



## 15 TEXAS STUDENTS SELECTED FOR 2018 YOUNG MASTERS CLASS

*Texas Commission on the Arts and the Texas Cultural Trust  
Award Scholarship Grants to Outstanding Student Artists*

**AUSTIN, Texas (March 12, 2018)** – [Texas Commission on the Arts](#) (TCA) and the [Texas Cultural Trust](#) (TCT) are proud to announce the 2018 class of Texas Young Masters. Texas Young Masters, a joint initiative between the Trust and TCA, recognizes 8th through 11th grade students who demonstrate artistic excellence in dance, theater, film, music, media, and literary and visual arts. The program awards 15 students with \$10,000 multi-year scholarships to enhance and build their professional artistic study and provide access to opportunities they otherwise might not have before college. The Trust celebrates a new class of Young Masters every biennium with an awards presentation to highlight their drive, talent, and creativity.

More than 300 students from across the state applied this year, but only the state’s most talented young artists receive the title of “Young Master.” The 2018 Young Masters class of 15 students is the ninth class of Young Masters to be recognized. Since the program’s inception in 2002, the TCT and TCA have provided 328 grants to 154 Young Masters, awarding nearly \$933,000 total to aspiring artists across the state.

“The Texas Young Masters grant program was created as a way to recognize and support young students pursuing the dream of becoming the next generation of prominent Texas artists,” said TCA Executive Director Gary Gibbs. “These gifted artists earned the Young Masters title because of their outstanding artistic ability, talent, and dedication to developing their knowledge in their chosen discipline. We congratulate them on their accomplishments.”

### **The 2018 Class of Young Masters:**

Antonio Ajero, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Nacogdoches, Mike Moses Middle School, *Music/Piano*  
Noah Avelar, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Corpus Christi, Veterans Memorial High School, *Music/Percussion*  
Tobi Berman, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Fort Worth, North Crowley High School, *Musical Theater*  
Riley Canterbury, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dallas, Booker T. Washington HSPVA, *Dance*  
Joziah German, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dallas, Booker T. Washington HSPVA, *Dance*  
Elizabeth Heyns, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Lantana, Guyer High School, *Visual Arts/Special Effects Makeup*  
Mikayla Johnson, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Floresville, Edgewood Fine Arts Academy, *Theater*  
Megan Lin, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Plano, Liberty High School, *Music/Violin*  
Lauren Mathews, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Katy, Seven Lakes High School, *Music/Cello*  
Aisha Mpiana, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dallas, Booker T. Washington HSPVA, *Visual Arts*

Ava Noble, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dallas, Booker T. Washington HSPVA, *Dance*  
Isha Parupudi, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Friendswood, Clear Springs High School, *Dance/Indian Classical Dance*  
Ian Stripling Jenson, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Austin, McCallum Fine Arts Academy, *Music/Violin*  
Leif Tilton, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Austin, James Bowie High School, *Music/Classical Guitar*  
Lauren Yang, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sugar Land, Dulles High School, *Visual Arts*

“The Texas Culture Trust is pleased to recognize another deserving class of Texas Young Masters,” said Heidi Marquez Smith, executive director of TCT. “This class represents what can be accomplished with commitment to a craft when given support and developmental opportunity. We are confident that those chosen will grow in their disciplines and succeed on their journeys to becoming the next legends of Texas.”

The Trust will recognize the 2018 class of Young Masters during an awards ceremony and concert on April 16th at Austin’s ZACH Theatre. First Lady Cecilia Abbott serves as honorary chair for the event and Ashley Covert, Gerardo Interiano, Maya Smart, and Natasa Valocchi are event chairs. The evening will feature Texas Young Masters alumni, Conspirare, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Cruz Ortiz, and an original composition by Allen Robertson. For more information on the event, and to purchase tickets, please visit <https://txculturaltrust.org/young-masters>.

#### **About the Texas Cultural Trust**

The Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose 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. This mission is achieved through the Trust’s five initiatives that quantify, promote, and advance the investment in the creative future of Texas. Programs of the Texas Cultural Trust include Art Can, Texas Medal of Arts Awards, Texas Young Masters, Arts & Digital Literacy, and Texas Women for the Arts. For more information about the Texas Cultural Trust, please visit [www.txculturaltrust.org](http://www.txculturaltrust.org).

#### **About Texas Commission on the Arts**

The mission of the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) is to advance our state economically and culturally by investing in a creative Texas. TCA supports a diverse and innovative arts community in Texas, throughout the nation and internationally by providing resources to enhance economic development, arts education, cultural tourism and artist sustainability initiatives. For more information on TCA and its programs, please visit [www.arts.texas.gov](http://www.arts.texas.gov).

#### **About Texas Young Masters Award Selection**

In order to be considered for the Young Masters grant, students must be living in Texas and participating in a school-based program, summer institute, specialized course of study, or private lessons from a qualified professional instructor. They must also maintain passing grades in all academic areas. The Young Masters are selected by a citizen panel of experts from across the state based on artistic excellence, level of commitment, and quality of their proposed plan of action. The 2018 Young Masters program was made possible through the generous support of contributors including:

Sarah and Ernest Butler, Neiman Marcus, Texas Women for the Arts, The SermoonJoy Organization, Judy and Kirk Robison, Wayne Fisher, Kathleen and Ben Keating, Covert Auto Group, and Karen and Charles Matthews.

**Media Contact**

Diana Cantu

Giant Noise

tct@giantnoise.com

512-382-9017