW THE ACADEMIC STUDIO IS DIFFERENT:

IT IS BUILT  
ON THE  
ELEMENTS OF  
TEACHING  
& LEARNING  
ACROSS  
ALL ARTS  
DISCIPLINES  
AT NOCCA



## ROLE OF TEACHER: Mentor

Through team teaching – Math & Science, English/Social Studies & World Languages – faculty will understand each student's abilities and be able to provide personalized learning. The teacher's role also changes as he or she is no longer the sole source of content but a critical means by which students learn to educate themselves.

## ROLE OF STUDENT: Discoverer

Utilizing extensive training in research, writing and critical thinking skills, students will learn how to develop questions and seek answers around specially crafted projects, then reflect on what they have learned. They will learn to see themselves as producers of knowledge, just as they are producers of art.

## SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. <b>Integrated Sciences</b> (Math and Science) to 10:25 a.m.	1:15 p.m. <b>Intensive Arts</b> to 3:45 p.m.
10:35 a.m. <b>Integrated Humanities</b> (English, Social Studies & World Languages) to 12:15 p.m.	4:00 p.m. <b>Supported Work &amp; World Language</b> to 6:30 p.m.

## INGREDIENTS

The Nature of Scientific Theory  
Historical Thinking  
Love of Reading & Writing  
Human Perception  
Conceptual Physics  
Natural History  
Number Sets  
Probability  
Statistics  
Geometric Thinking  
Linguistics  
Latin  
Major Ancient Languages  
Classics  
Ancient World Epics  
Ancient Archeology  
Anthropology  
Philosophy  
Art History  
Cultural Geography

Mix with:  
Culinary Arts  
Dance  
Media Arts  
Music  
Theatre  
Visual Arts  
Creative Writing



NOCCA's new attendance option, the Academic Studio, launches August 1, 2011 with the 9th grade. The Academic Studio is made possible through the support of Chevron, Coypu Foundation Trust, RosaMary Foundation, Hearst Foundations, Ruth U. Fertel Foundation, Libby-Dufour Fund, Ella West Freeman Foundation, Reily Foundation, Selley Foundation, and the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation. We offer all Academic Studio donors our deepest appreciation. For further information visit [nocca.com](http://nocca.com) and [noccainstitute.com](http://noccainstitute.com).



level of talent and dedication,” said Mr. Sassone.

Musical Theater students acted in the film and were able to experience the differences between film and stage acting for the first time. Again, Mr. Sassone praised the students’ work ethic. “They were always on time, they always knew their lines, and they had a great attitude,” he said. Kelly Barberito, the Dance student who played Claire’s best friend Emma in the video said, “I had a blast! Filming was very time-consuming. We had to get there at seven or eight in the morning and we stayed 12 hours. Sometimes we had to film a scene ten different ways!”

*Donate Life*, a short film produced by the Legacy Donor Foundation (LDF) in collaboration with NOCCA, is the story of a high school student named Claire, who needs a heart transplant. Viewers follow Claire’s journey towards receiving a heart, while her friends learn first-hand about the value of becoming an organ donor.

In Louisiana, all drivers’ education courses must provide thirty minutes of instruction about organ donation, but most courses simply show a dry informational video and then field questions from students. The Legacy Donor Foundation determined to produce a short video that would educate young people about organ donation in a way that was interesting and exciting. Executive producers Jeanette Slakey, executive director of LDF, and Pamela Senatore, board member, decided to ask NOCCA students and faculty to create and produce the message.

“We wanted a video that would prepare young adults to make a decision about organ donation,” said Slakey. “Who better than young people to deliver the message to other young people?” concluded Senatore.

Before beginning work on the video, LDF presented a tutorial about organ donation for NOCCA students, educating them about the facts about organ donation and the myths that needed to be dispelled. LDF then stepped back and allowed NOCCA students to take the reins.

The Legacy Donor Foundation hired seasoned filmmaker Oley Sassone to direct the film. Mr. Sassone, who has directed over one hundred music videos and several television series and feature films, brought in a professional film crew for the five days of filming during NOCCA’s spring break. NOCCA students and faculty did the rest of the work. Mr. Sassone repeatedly expressed how impressed he was with NOCCA students’ tenacity and professionalism.

“The kids were so bright, astute, and very mature. They took a serious subject and wrote a script that was both insightful and emotional. I can’t say enough about the students and their

“It was great for our students,” said Paul Werner, the chair of Media Arts at NOCCA. “The Musical Theatre students got to experience being on camera, two Music students wrote the closing song, and the Media Arts students got to work with a professional film crew.” The crew allowed the students to shadow them throughout the filming process, often allowing them to man the equipment.

In the fifteen-minute video, emotions ride high and low, but the facts about organ donation stick in the mind of the viewer. The *Donate Life* video was truly a win-win arrangement. It allowed the Legacy Donor Foundation to make a professional quality video with a fresh story, and it allowed NOCCA students to experience working with the film industry first hand. Most importantly, the *Donate Life* video allowed students to use their artistic training to convey an important message and to impact other young people around Louisiana.



Watch the *Donate Life* video at [vimeo.com/25566631](https://vimeo.com/25566631) or [donatelife.org/resources](https://donatelife.org/resources). Article by Ann Marshall Thomas.



Summer Study support helped me tremendously in preparing for college because I was able to leave my NOCCA comfort zone, gain a new perspective on my art and grow by working with new people. I appreciated my teachers and NOCCA's environment even more because I knew NOCCA was preparing me to be successful in the world,

*Angela Stewart, Drama \$494,105 earned in college scholarships, attending Auburn University*

The NOCCA Institute assisted me and my family in so many ways and helped me reach my goals. Through Term-Time Financial Aid, I was able to study under one of the finest trumpet instructors in the city. Those lessons, both at NOCCA and with my private teacher, have encouraged me to seek a degree in music education so I can give back to the community.

*Doyle "Red" Cooper, Jazz \$31,450 earned in college scholarships, attending Loyola University*



My time spent studying at the Boston Conservatory and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance summer programs opened my mind, improved my technique and gave me confidence to transition to my college dance career. Summer Study support truly helped me develop as a dancer and artist. I benefitted greatly from each experience and in returning to NOCCA could share what I learned with my peers and teachers.

*Raven Ross, Dance \$39,958 earned in college scholarships, attending Southern Methodist University*

Without The NOCCA Institute, I would not have been able to attend Walnut Hill's Summer Opera Intensive, which included travel to Italy to experience the richness of opera. This program helped me understand life of a professional opera singer while allowing me to experience opera at its roots. It was an experience that strengthened my professionalism at NOCCA and helped me gain a deeper appreciation for all aspects of the stage, those who perform on it and help behind it.

*Adjani Gibson, Vocal, \$319,424 earned in college scholarships, attending Catholic University*



Studying at Maryland Institute College of Art really opened my eyes. It gave me an entirely new perspective, for both my own art and that of the many contemporary artists I studied there. I left with a new mindset and enthusiasm about creating art that I had never before fully experienced. The program allowed me to grow as an artist and as a student, made me think about my art in ways that I never had before, and deepened my appreciation for all that NOCCA has provided for me.

*Drew Schenk, Visual Arts, \$522,600 earned in college scholarships, attending Alfred University*

**The NOCCA Institute awarded over \$130,000 in Term-Time and Summer Study Financial Aid in 2010-11. The Term-Time program, which helps students with department fees, supplies, required private music lessons, and travel to the Chicago Unified Auditions, received a record number of requests – 75% more than last year. This initiative has typically made \$20,000 in awards; for 2010-11 the amount increased to \$51,000. Both Term-Time Aid and Summer Study Aid to attend important pre-college programs across the country are a strong investment in our young artists and their tremendous dedication to developing their talent, craft and futures.**



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1. Amanda Waites Vocal Master Class
2. Summer Conservatory with jazz faculty Khari Lee (standing right) and alumnus Oliver Bonie (seated center)
3. Music Performance Class with alumnus Troy Andrews
4. Marcia Porter Vocal Master Class
5. Joel Harrison Jazz Master Class

The NOCCA Institute funded 65 artist residences this past year, and NOCCA welcomed many more master artists into its classrooms who provided invaluable experiences to young artists developing their own voices and goals. The Artists-in-Residence Program also funded hourly faculty and the Summer Conservatory this year.

Alumni were especially generous with their time, including musicians Troy Andrews, Joey Peebles, Michael Ballard; vocalists Amanda Waites and Marcia Porter; and actor Wendell Pierce.

### Marcia Porter

“Tell me what you liked,” Dr. Marcia Porter asked the young vocal student who had just performed in a workshop last October.

“Well, I liked the acting,” she replied.

“That’s all? I’ll tell you what I liked” said Dr. Porter, now Assistant Professor of Voice at Florida State University. “I liked the through line, the German diction was really good, and yes, I liked the acting or what we call character.”

“When you are analyzing your work, go with what you liked first. That will encourage you. There will always be 101 things you didn’t like and two things you did. But give yourself something positive to build on.”

### Lesley Dill

New York artist Lesley Dill has long incorporated language into her imagery, specifically the language of poets such as Emily Dickinson. Returning to NOCCA for a three-day workshop, she gave students a theme and a cache of xeroxed images to incorporate within their own ideas. “Heaven and hell was chosen

as the theme,” Dill explained,” so that students could work with an intensity of emotion and to give everyone the freedom to not be neutral.”

### Joel Harrison

Upstairs on the music floor, Guggenheim Fellow and jazz guitarist/composer Joel Harrison was asking students, “How do you learn the vocabulary of jazz without becoming a slave to it? Then how do you develop your own voice?” He and violinist Christian Howes guided students through thought processes and exercises designed to simplify and strengthen their improvisation skills. As students grappled, he asked them to think of a song as a story, with music themes as characters that have to be introduced. “I want you to introduce characters slowly but surely; this gives you a place to build a solo. But I want you to captivate me.”



6.



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- 6. Leslie Dill Visual Arts Workshop
- 8. Jeff "Tain" Watts Master Class through the Thelonius Monk Institute of Jazz
- 9. Wendell Pierce Drama Master Class
- 7. Blythe Danner Drama Master Class



7.



9.

### Blythe Danner

"An actor's job is to excite, surprise, make one feel," Tony and Emmy Award-winning actress Blythe Danner expressed as she critiqued the monologues of 12<sup>th</sup> grade drama and musical theatre students preparing for college auditions.

On her third visit to NOCCA, Danner again gave students a primer on acting. She prodded, urged and pulled emotions out of students as they focused on the every word from the master artist. With great care and honesty, she helped them understand the hard work, generosity and courage required of acting. "Acting is reacting," Ms. Danner urged students. "Surprise one another when you are working on scenes together. Do something different today from what you did yesterday. The best actors I've worked with threw the ball from a

different direction each night."

### Jeff "Tain" Watts

"Music is not a competitive thing. You must be constantly trying to help each other," renowned jazz drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts impressed upon jazz music students from NOCCA, Loyola, UNO and Tulane University. They had all come to NOCCA for Watt's master class put together by The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at Loyola University.

"You know, musicians can perform live music without truly aspiring to play with each other," Watts told students as he tried to explain how important it is to be emotionally and aesthetically invested in each other's playing. "You'll have good days, bad days, alright days. But it's those 'bam!' days that keep you going, when you touch some of that magic. That's

why you practice your craft and help other musicians - so you can be in position for those moments. You never know when they will come but they reaffirm why you are playing."

### Wendell Pierce

"What do I do with a broken metered line and just one word to start a speech?" *Treme* star Wendell Pierce asked a student to consider. This winter Wendell spent extensive time - as technician and inspirational voice - with every NOCCA senior making the trip to the Chicago Unified Auditions. "There's craft and there's the business. Employment doesn't define you. Nor does it mean you are good. Your relationship is always with your craft. Some of my best performances were in auditions. Investigate, find the fire that fuels you. If you have been working for this, be there in full."



The GRAMMY Foundation selected NOCCA as a 2011 Signature School Enterprise Award Recipient, one of 36 nationwide. Created in 1998, the GRAMMY Signature Schools program recognizes the top U.S. public high schools that are making an outstanding commitment to music education. The Foundation also held a GRAMMY Career Day at NOCCA to help music students understand the professional and business side of the industry. Above, left to right, NOCCA President and CEO Kyle Wedberg, and music faculty Michael Peller, Dr. Jee Yeoun Ko and Phyllis Treigle accept the gift of \$5,500 from GRAMMY Foundation senior director David Sears.



Students won awards this year in the following prestigious national and regional competitions:

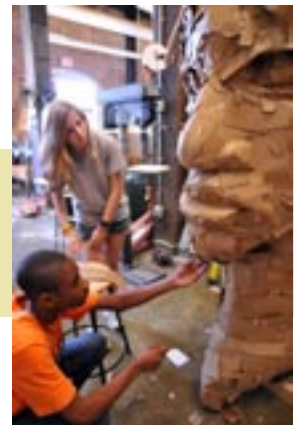
- 1 student was recognized by the National Arts Recognition and Talent Search;
- 2 seniors were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Competition as finalists;
- 2 seniors were recognized by the National Achievement Scholarship Program;
- 8 students in Creative Writing and Visual Arts received national honors and Gold Key recognition in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Competition.
- Classical Instrumental student **Angelique Montes** was the winner of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra 2010-11 Young Artists Concerto Competition.
- Creative Writing student **Sarah Allen** earned First Place in the International House of Blues Foundation's 2011 Spirit of the Dream Competition.



Vocal students competed against 400 others at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Southern Region Auditions. NOCCA students **Elena Figueroa** (left), **Amanda McCarthy** (right) and **Vivian Bu** placed first, second and third respectively in the women's high school division. **Adjani Gibson** (middle) placed third in the men's high school division.



Media Arts students **Erin Le** won the Recording Award while **Ryan** won three awards at the St. C and placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd





### 2010 SENIOR AWARDS

The Helen A. Mervis Award for artistic and academic achievement and community service was awarded to **Jade Thirawas**.

The Lisa Marie Catalanello Memorial Scholarship for visual arts achievement and generosity of spirit was awarded to **Drew Schenk**.

The Daniel Price Memorial Scholarship for Aspiring Young Artists was awarded to **Leigh Barrosse**.

Ellen H. Golodner M.D. Jelly Roll to Jam Scholarship in Jazz was awarded to **Michael Mason**.

Seth Daniel P. Memorial Award for multi-disciplinary artistic accomplishment was awarded to **Brent Thibodeaux**

The Gary Barnett and Charles Jefferson Scholarship for visual arts achievement by an Orleans Parish student was awarded to **Renee Legaux**.

Hurst Recordings Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Audio Production was awarded to **John Lebien**.

New Orleans Rotary Club Scholarship was awarded to **Peyton Nazar**.

### OUTSTANDING GRADUATES AWARDS

Lee and Kathy Randall Award in Creative Writing – **Carmilla Cannon**

Milly and George Denegre Award in Dance – **Amanda Bonds**

Helen Hill Memorial Award in Media Arts – **Erin Levins**

Make It Funky! Award in Jazz – **Evan Murphy**

Glennadora & James H. Perry Award in Vocal Music – **Amanda McCarthy**

Freda M. Lupin Award in Musical Theatre – **Rachel Abbate**

Kuumba-Keener Award in Theatre – **Celeste Cahn**

Outstanding Graduate Award in Theatre Design – **Taylor Robertson**

The NOCCA Institute Collection Award (Visual Arts Purchase) – **Caden Sage Wilson and Leigh Barrosse**



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Levins won DOWNBEAT's Performing Arts High School Best Engineered Live Performance. Amanda Bonds received Best Engineered Studio Recording. Media Arts students also won at the Charles Parish Film Festival in animated commercial and experimental formats, 1st in Animation Shorts, 2nd in Music Video Short and 3rd in Documentary short at the Pelican D'Or Film Festival.



Left: The one-week 2011 Summer Conservatory, funded by The NOCCA Institute

## THANK YOU

The NOCCA Institute is honored to recognize the following support, memorials and gifts for 2010-11. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

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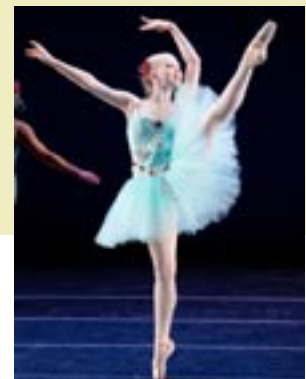


Jackson Hill



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 New Orleans Wine & Food Experience

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## Age

Ryanne Autin, Creative Writing, Level II

At home every day, it becomes difficult to not just lounge on the couch and smoke cigars while your wife is not home. It becomes difficult to not watch football game after football game and not change the same white shirt that hides your stomach which protrudes over a pair of pajama pants that you have owned for years. However, the-used-to-be loose elastic band now has tightened. You pull at it periodically to measure the amount of fat you could possibly gain before needing new pants. You are disappointed every time because it always ends up being less than an inch. Luckily, your wife has also left a post-it note on the bathroom mirror with the scribble, “Don’t forget to walk the dog, do the dishes, and take the trash out. Making fish for dinner, smiley face, love you!” You are considered an old man now, dressed in a business suit each day, even though you are only going to the store, to the barber, to tend to matters regarding your dying mother. This is the first year of your adulthood that you have not spent working. Your wife wakes up next to you at six in the morning, seven days a week. Your daughter and son no longer call daily but rather, you receive a text message every other day on a phone with a touch screen that you’re not sure how to end a call on. The messages relay pictures of the grandchildren in Ralph Lauren, Armani Baby, and Jotum. You worked hard to raise the children well, they married wealthy companions that they may or may not love, and the grandchildren are spoiled, just not like the grilled cheese sandwich you found in the refrigerator last week. No longer within miles of you, your family has become extended, but you hold your hand to your heart before you go to bed every night and say, “Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.”



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