Texas Young Masters

A program of the Texas Cultural Trust
The Texas Young Masters program is a joint initiative between the Texas Cultural Trust and the Texas Commission on the Arts providing exemplary Texas-based arts students in grades 8-11 with the financial help needed to pursue advanced study in the areas of visual arts, literary arts, music, theatre, dance, musical theater, folk arts, and media arts. The program awards grants of $5,000 per year for two years to advance their studies in their respective arts discipline.

The Texas Young Masters program is available to students engaged in the arts, offering financial assistance to develop their unique talents. Students may be enrolled in a program through their school or receive private lessons from a qualified professional instructor.

“To be young, motivated, and free to truly explore what it means to be an artist; this is a powerful combination of forces. The Young Masters program is important because it recognizes this time.”

- Katie Rose Pipkin, 2008 Texas Young Master in Visual Arts
Dear Texas Cultural Trust,

I just wanted to send a note over to you to simply THANK YOU! As a member of the 2008 Class of the Texas Young Masters Program, I can truly say that my exposure and education in the performing arts was broadened and taken to a much higher level.

My annual grant allowed me to travel to New York City and become exposed to the Broadway stage and some of the best choreographers in dance. I trained at summer Broadway workshops in musical theatre at Camp Broadway and studied dance in the summer intensives at The Alvin Ailey School (two programs that exposed me and helped to create my strong performing arts foundation).

I headed off to The Juilliard School from Booker T. Washington High School of the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas. In May 2015, I received my Bachelor of Arts from the Dance Program at Juilliard. Juilliard has been my dream school ever since I was 8 years old watching Julia Stiles’ big audition in *Save the Last Dance*. Receiving the Young Masters grant helped me to work with the best masters in dance and theatre that I simply never imagined I would ever meet...and I was actually being taught by them.

Eight years later I was in rehearsals for Cirque du Soleil’s first Broadway production, Paramour. Why? Because I was a Texas Young Master! Now it’s my time to give back to help with other students. I made my first donation towards future Young Masters. I want to do my part in making sure you are able to keep the program alive. Again, thank you so very much for making the difference in my life!

-Asher

Amber Pickens, 2008 Texas Young Master in Dance

**Mikayla Johnson**  
2018 Young Master in Theatre

Johnson is a 2019 National Young Arts Winner in Theater, two-time Joci Awards Overall Winner, and three-time Thespian Festival National Qualifier in Monologue. She used her Young Masters award to study at the New York Film Academy and the Houston Shakespeare Conservatory. Johnson attends Yale University and is a graduate of Edgewood Fine Arts Academy in San Antonio, where she trained with Claudia Casso.

**Ann Cho**  
2014 Young Master in Music

Cho is a two-time National Young Arts Foundation Winner in Classical Music. She has won top prizes at the MTNA National Solo Competition, Austin Civic Orchestra’s Pearl Amster Competition, Austin Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Awards, and the Longy School of Music’s Concerto Competition. At the age of five, she was the youngest member of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra.

**Ida Saki**  
2010 Young Master in Dance

Saki is from Dallas and is a first generation Iranian-American whose love of dance stems in part from her mother not being able to study that art form as a young girl in Iran. Since Young Masters, she has wowed the judges on *So You Think You Can Dance*, and received numerous national honors, including Distinguished Performer of the Year, Outstanding Dancer of the Year, and was the first female dancer to be named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Saki also co-created/performed in a show that premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

**Antonio Cisneros**  
2002 Young Master in Film/Media

Cisneros is an award-winning cinematographer. He has lensed “American Koko,” a streaming series for ABC produced by Viola Davis, collaborated with Danish Renzu on the independent feature “The Illegal” starring Suraj Sharma (Life of Pi), and “Half Widow” (Audience Award South Asian Film Festival 2017). Cisneros is from San Antonio, Texas, and is a graduate of New York University Tisch School of the Arts, the American Film Institute, and a Project Involve Alumni.
Since 2002, the Texas Cultural Trust and the Texas Commission on the Arts have named 154 Texas Young Masters, awarding nearly $1 million to exceptionally talented young Texans.

2002
Olivia Dane Charbeneau, Dallas, Visual Arts
Antonio Cisneros, San Antonio, Visual Arts
Dean Andre de Luna, Ft. Worth, Dance
Nicholas N Garza, Pharr, Visual Arts
Stephanie Joiner, Austin, Musical Theatre/Theatre
Rachel Lamb, Plano, Dance
Alexander Lue, Richardson, Music
Melissa M. McChristia, Chicago, Visual Arts
Katherine Petak, Houston, Music
Adriana Potoczniak, Houston, Music
Emily Schmeltek, Ft. Worth, Dance
Anita Shankar, Houston, Dance
Chlöe Trevor, Plano, Music
Christophe Vo, New York, Dance

2004
Jonathan Campbell, Cedar Hill, Dance
Ngoc-Yen Hoang, Houston, Visual Arts
Chris Jenkins, Plano, Visual Arts
Sofya Karash, Houston, Visual Arts
El-Jane Ja Lin, Bellevue, Visual Arts
Morgan As Morrow, Arlington, Musical Theatre/Theatre
Brandie Phillips, San Angelo, Music
Anna Mich Reyes, Austin, Dance
Caitlin Tully, Austin, Music
Stephanie Williams, Allen, Dance
Charles Yang, Austin, Music

2006
Dakota Anderson, Houston, Visual Arts
Caroline Beach, Fort Worth, Dance
Cynthia Black, Dallas, Music
Paige Brown, Kingwood, Music
Brittanie Brown, Dallas, Dance
Jesse Caldwell, Center, Visual Arts
Stephanie Chen, Austin, Music
Emily Clarkson, Brownwood, Music
Mitchell Collier, Austin, Media Arts
Sarah Crowe, Austin, Visual Arts
Margaux Crump, Houston, Visual Arts
Eboni Cunningham, Dallas, Dance
Alice Dennard, Houston, Visual Arts
Jon Eng, Houston, Visual Arts
Natalie Freeman, Austin, Dance
Lill Froehlich, Weatherford, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Damian Green, Austin, Music
Shannon Lee, Plano, Music
Sean Maddox, Austin, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Jose Martinez, Houston, Visual Arts
Lindsey Mason, Arlington, Literature
Cecil Moore, Dallas, Dance
Michael Paglia, San Antonio, Visual Arts
Mary Micha Patterson, Aledo, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Samantha Stewart, Dallas, Music
Marco Villa, Austin, Music
Sarah Welch, Austin, Visual Arts

2008
Julia Cinquemani, Dallas, Dallas
Catherine Cleary, Houston, Visual Arts
Torrence Cobb, Beaumont, Dance
Maureen Fenniger, Houston, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Bernadette Gnass, Wimberley, Literature
Boris Karash, Houston, Visual Arts
Rachael Milton, Austin, Visual Arts
Robbie Moore, Porter, Dance
Amber Pickens, Dallas, Dance
Katie Piggin, Austin, Visual Arts
Rosie Salvado, San Antonio, Music
Thales Smith, Austin, Music
Christine Smith, Dallas, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Robert Switala, Grapevine, Music
Kira Viola, Metairie, Dance

2010
Behnam Arzaghi, Lubbock, Music
Ava Barrett, Houston, Visual
Sklar Boykin, Plano, Dance
Monica Brown, Kingwood, Musical Theater
Maddie Bueter, Frisco, Music
Chelsea Conwright, Houston, Dance
Karina Ferek, Houston, Media Arts
Alysa Johnson, Dallas, Dance
Hannah Lee, Bryan, Musical Theater
Ruth Lin, Houston, Visual
Emily Manning, College Station, Visual
Paul “Vijay” Meunier, Sunset Valley, Music
Kyle Morrow, Dallas, Visual
Sydney Roberts, Spring, Musical Theater
Ida Sak, Dallas, Dance
Eun "Jinny" Sae, Euless, Visual
Morgan Starr, Spring, Musical Theater
Michelle Suh, Austin, Music
Alexandra Switala, Grapevine, Music
Michael Taylor, Arlington, Music
Vincent Turner, New Braunfels, Music
McKinley Willis, Dallas, Dance

2012
Eric Bowsse, Center Point, Music
Brendan Carrillo, Waco, Music
Michelle Garcia, Cypress, Dance
Mia Gerachis, Houston, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Christian Kay, Tyler, Music
Reagan Lukefahr, Houston, Theatre/Musical Theatre
Mason Manning, McKinney, Dance
Cesar Martinez, San Antonio, Visual Arts
Ani Mayo, Plano, Dance
Annyston Pennington, Amarillo, Literary Arts
Shilpa Sadagopan, Pearland, Music
Susan Seo, Euless, Visual Arts
Michael Stromile, Dallas, Dance
Morgan Tao, Rosarhon, Visual Arts
Laurel Thornburg, Houston, Visual Arts

2014
Sophie Anthony, Dallas, Visual Arts
Jay Appajji, Plano, Music
Nizhoni Begay, San Antonio, Voice
Jared Brown, Dallas, Dance
Jian Chiang, Plano, Music
Ann Cho, Austin, Music
Montana Daltone, Frisco, Dance
Christin Engelberth, San Antonio, Visual Arts
Claudia Iza Heymach, Pearland, Literary Arts
Esther Liao, Houston, Music
Hannah McEvilly, Austin, Musical Theater
Meg Mickelson, Dallas, Visual Arts
Nina Pitts, Houston, Music
Kian Raisian, Houston, Music
Juanito Riveros, Rowlett, Music
Sydney Shreve, Dallas, Visual Arts
Catherine Thomas, Texaskana, Theater
Anastasia Tillman, Fort Worth, Dance
Luke Westerman, Houston, Dance
Katja Yanko, The Woodlands, Musical Theater

2016
Todd Baker, Carrollton, Dance
Samantha Choo, Plano, Music
Emma Colwell, Grand Prairie, Theater
Margaret Erickson, Houston, Visual Arts
Quinlan Facey, Plano, Music
Niel Gorman, Houston, Visual Arts
Shaddien Hashem, Collegeville, Dance
Mia Heidker, Bellaire, Theater
Bharangi Sarangapa, Coppell, Dance
Fiona Shea, Lubbock, Music
Emma Sutherland, Dallas, Dance
Zane Unger, Dallas, Dance
Olivia Vanderslice, Garland, Dance
Johnathan Wu, Plano, Music
Anton Zhou, Sugar Land, Visual Arts

2018
Antonio Ajerio, Nacogdoches, Music
Nah Avellan, Corpus Christi, Music
Tobi Berman, Fort Worth, Musical Theater
Riley Canterbury, Dallas, Dance
Joziah German, Dallas, Dance
Elizabeth Heyns, Lantana, Visual Arts
Mikayla Johnson, Floresville, Theater
Megan Lin, Plano, Music
Lauren Matthews, Katy, Music
Aisha Mpiiana, Dallas, Visual Arts
Ava Noble, Dallas, Dance
Isha Parupudi, Friendswood, Folk/Traditional Dance
Ian Stripling-Jenson, Austin, Music
Leil Tilton, Austin, Music
Lauren Yang, Sugar Land, Visual Arts

THANK YOU

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Texas Cultural Trust’s mission is to be the leading voice for the arts in education, advocacy, and economic impact in Texas, spotlighting the artistic excellence of our state.

For more information on the Texas Young Masters program, visit www.txculturaltrust.org