



NEA Jazz Master Barry Harris performs during the annual NEA Jazz Master concert and awards ceremony at the International Association for Jazz Education conference.

Photo by Tom Pich

National Initiatives

The NEA began the National Initiatives program in 2003 to present performances to communities and constituencies that otherwise would not have access to them. Partnering with local communities, arts organizations, and presenters, the NEA has expanded the program to include seven National Initiatives in FY 2005: Shakespeare in American Communities, NEA Jazz Masters, Operation Homecoming, NEA Arts Journalism Institutes, Great American Voices, American Masterpieces, and Poetry Out Loud. Below are a few examples of the type of activities that are being undertaken by these special initiatives.

SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

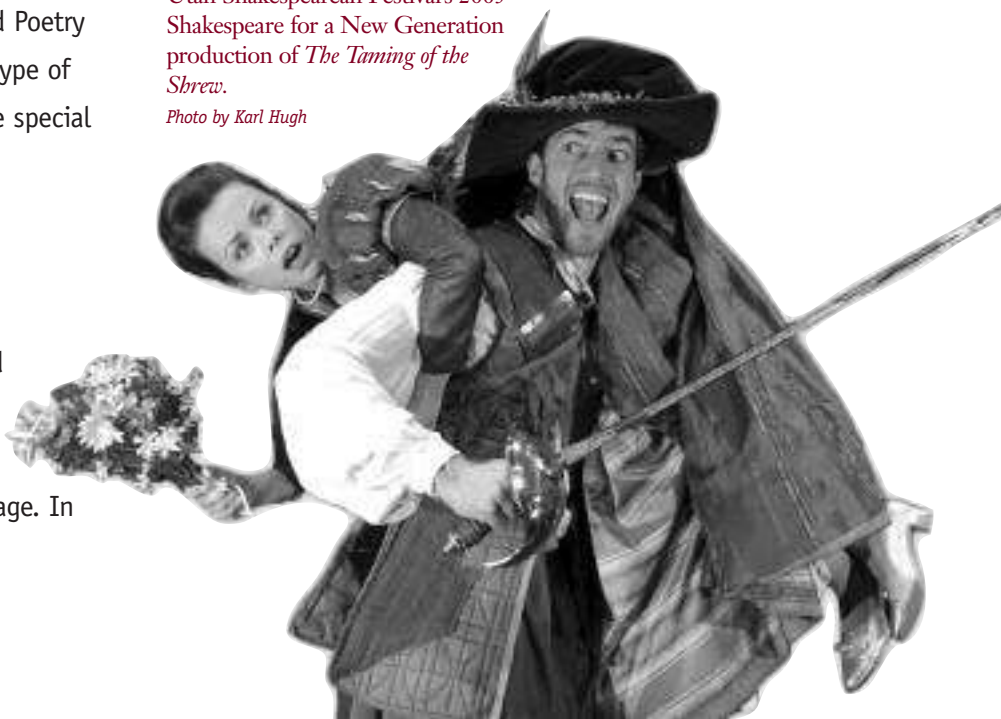
The National Endowment for the Arts created **Shakespeare in American Communities** to introduce a new generation of audiences to the greatest playwright in the English language. In

partnership with regional arts organization Arts Midwest, which administers the initiative, the NEA helped create new audiences and a new appreciation for live theater and Shakespeare.

In 2005, Shakespeare in American Communities embarked on its first year of **Shakespeare for a New**

Shelly Gaza as Katherina and Michael Reed as Petruchio in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2005 Shakespeare for a New Generation production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Photo by Karl Hugh



Generation, a program that provides professional Shakespeare performances and educational programs to high school and middle school students. Twenty-one theater companies were selected to participate during the 2004-05 school year, and provided performances and activities for at least 10 schools each. By the end of the school year, students from 1,054 schools had seen a Shakespearean production, and more than 12 million students had benefited from the educational materials.

A standout of the program was Utah Shakespearean Festival (USF), which has a long and distinguished history of touring to schools in the Intermountain West (Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and Idaho) before becoming associated with Shakespeare for a New Generation. USF's association with the initiative has allowed the company to expand activities to schools in underserved areas that could not have been reached otherwise. Utah Shakespearean Festival's ambitious 38-day tour in early 2005 resulted in 56 performances and 114 educational activities, reaching more than 9,000 students.

Despite being on the road, performances of *The Taming of the Shrew* maintained a high artistic integrity, carried out with a small cast and portable stage, adaptable to various school spaces. Schools also were offered three hour-long workshops, taught by professional actors, on topics such as Shakespeare's text, stage combat, and building characters through improvisation. The workshops were designed with the students as active participants, allowing each student the opportunity to interact with Shakespeare's text in a lively manner. According to USF, students who participated in workshops were much more invested and receptive to the performance. And according to a

teacher at a Utah high school, "To see the play and to actually enjoy it changed their attitudes."

NEA JAZZ MASTERS

Established in 1982, the **NEA Jazz Masters** awards annually elevates a select number of living jazz artists to its ranks, conferring on them the nation's highest honor for this uniquely American art form. The expansion of the program includes **NEA Jazz Masters on Tour**, a touring component to bring NEA Jazz Masters to all 50 states throughout 2005-06 in partnership with Arts Midwest and with support from Verizon; a radio show, *Jazz Profiles*, in partnership with National Public Radio, hosted by NEA Jazz Master Nancy Wilson; and a new arts education component, **NEA Jazz in the Schools**. This educational resource for high school teachers of social studies, U.S. history, and music is a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and DVD toolkit that explores jazz as an indigenous American art form and as a means to understand American history. The curriculum is produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and supported by a grant from the Verizon Foundation. The complete kit and curriculum became available in fall 2005 at www.neajazzintheschools.com.

The main event of the initiative, however, is the presentation of awards to the legendary jazz musicians. In January of each year, the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) holds its annual conference and the highlight of the conference is the special concert and award ceremony of the NEA Jazz Master Awards.

IAJE was founded in 1968 to ensure the continued growth and development of jazz through education and outreach activities. Its membership includes more than



NEA Jazz Masters Jimmy Heath, Chick Corea, Paquito D’Rivera, and James Moody take the stage during the annual NEA Jazz Master concert and awards ceremony at the International Association for Jazz Education conference.

Photo by Tom Pich

8,000 teachers, musicians, students, music industry representatives, and enthusiasts in 40 countries.

In addition to hosting the ceremony, IAJE holds special workshops involving NEA Jazz Masters throughout the conference, including a special panel on the newly honored NEA Jazz Masters, which was held the day following the concert. The musicians shared anecdotes and advice during the hour-long session, receiving a standing ovation at the end by the enthusiastic audience.

OPERATION HOMECOMING

Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience, through a partnership with the Department of Defense and with support from The Boeing Company, provided writing workshops by nationally known writers—novelists, poets, historians, and journalists—at domestic and overseas military bases representing all

four branches of the U.S. armed services. In addition to the workshops, the best writing emerging from this initiative will be published in a nationally promoted anthology that will be sold in bookstores and distributed free by the Arts Endowment to military installations, schools, and libraries in fall 2006.

In 2005, the NEA is extended its Operation Homecoming initiative with **Operation Homecoming: Beyond Glory**, a tour of the one-man play *Beyond Glory*, adapted and performed by Stephen Lang, to more than 25 overseas and domestic military installations beginning in May 2005. *Beyond Glory* was performed at a range of traditional and nontraditional venues, including theaters, tents, and even the deck of an aircraft carrier.

Adapted by Lang from Larry Smith’s book, *Beyond Glory: Medal of Honor Heroes in Their Own Words*, this



Stephen Lang performs his one-man show, *Beyond Glory*, aboard the USS *Mustin* in the Persian Gulf as part of the NEA Operation Homecoming initiative.

Photo by Roy Gross

acclaimed production features the stories of seven different Medal of Honor winners from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, including U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye and Admiral James Stockdale. Lang says that he wanted to perform the show for the troops in order to “do something to support our troops beyond saying it. I have a respect for the whole military ethic. So many of the concepts—courage, leadership, loyalty—are themes really worth exploring.”

In addition to performances of the play, Lang also conducted writing workshops and held post-performance discussions for the troops. He felt he had a unique perspective to share with the troops as he does not consider himself a writer by trade. “But if there’s something I want to write, I write it,” he adds. “These folks were in the workshop because something was on their mind.”

Plans for a documentary on Operation Homecoming to

be aired on public television in 2007 also proceeded in FY 2005. Additionally on the drawing board is a second documentary to be used as a teaching tool for future writing workshops on military bases.

NEA ARTS JOURNALISM INSTITUTES

In June 2004, the NEA established three **NEA Arts Journalism Institutes** to address a chronic problem throughout the country: the lack of quality arts criticism in the press. The institutes are designed for journalists who cover the arts for print and broadcast outlets located mostly outside the country’s largest media markets, where professional development opportunities are limited. Institutes for dance critics are hosted by the American Dance Festival (ADF) at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina; for classical music and opera critics at Columbia University in New York City; and for theater and musical theater critics at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles.

The success of the program is clearly shown by the response of the participants. In 2005, the USC Annenberg School for Communications and its School of Journalism held its first institute for theater and musical theater critics. Twenty-five participants from across the country attended the sessions, which provided firsthand exposure to the essential elements of theater in addition to teaching how journalism skills can be applied to theater criticism and behind-the-scenes experience with theater productions. Participant Donna Hartman, features reporter for the *Bradenton Herald* in Florida, said of the sessions, “[They] gave me so much insight into theater. I conduct better interviews, ask better questions, and have developed some ideas for stories. I recently did a piece about a

local black theater company, the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, and the idea came directly from the [sessions].”

The participants are not the only ones noticing a difference in their approach to criticism. Becky Holt, features editor for *The Burlington Free Press* in Vermont, commented while recommending one their reporters for the institute, “Earlier this year [2005], one of our other staffers, Brent Hallenback, was fortunate to have participated in your program. As a direct result of this, our theater reviews and coverage have increased exponentially. This has received praise from the theater community and our readers.”

Scott Ramsay, Tracie Luck, Staff Sgt. Alvy Powell, and Robin Follman perform with Opera Carolina and the Winston-Salem Symphony, conducted by James Meena, at Camp Lejeune on July 4, 2005 as part of NEA's Great American Voices initiative.

Photo by Leslie Liberato

GREAT AMERICAN VOICES

Building on the existing partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Defense, the Arts Endowment launched **Great American Voices**, a National Initiative that will continue our efforts to serve military personnel and their families by providing professional performances of well-known opera and Broadway classics.

From October 2005 through November 2006, Great American Voices features 24 professional opera companies performing at 39 military bases across the country. Performances include selections from popular operas such as Bizet's *Carmen* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, as well as highlights from classic American musicals such as Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*. Performances are offered at no cost to the base or to audience members. In addition to the performances, participating artists conduct school visits



and pre-concert briefings to familiarize youth and adults with these musical genres.

An early highlight was a preview performance on July 4, 2005, at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, in front of an audience of 15,000. Opera Carolina and Winston-Salem Symphony teamed with the Arts Endowment for this event, in which four talented opera singers performed with a 55-piece orchestra and 30-member chorus. The Arts Endowment offered this performance to Camp Lejeune as a replacement for the award-winning Second Marine Division Band, which traditionally performs at this annual event but is currently deployed to Iraq.

Great American Voices is presented in cooperation with OPERA America, and made possible by generous support from The Boeing Company.

AMERICAN MASTERPIECES

American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius consists of three components—touring, local presentations, and arts education. Programs presenting acknowledged masterpieces selected from a wide variety of art forms will tour to large and small communities in all 50 states.

Local presentations are supported so that institutions throughout the country can create programs consistent with the overall theme. Arts education makes up a substantial portion of the initiative, both by bringing an unprecedented number of students to the exhibitions, presentations and performances, and by creating substantial and engaging in-school programs.

The first grants given out under the initiative in FY 2005 were in the visual arts. Eleven grants were awarded, totaling \$1,183,000. One of the exhibitions



The Art Critic by Norman Rockwell is one of the works to be featured in the touring exhibition *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)* by the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as part of NEA's American Masterpieces.

Image courtesy of Norman Rockwell Museum

receiving a grant was *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)* by the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The exhibition is drawn from the museum's collection of more than 600 paintings, drawings, and studies by one of the 20th century's premier illustrators. Rockwell's artistic contributions and the impact of his images on American popular culture are explored within the context of his life and times through exhibition commentary, a decade-by-decade installation of 30 original paintings, and a complete set of the 323 archival *Saturday Evening Post* covers.

From May 2005 to November 2006, the museum will

develop the exhibition and its related materials, creating the text and commentary for the pieces. Simultaneously, an 80-page catalogue, family guide, and educator's curriculum guide will be produced. The tour of the exhibition will take place in winter 2006/07.

POETRY OUT LOUD

In FY 2005, the NEA partnered with the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, Illinois, on an exciting new educational initiative: a national poetry recitation contest. A pilot program in Washington, DC and Chicago, was established to work out the logistics of holding the contest. During the 2004/05 academic year, the NEA coordinated the program in DC-area high schools while the Poetry Foundation did the same among Chicago-area high schools. Final recitation competitions were held April 11 at Chicago Shakespeare Theater and on April 19 at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington. Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation administered the pilot program.

"By performing great works of literature, students can master public speaking, build self-confidence, and learn more about their literary heritage," Chairman Gioia said at the Washington event. Banneker High student Stephanie Oparaugo won the Washington contest, and Walter Payton College Prep student Devin Kenny won the Chicago contest. Each student received a \$1,000 cash award, and each of their schools received a \$2,000 stipend for poetry books.

The success of the pilot program led to the development of the National Initiative **Poetry Out Loud**, which during the 2005/06 academic year held poetry contests in the state capitals of all 50 states and Washington, DC leading to a national finals in DC in May 2006 and the awarding of \$50,000 in scholarship funds and school

stipends to the top finalists. High schools in each state capital region participated in classroom and schoolwide contests, advancing to state competitions in April 2006. Poetry Out Loud involves partnership with all the state arts agencies, who helped to coordinate the state competitions.

Educational materials created for the initiative include print and online poetry anthologies containing more than 400 classic and contemporary poems, a teacher's guide to help instructors teach recitation and performance, and a CD featuring well-known actors and writers such as Anthony Hopkins, James Earl Jones, Alyssa Milano, and N. Scott Momaday.



Washington Regional Champion Stephanie Oparaugo of Benjamin Banneker High School recites "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats in the pilot program for NEA National Initiative Poetry Out Loud.

Photo by James Kegley

Anthony Braxton was one of the artists who participated in the USArtists International program, which supports U.S. artists performing at international festivals, in 2005.

Photo by Michael Wilderman

