



SOTA Theatre Department Senior Michelle Ang listed among the 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts

20 YoungArts winners named top high--school artists in the nation for their superior academic and artistic achievement, leadership and character

(MAY 2, 2012) -- Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the names of the **20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts**. These Scholars were nominated by YoungArts, a program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). For an artistically talented graduating high school senior, inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon them. The award is presented on behalf of the President of the United States, and selection is based upon academic, civic and artistic achievement. Each year, 141 U.S. Presidential Scholars are recognized, including up to 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

Michelle Ang, 17, a senior at the Ruth Asawa School of the Arts Theatre Department, is active in school and local productions in the San Francisco Bay Area. She recently appeared as Janice Vickery in Paul Zindel's *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man in the Moon Marigolds* with Custom Made Theatre. Other credits include Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, SOTA's *Shakespeare Night*, and a host of Student Showcases. Michelle also enjoys music and literature, particularly the works of Milan Kundera, Sylvia Plath, Bon Iver, and Beethoven. She will be attending Fordham University in Manhattan to pursue a B.A. in Theatre and a minor in business. Her current goal, besides working as an actor in New York City, is to establish a theatre company focused on producing the works of emerging ethnic playwrights.

"The students who are chosen as U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts represent the nation's best in the visual, literary and performing arts," says pal T. Lehr, YoungArts' Executive Director. "Our rigorous program identifies the most talented and well-rounded candidates each year, and I am proud to see our organization play such an essential part in recognizing and developing America's young artists and next generation of leaders."

The 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts will be honored in Washington D.C. together with the rest of the 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars during National Recognition Weekend. The Scholars will travel to Washington, DC to meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians and other accomplished individuals. To commemorate their achievement the Scholars are awarded the U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion in a White House--sponsored ceremony. The artists and writers will exhibit their works at the Smithsonian American Art Museum on Sunday, June 17, and perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on Monday, June 18.

To be selected as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, candidates must participate in and receive a nomination from YoungArts. Each year, YoungArts receives up to 5,000 applications for its national program. After a rigorous adjudication process, the organization nominates 60 YoungArts finalists for further consideration to the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.

Finally, the Commission on Presidential Scholars, whose members are appointed by the President, select up to 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts each year. YoungArts is the exclusive path to the U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts awards.

The 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts join an illustrious group which includes Tony Award-- nominated dancer and choreographer **Desmond Richardson**, American Ballet Theatre Executive Director **Rachel Moore**, novelist and National Book Award Finalist **Allegra Goodman**, Grammy Award nominated violinist **Jennifer Koh**, BRAVO's *Work of Art* winner **Abdi Farah**, and OBIE Award winning actress **Donna Lynne Champlin**.

This years U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts represent eleven states and nine artistic disciplines including cinematic arts, dance, jazz, music, photography, theater, voice, visual arts and writing. For a complete list, visit <http://www.youngarts.org/us-presidential-scholars-arts>.