



*2006 Poetry Out Loud National
Champion Jackson Hille of Columbus
Alternative High School in Ohio.*

PHOTO BY JAMES KEGLEY

National Initiatives

In order to reach even more Americans who may not have ready access to the arts, the NEA created the National Initiatives program in 2003. Since then, the program has grown from one to eight National Initiatives, partnering with local communities, arts organizations, presenters, and regional arts organizations to bring high quality arts programming and educational activities to communities throughout the country. The National Initiatives in FY 2006—American Masterpieces, NEA Arts Journalism Institutes, the Big Read, Great American Voices, NEA Jazz Masters, Operation Homecoming, Poetry Out Loud, and Shakespeare in American Communities—have reached millions of people in all 50 states. The following pages highlight just a few of the activities that comprise these special initiatives.

AMERICAN MASTERPIECES

American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius is designed to acquaint Americans with the best of their cultural and artistic legacy. In FY 2006,

the NEA awarded a second round of American Masterpieces grants in visual arts and a first round of grants in dance, musical theater, and choral music. Funding also went to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations to develop and support American Masterpieces projects at the state and regional level.

Sixteen visual arts organizations received grants totaling \$1,240,000 to support touring exhibitions such as *Native Views: Influences of Modern Culture* (Artrain, Inc.) and *American Photography 1850-1960* (Cleveland Museum of Art). NEA support enabled many of these exhibitions to tour to the nation's small and mid-sized museums, for which the cost of these shows is usually prohibitive.

In American Masterpieces: Musical Theater, 13 organizations received grants of \$25,000 to \$75,000—for a total of \$580,000—to support productions of classic works from the American musical theater repertoire, including *Porgy and Bess*, *West Side Story*, and *Oklahoma!* Many of these



Music Director Philip Brunelle takes a bow at the end of the “America Sings!” concert, which launched the American Masterpieces: Choral Music initiative.

PHOTO BY JIM SAAH

productions featured outreach components such as mini-tours, audience discussions, and in-school workshops.

American Masterpieces: Dance grants were given in FY 2006 through a partnership with regional arts organization the New England Foundation for the Arts. These grants covered two categories: reconstruction and tour of masterworks of the American dance repertoire—such as the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre’s reconstruction and tour of Talley Beatty’s *Road of the Phoebe Snow*—and a college component, which supports the reconstruction of master works by college dance programs, such as the University of Michigan’s performance of Martha Graham’s *Primitive Mysteries*.

The NEA also provided American Masterpieces support to the choral music field with grants for regional choral festivals highlighting the work of 49

U.S. composers who have made significant contributions to the discipline, including William Billings (1746-1800), Charles Ives (1874-1954), and Libby Larsen (b. 1950). Eight organizations received grants of \$20,000 to \$90,000 to present American Masterpieces festivals, for a total of \$490,000. These projects featured a variety of activities including master classes, workshops, lectures, and performances. In FY 2007, these grant recipients were eligible to apply for additional NEA funding to support festival-related recording and radio broadcast projects.

American Masterpieces: Choral Music launched on June 11, 2006 with “America Sings!”, an exuberant celebration of the nation’s rich choral music heritage, in partnership with Chorus America and under the leadership of American Masterpieces: Choral Music Artistic Director Philip Brunelle. Held at the Music Center at Strathmore in Bethesda, Maryland, the

program featured 12 choruses, an orchestra, a fife-and-drum corps, a barbershop quartet, and even square dancers. Featured choruses included the Young People's Chorus of New York City and the United States Army Chorus performing work by American composers, including Stephen Foster, Aaron Copland, and Leonard Bernstein.

NEA ARTS JOURNALISM INSTITUTES

Just as a great nation deserves great art, every community deserves quality arts coverage. At a time when many publications are reducing their culture pages, the National Endowment for the Arts wants to equip arts writers and broadcasters with the insider expertise that should make their positions essential. To that end, in 2004 the agency established NEA Arts Journalism Institutes, brief sabbaticals for journalists to spend attending performances, talking about the arts, and writing reviews under the tutelage of some of the country's top arts writers.



New York Times dance critic Anna Kisselgoff talks with fellows of the NEA Arts Journalism Institutes at the American Dance Festival at Duke University in North Carolina.

PHOTO BY BRUCE FEELEY/ADF

More than 200 journalists from nearly every state have attended the institutes thus far. Most run for 10 days and are offered in three disciplines, through partnerships with three prestigious universities. University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communications co-sponsors the theater and musical theater institute each winter. Columbia University organizes the classical music and opera institute each fall in New York City. And Duke University, through a partnership with the American Dance Festival, hosts the dance institute every June.

Writers, reporters, critics, editors, and broadcast producers who attend the institutes find the schedule to be packed with performances, panels, and hands-on classes. They go backstage and take voice lessons at the Metropolitan Opera, have lunch with actors from landmark theater productions, and see three internationally acclaimed dance companies perform in one day. Fellows also spend time honing their own writing skills through craft classes and writers workshops. The list of prominent critics who have mentored NEA Arts Journalism Institute fellows include John Lahr (*The New Yorker*), Michael Phillips (*Chicago Tribune*), and Terry Teachout (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Jay Handelman, theater critic for the *Herald Tribune* in Sarasota, Florida, was one of 61 journalists who attended an NEA Arts Journalism Institute during FY 2006. "Our conversations in and out of the different sessions and workshops led me to realize that newspapers need to change their approach to covering the arts....By demystifying art forms that some people don't know or care about, we can hopefully build more interest in the stories that we write and make more people interested in the art forms we cover."



Miami, Florida's Big Read programming for Fahrenheit 451 included Spanish-language events such as this one.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLORIDA CENTER FOR THE LITERARY ARTS

THE BIG READ

In 2006, the NEA debuted the Big Read, a national reading initiative designed to restore reading to the center of American public culture. The Big Read is the literature component of American Masterpieces. The program was developed in response to the 2004 NEA survey *Reading at Risk*, which reported that less than half of American adults were reading any literature. Presented in partnership with regional arts organization Arts Midwest, the program is modeled on the popular City Reads, in which communities come together to read and discuss a single book.

Ten cities and towns participated in the program's pilot phase from January to June 2006: Huntsville, Alabama; Little Rock, Arkansas; Fresno, California; Miami, Florida; Boise, Idaho; Topeka, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Buffalo, New York; Enterprise, Oregon; and Brookings/Sioux Falls, South Dakota. These communities received Big Read grants of \$15,000 to \$40,000—for a total of \$265,000—to celebrate one of four classic American novels:

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, or *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Each community also received reader's and teacher's guides for its Big Read novel; an audio guide featuring excerpts from the novel and commentary by noted writers, scholars, and public figures such as retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; promotional materials, such as banners, posters, and customized television public service announcements; and an organizer's guide for hosting a Big Read program.

The pilot communities developed an impressive roster of events including a Roaring '20s street party in Huntsville, Alabama; a *Fahrenheit 451* technology exhibit at Boise, Idaho's hands-on science museum; and a dramatization of one of the courtroom scenes from *To Kill a Mockingbird* in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. (South Dakota's Big Read is highlighted in the state grants section of this annual report.)

In FY 2007, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which provides leadership and funding for the nation's 17,500 museums and 122,000 libraries, became the NEA's lead federal partner for the project. The Boeing Company also joined the Big Read to support the program in military communities. Additional support was provided by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The Arts Endowment awarded 189 grants to cities and towns nationwide to hold Big Read celebrations in 2007.

GREAT AMERICAN VOICES

The NEA continued to serve members of the military and their families through its Great American Voices initiative, in which professional opera companies brought live performances of classic songs from opera

and musical theater to military installations nationwide. Great American Voices was inaugurated in 2005 in cooperation with OPERA America and with support from The Boeing Company. In 2005 and 2006, 24 companies performed at 39 bases in 24 states, including Naval Station Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (New York), and Albany Marine Corps Base (Georgia). Performances were offered at no cost to the base or to audience members. In addition to the performances, participating artists conducted school visits and pre-concert briefings to familiarize each community's youth and adults with these musical genres.

In February 2006, Florida's Pensacola Opera visited Tyndall Air Force Base for a three-day residency by singers from the opera's Young Artists Program. On the first day in residence, the opera company presented two performances of the children's opera *The Three Little Pigs* at a local elementary school and at the base's youth center. More than 600 students attended these performances. On day two, Pensacola Opera presented performances of "Opera in a Trunk"—an improvisational opera performance created from audience suggestions—at the Tyndall Community Center and the Tyndall Family Camp. The Tyndall Family Camp, one of the base's unique features, is an on-base RV site for military families and veterans vacationing in Florida. The company gave its

The Tyndall Air Force Base audience enjoying Pensacola Opera's performance of The Three Little Pigs as part of NEA's Great American Voices initiative.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE



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final performance on the last day of the residency at the Tyndall Officer's Club to an audience of more than 200. The concert included favorites from the opera, musical theater, and jazz repertoires, including the sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, "A Boy Like That" from *West Side Story*, and a pair of Spanish folk songs. In March 2006, the company brought its performances to Eglin Air Force Base in Valparaiso.

The experience was so gratifying to the Pensacola Opera that it is continuing its outreach activities at the air force bases. With NEA support, Pensacola Opera expanded its military performances to include Pensacola Naval Air Station. In 2006–2007, the company offered more than 20 performances to the three bases and the schools that serve military children.

NEA JAZZ MASTERS

The NEA established the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships in 1982 to honor those musicians who throughout their lifetimes have made significant and lasting impact on the field of jazz. Each year, another class of legends is inducted as NEA Jazz Masters and feted during the NEA Jazz Masters concert

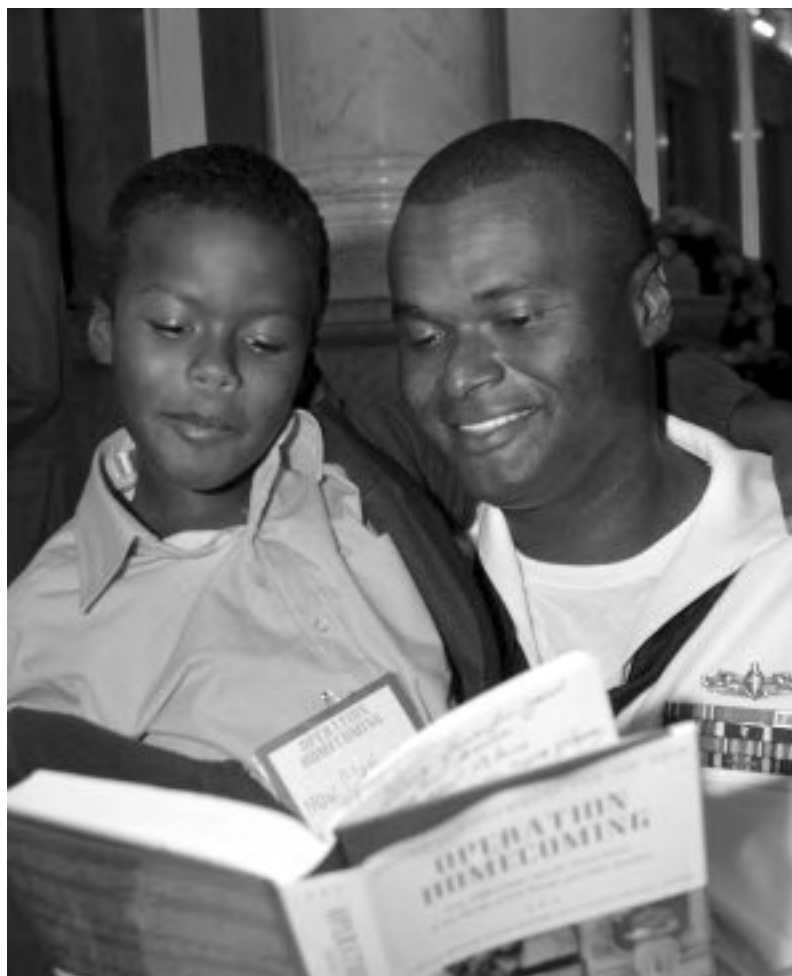
and awards program. The NEA also helps to build and expand the audience for jazz in the United States through the NEA Jazz Masters on Tour program. In partnership with Arts Midwest and with support from Verizon, NEA Jazz Masters on Tour is a series of presentations by NEA Jazz Masters at jazz festivals that include performances, educational activities, and speaking engagements. In 2006, 45 communities hosted 74 Jazz Masters on Tour performances. Dave

Brubeck, Marian McPartland, and Paquito D'Rivera are just a few of the 24 NEA Jazz Masters who participated in those performances.

The NEA Jazz Masters program does more than honor these living legends, it also works to create the next generation of jazz masters and aficionados through NEA Jazz in the Schools. Produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and supported by a grant from the Verizon Foundation, NEA Jazz in the Schools is a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and DVD toolkit for use by high school teachers to explore jazz as an indigenous American art form as a means to understand American history. Each of the units includes an introductory video, a lesson essay, a teacher's guide with cross-curricular activities, assessment methods, student activities, and links to multimedia resources such as musical excerpts, period photographs, and biographical sketches of significant jazz musicians. The flexible units can be taught in a day or expanded into a more comprehensive series of lessons. Each of the units is structured to meet lesson objectives and national curriculum standards for U.S. history, social studies, arts education/music, civics and government, and geography.

The full NEA Jazz in the Schools curriculum was launched in January 2006 as an online resource. Teachers from more than 6,800 schools have ordered the toolkits, which they have in turn passed on to more than 150,000 additional teachers. In total, nearly 4.6 million students have benefited from the toolkits alone. Even more teachers and students have benefited from using the NEA Jazz in the Schools curriculum online.





*Former Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Gregory S. Cleghorne and his son at the book launch for the NEA anthology, *Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan and the Home Front, in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families*.*

PHOTO BY KEVIN ALLEN

OPERATION HOMECOMING

In April 2004, the NEA debuted the initiative Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience, in partnership with the Department of Defense and with generous support from The Boeing Company, to provide writing workshops by nationally known writers at domestic and overseas military bases representing all four branches of the U.S. armed

services. Workshops were held at 50 military installations, with 24 writers leading sessions for more than 6,000 individuals.

In 2006, Random House published *Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families*, an anthology of letters, e-mails, personal narratives, poems, and short fiction written by U.S. military personnel who served after September 11, 2001, and their immediate families. Anthology editor Andrew Carroll and an independent panel of writers read through 1,200 submissions before selecting the nearly 100 pieces that comprise the anthology. While the anthology contains writing developed during the Operation Homecoming workshops, writers did not need to participate in the program to be

eligible to submit works to the project. All of the submissions received from the anthology will be housed at an open government archive.

To launch the anthology, the NEA hosted a celebration at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, on September 12, 2006. At the widely attended event, more than 45 of the book's contributors were on hand for a group book signing. After the launch, Andrew Carroll and some of the anthology's contributors also took part in a more than 30-city book tour throughout the U.S. and overseas, including a stop at the National Book Festival on the National Mall. The tour visited more than ten military bases nationwide, with stops in California, Georgia,

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New York, North Carolina, and Texas. Several of the anthology's writers also appear in two Operation Homecoming documentaries, which premiered in 2007.

Proceeds from the *Operation Homecoming* anthology were used to provide arts and cultural programming to U.S. military communities. Free copies of the book also were given to military installations, schools, and libraries.

POETRY OUT LOUD

Poetry Out Loud is an NEA initiative developed with the Chicago-based Poetry Foundation that capitalizes on the latest trends in poetry—spoken word and poetry slams—to introduce the love of poetry through memorization and recitation to a new generation. After a successful pilot program in Washington, DC, and Chicago in FY 2005, the NEA partnered with the nation's state arts agencies to launch Poetry Out Loud nationally in FY 2006, with competitions taking place in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Participating schools received free standards-based curriculum materials, including print and online poetry anthologies, a teacher's guide, and an audio guide on the art of recitation featuring well-known actors and writers. From January to April 2006, thousands of students from more than 400 schools participated in Poetry Out Loud programs managed by each state arts agency in the state's capital region or beyond.



U.S. Representative Deborah Pryce of Ohio congratulates POL National Champion Jackson Hille in her DC office.

PHOTO BY PETER FREEMAN

Student competitions took place at classroom, school, district, or regional levels and culminated in a state final. Each state finalist received \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to compete in the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington, DC. Each state finalist's school received \$500 for the purchase of poetry books for the school's library.

On May 15 and 16, 2006, all 51 Poetry Out Loud State Champions met in the nation's capital for semi-finals and finals competitions administered by

the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, a Baltimore-based regional arts organization. After a welcome banquet the previous evening, on May 16 the state champions participated in a Capitol Hill breakfast with Members of Congress. The competitors next assembled at the District's historic Lincoln Theater for three regional semi-final rounds of competition, which yielded 12 finalists. These finalists competed in an evening finals round, reciting two poems each, after which the final five recited a third poem in the hope of taking first place.

Ohio State Champion Jackson Hille ultimately was crowned the 2006 Poetry Out Loud National Champion, after arresting recitations of "A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General" by Jonathan Swift, "Altruism" by Molly Peacock, and "Forgetfulness" by Billy Collins. Hille, a high school senior, received a \$20,000 college scholarship. Second place went to Teal Van Dyck of New Hampshire who received a \$10,000 scholarship, and third to Kelli

Taulia Anae of Hawaii, who received a \$5,000 scholarship. The remaining finalists each received \$1,000 scholarships, and the schools of all 12 finalists received \$500 for the purchase of poetry books.

SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES: SHAKESPEARE FOR A NEW GENERATION

In FY 2006, the NEA entered its third year of Shakespeare for a New Generation, the second phase of its innovative Shakespeare touring program, Shakespeare in American Communities. Shakespeare for a New Generation provides professional Shakespeare performances and educational programs—free of charge or at a deeply discounted rate—to high school and middle school students. Thirty-five theater companies were selected to participate during the 2005-06 school year, each providing performances and activities for a minimum of 10 schools. By the end of the school year, students from 1,626 schools had seen a Shakespeare production, and more than 10,000 educational toolkits had been distributed for classroom use. Participating theater companies—such as Minnesota’s Guthrie Theater, Alaska’s Fairbanks Shakespeare

Theatre, and Florida’s Teatro Avante—gave 1,228 performances of 19 of Shakespeare’s plays in 1,022 communities in 40 states. These performances reached 300,000 youth and adults, bringing the total number of individuals exposed to the Bard through the initiative to nearly 750,000 through FY 2006.

Kentucky’s Actors Theatre of Louisville participated in the NEA’s Shakespeare initiative for the first time in FY 2006. A previous recipient of a Tony Award for Best Regional Theater, the theater’s educational programs, such as Actors in the Classroom, annually benefit more than 11,000 students. In September and October 2005, the company conducted educational activities and performances of the comedy *Twelfth Night* at 16 schools. In all, 14 performances were given and 112 educational activities conducted, reaching more than 2,100 youth and children. In-school and after-school activities afforded students the opportunity to interact with professional actors and production staff, and included pre- and post-performance workshops emphasizing text analysis, interactive theater exercises, and playwriting. In collaboration with the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, the Actors Theatre also sent participating teachers and community center coordinators through the Festival’s teacher training institute.



The Actors Theatre of Louisville’s production of William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, directed by Aaron Posner.

PHOTO BY HARLAN TAYLOR