



**Tampa Bay Business
Coalition for the Arts**
A Chapter of Americans for the Arts

2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



The Charlie Houchell
Art Stars Scholarship



LITERARY ARTS

Melina DiGiorgio
Howard W. Blake High School
Judge: Shane Hinton

VISUAL ARTS

Leo Dougherty
Howard W. Blake High School
Judge: Joanna Robotham

DANCE

Roselana Hermoso
Howard W. Blake High School
Judge: Helen Hansen French

THEATER

Isabel Ramos
Sunlake High School
Judge: Eugenie Bondurant

VOCAL MUSIC

Emilee Scotch
Palm Harbor University High School
Judge: Dawne Eubanks

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Gabriella Setta
J. W. Mitchell High School
Judge: Paul Wilborn

AWARDS PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

5:30 PM Cocktail Reception

6:00 PM Ceremony Remarks and Talent Performances

Ferman Center for the Arts, University of Tampa

Generously supported by:



Hillsborough
County Florida



J. Crayton Pruitt
Foundation

THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA

Mernet Larsen

VINIK FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Tampa Bay has stood out for decades as the first-in-Florida Committee for Culture & the Arts, one of the national BCAs who work to connect business leaders in support of arts and culture—in the workplace, in the community, and in education. Tampa Bay BCA is a member of the private sector network and the pARTnership Movement of Americans for the Arts.

Quality arts and culture are a hallmark of thriving, world-class communities that attract top talent to live and work. Tampa Bay BCA pARTnerships strengthen and advance this mission, propelling our initiatives and programs to success, such as the Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarships.

Tampa Bay BCA is fortunate to have so many outstanding donors and supporters who pARTner with us to impact and enrich our community positively—thank you!

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The Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship



Charlie Houchell was a well-rounded individual with a diverse range of experiences. He grew up in St. Petersburg as the son of a dentist. He attended George Washington University, Middlebury College (where he earned a master's degree in Spanish), and the University of Florida (where he earned his law degree). He also earned an MBA from an Arizona college before returning to the Tampa Bay area to work as a prosecutor. In addition to his more cerebral pursuits, Charlie was a model in South America and Europe, known for his striking appearance and calm demeanor. Throughout his career, he owned a medical billing company, ran a law firm and title company, and sold real estate. Charlie was also actively involved in his community, serving on more than half a dozen nonprofit boards, two of which he chaired simultaneously. Despite his busy schedule, he always made new friends along the way. Charlie passed away suddenly in 2013, well before his time, but his love of the arts lives on through the scholarship program that he founded.

Charlie passionately supported Tampa Bay BCA and our nonprofit organization's mission to unite businesses in backing arts and culture. He was dedicated to inspiring and encouraging young student artists and performers. In 2008, Charlie spearheaded the establishment by Tampa Bay BCA of the Art Stars Scholarship program. Over 15 years, Tampa Bay BCA has awarded over 90 scholarships across six different fine and performing arts disciplines to students, predominantly from public schools, helping to offset tuition fees at prestigious colleges, universities, and conservatories across the nation. This enriching Tampa Bay BCA initiative offers some of the most gifted and deserving students in the Tampa Bay region life-changing opportunities, not only because of the crucial financial aid but also because it introduces them to celebrated judges and mentors in their respective fields, as well as a network of other talented and accomplished peers.

The Tampa Bay BCA Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship program is chaired by Stephen Gay, a long-standing member of the Tampa Bay BCA board of directors. Stephen leads Tampa Bay BCA in carrying forward Charlie's vision with passion and dedication. Today, together with all of you, we send a clear message to our youth — especially to our scholarship recipients.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP LITERARY ARTS



Melina DiGiorgio
Howard W. Blake High School

Melina exhibits a multifaceted commitment to academic and creative pursuits, having studied AICE English Language under the nurturing guidance of Rebecca Giangrasso. Her training in English has been instrumental in honing her analytical and expressive skills with creative outlooks, which she has adeptly applied to a diverse array of interests, from costume and fashion design to leadership roles in various school activities.

Melina's creative journey is marked by notable achievements such as receiving the "Best Artist Statement" at the Fashion Design at The Dalí event, where her art was featured at the Florida CraftArt Museum. Melina has also excelled academically, maintaining straight A's in rigorous courses and contributing significantly to her school's Costume Design program. She has won multiple awards from the Scholastic Writing Program, including Silver and Gold Keys for her short stories and a Gold Key for her writing portfolio. Additionally, Melina has demonstrated leadership and community engagement through roles such as co-president of the Soup Enthusiasts Club and officer in the French Honor Society. Melina has ambitious plans to merge her artistic talents and drive to innovate by pursuing a career encompassing cosmetology, fashion business management, and journalism. Her vision is to establish a unique boutique that integrates hair, fashion, piercing, and art, serving as a platform for self-expression and subcultural styles. This goal reflects her passion for challenging societal norms and creating spaces celebrating individuality and rebellion against conformity. Melina's participation in various activities and her reflective, existential writing style underscore her commitment to making a meaningful impact through work and creative expression.

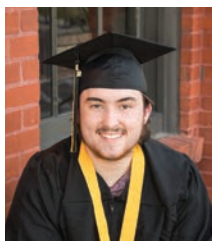


Shane Hinton, Judge

Shane Hinton is an Associate Teaching Professor of English and Writing at the University of Tampa. Hinton's work focuses on the absurd and the horrific in contemporary society. He often writes about Florida and is an active member of the local literary community. Hinton is the author of three books — *Pinkies* (2015), *Radio Dark* (2019), and *Other Shane Hintons* (forthcoming 2025) — and is the editor of the anthology *We Can't Help It if We're From Florida* (2017). His work has been published in literary magazines and exhibited at national and international conferences.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP VISUAL ARTS



Leo Dougherty
Howard W. Blake High School

Leo has exhibited extraordinary talent and dedication in the realm of high school technical theater under Betty-Jane Parks' guidance. Over four years, his engagement in set design and stage management has shaped his technical skills and artistic vision, earning him superior ratings and top honors at district levels and the opportunity to showcase his talents at the State Thespians Festival in March 2024.

Leo's commitment is further demonstrated in his leadership role on the school's Thesopian Troupe leadership board and his outstanding contribution to the school's production of "Peter and the Starcatcher," which garnered him an award for outstanding stage management. Beyond the theater, Leo has also dedicated time to community service through Open Arms Homeless Ministries, where his role as a greeter reflects a community-oriented spirit.

With aspirations to attend St. Pete College for technical theater, Leo aims to deepen his expertise in creating evocative theatrical environments inspired by professional productions such as the 2017 national tour of "Into the Woods." His work exemplifies a profound understanding of how technical elements like lighting and set design can dramatically enhance storytelling. Leo wants to continue his educational endeavors and pursue a career in which he can continue to innovate and inspire in the world of technical theater.



Joanna Robotham, Judge

Joanna Robotham joined the staff of the Tampa Museum of Art as the Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art in 2016. Robotham recently curated at the Tampa Museum of Art the exhibition *Vapor and Vibration: The Art of Larry Bell and Jesús Rafael Soto* and organized Mernet Larsen: *Getting Measured, 1957-2017*, a retrospective of Mernet Larsen's paintings. She has also curated, among others, the Tampa Museum of Art's presentation of *Susanne Bartsch: Art-a-Porter and Alex Katz: Black and White* and was part of the curatorial team for *Skyway: A Contemporary Collaboration*. She previously held the Neubauer Family Foundation Assistant Curator position at the Jewish Museum in New York City, where she worked for over 10 years. She received her M.A. in curatorial studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and earned a B.A. in art history and political science from the University of Washington.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP **DANCE**



Roselana Hermoso
Howard W. Blake High School

Roselana has dedicated years to honing her craft across multiple dance disciplines, including ballet, modern, contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, and African dance, under the guidance of esteemed instructors like Ivonne Lemus, Francisco Gella, Albená Arnaudová, Yusha-Marie Sorzano, and Barak Marshall. Her ballet training has been particularly formative, providing a solid foundation in discipline and technical precision, while her contemporary training has encouraged creativity and expression, allowing her to explore storytelling through movement.

Her deep engagement in various styles is complemented by her active participation in her school's activities, including student government and the National Honors Society of Dance Arts, underscoring her leadership skills and commitment to her community.

Looking ahead, Roselana plans to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts at a liberal arts college to explore further and develop her artistic voice. Roselana's vision extends beyond performance; she aspires to contribute to the dance world as a choreographer, hoping to impact audiences worldwide through her unique approach to dance storytelling. Roselana is willing to take a crucial step toward achieving her educational and career goals and alleviating the financial barriers she faces as a first-generation student striving to succeed in a highly competitive field. Her journey is a testament to her resilience, passion, and profound belief in the transformative power of dance.



Helen Hansen French, Judge

Helen Hansen French earned her BFA from The Juilliard School in 2001 and was invited to join Buglisi Dance Theatre (NYC) upon graduation. She has toured nationally and internationally and played a critical role in staging BDT's works at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Pieve International School in Italy, North Carolina Dance Theater, and numerous colleges and universities throughout the United States.

As a choreographer and movement maker, French collaborates with artists from other fields to explore the relationship between dance and other art forms. In addition to her work as a dancer and choreographer, French is a certified Alexander Technique teacher and has taught at George Mason University, The Juilliard School, The Neighborhood Playhouse, John Hopkins Middle School, and St. Petersburg College. She is currently pursuing her MFA through Hollins University.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP THEATER



Isabel Ramos
Sunlake High School

Isabel's journey through theater and vocal performance has been characterized by deep commitment and significant achievement. Based in Land O' Lakes, Florida, under the tutelage of Brooke West and Lisa Katt Watson, Isabel has developed a strong foundation in acting and singing. Over nine years with Watson, Isabel has cultivated a versatile singing voice, adapting to classical and theatrical music, culminating in acceptance to a prestigious Musical Theatre BFA program.

Isabel has excelled in high school theater, appearing in eight productions and actively participating in district and state thespian competitions. Her talent and leadership were recognized through numerous awards, including Sunlake's Outstanding Senior and a scholarship at the District 14 Thespian Festival. Isabel's role as Drama Club President further underscores her leadership and commitment to the arts.

For Isabel, theater is a career path and a profound personal journey. She sees her acting as a method of exploring complex emotions and human experiences, enabling her to connect deeply with characters and audiences alike. This emotional and psychological exploration through performances has become a unique hallmark of Isabel's artistic identity, underscoring her potential to inspire and engage future theater audiences. Her focus on continued growth through scholarships and educational opportunities demonstrates a thoughtful approach to pursuing her dreams while honoring the support and sacrifices of her family.



Eugenie Bondurant, Judge

Eugenie Bondurant has had a long and interesting career, starting as a runway model in Paris before transitioning to acting. At 6'1" with striking cheekbones, her agents promoted her as androgynous, a quality that carried over into her acting roles. She is perhaps best known for playing Tigris in *The Hunger Games*, a character who was both female and feline. Bondurant's other credits include the short film *Tiny Bacteria*, which was shown at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, as well as recent appearances in *Darlin'* and other film and TV projects listed on her IMDB page. Bondurant is a 20-year SAG/AFTRA actress and acting coach who was the first teacher hired at the Patel Conservatory in 2004. She brought her dynamic on-camera acting program to Tampa from Los Angeles and has her Meisner Acting certification, studying with mentor Larry Silverberg.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP VOCAL MUSIC



Emilee Scotch

Palm Harbor University High School

Emilee, under the devoted mentorship of Roseann Tota at the Tota Conservatory in Clearwater, Florida, has honed her vocal skills and experienced profound personal growth over five years of study. Despite facing challenging circumstances, including her mentor's battle with breast cancer, she witnessed firsthand Ms. Tota's resilience and dedication. This example has greatly influenced her personally and artistically, instilling a deep commitment to her craft and community. The conservatory, under Ms. Tota's guidance, became more than a training ground — it evolved into a supportive family that prioritizes the well-being and development of its members.

In addition to her vocal achievements, Emilee excelled in dance under Elizabeth Morgan, further enriching her performance skills. Her active participation in various community and school choirs, including the prestigious All-State choirs in consecutive years and notable roles in her school's Drama Club, underscores her versatile talent and leadership. She has proven her ability across multiple performance arenas, with accolades such as SSAA Choir Alto 1, Mixed Chorus Alto II, and multiple Broadway Star of the Future awards.

Driven by a passion deeply rooted in her earliest music and performance experiences, she aims to pursue vocal performance at a collegiate level and beyond, viewing it as a fundamental connection to her core self and an opportunity to inspire others. This scholarship represents not just financial assistance but also a stepping stone toward realizing a life enriched through performance, fulfilling the dreams of her younger self, and connecting with the broader artistic community.



Dawne Wisner Eubanks, Judge

Dawne Wisner Eubanks holds a B.A. in Music/Voice from Florida State University. For 11 years, she has been the voice professor at Eckerd College and has been on the voice faculty at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School for over 30 years. Eubanks' solo career has led her to the stages of Carnegie Hall, Dallas' Meyerson Symphony Center, and locally, the Mahaffey Theatre, Ruth Eckerd Hall, and the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center.

Eubanks recently returned to St. Petersburg City Theatre to musical direct its spring musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar* (2018) and *Pirates of Penzance* (2019), and she musically involved with the theater department at Eckerd College. She maintains a private vocal studio in St. Petersburg, is an active performer, and is Assistant Music and Worship Leader at the First Baptist Church of St. Pete.



2024 CHARLIE HOUNCHELL ART STARS SCHOLARSHIP INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC



Gabriella Setta
J. W. Mitchell High School

Gabriella has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to music education, underscored by a comprehensive history of participation and leadership in various ensembles and bands. Notably, she has consistently achieved the position of first chair tenor saxophone across multiple esteemed music groups, such as the FMEA All-State Band, FBA Pasco All-County Band, and the Bay Area Youth Wind Ensemble. She sustained this role over several years, highlighting her skill and dedication and their ability to inspire and lead within their musical community.

Moreover, Gabriella has been recognized for her superior performances at regional and state Solo and Ensemble events, further evidencing her musical prowess and commitment to excellence. Gabriella's aspiration to become a music educator is fueled by her transformative experiences with mentors like Dr. Katharine Weintraub, Jeffrey Mackechnie, and Dr. Matthew McCutchen at USF and her desire to give back by mentoring younger students.

Beyond her musical achievements, she has also shown a commitment to the community, volunteering significant time at the Suncoast Animal League. This well-rounded dedication to her art and community makes Gabriella an exemplary candidate for further educational opportunities in music, where she aims to use the power of education to inspire and teach future generations the profound benefits of music.



Paul Wilborn, Judge

Paul Wilborn is the Executive Director of the Palladium Theater at St. Petersburg College. Under his leadership, the Palladium has won numerous "Best of the Bay" awards and is recognized as the top venue for jazz, blues, choral music, chamber music, and dance in the Bay area. Paul is a pianist, musician, and bandleader. His American Songbook Series presents intimate cabaret shows at American Stage Theater and other venues around Florida. As founder and leader of Paul Wilborn and the Pop Tarts, he played most major venues in the Tampa Bay area for 15 years. He is a founding member of the WMNF and Studio at 620 Radio Theater Project and contributes radio plays to the project. Wilborn serves as an adjudicator for a number of music competitions. Previously, Wilborn worked for Tampa Mayor Pam lorio as Manager of Creative Industries, including directing Arte 2007, Tampa Bay's Festival of Latin American Arts.



TAMPA BAY BCA PROGRAMS

For over three decades, Tampa Bay BCA has *united area businesses to champion arts and culture for a prosperous community*. Tampa Bay BCA programs connect, motivate, and recognize the business community's leadership and support of arts and culture as vital economic drivers, catalysts for innovation, creativity, transformation and development, and essential contributors to quality of life.

The Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarships: Each year, Tampa Bay BCA awards six or more competitive and merit-based fine and performing arts scholarships, providing tuition assistance to Tampa Bay area high school students with exceptional talent in instrumental music, vocal music, dance, theater, literary arts, and visual arts, helping them to fund and pursue higher education in the arts. Since the Art Stars Scholarship program's founding in 2008 by Tampa Bay BCA and Past President, the late Charlie Houchell, Tampa Bay BCA has awarded scholarships to over 70 students, the majority from public high schools.

Cultural Encounters and Introduction to Nonprofit Board: Tampa Bay BCA creates and curates value-added dialogues and events that connect businesses to cultural and arts institutions, organizations, and their programs, and to individual artists, to help heighten visibility, expand audiences, encourage deeper engagement and appreciation, and promote cultural collaborations, sponsorships, and economic development between businesses and the arts.

Tampa Bay BCA Chalk Walk: Tampa Bay BCA funds artist stipends and produces/sponsors Tampa Bay BCA Chalk Walks, offering free, fun, family-friendly, open-air, interactive art experiences and bringing public art to the streets and the heart of our community.

Leadership Intern Program: prepares college and postgraduate students to become the next generation of business supporters and arts and cultural enthusiasts through early awareness, knowledge, engagement, and appreciation of artists and arts and cultural assets in the greater Tampa Bay area. Students receive mentoring, real-world business experience and skill-building opportunities in leadership, communications, research, marketing, financial literacy, social media, technical skills practicum, networking and business etiquette, and other areas, and assistance with career exploration, resume and portfolio building and recommendations for job placement.



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Pledge Your Support

We invite you to support the Tampa Bay BCA Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship program, which provides valuable opportunities for students to pursue their passions for creativity and receive the resources they need to succeed.

Every year, Tampa Bay BCA brings together private sector partners, business leaders, and the community to honor the recipients of the Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship. This year's awardees are exceptional individuals with a strong sense of identity and purpose. They have overcome challenges and are unafraid to explore new ideas and express themselves creatively, with boldness and imagination.

These young artists and performers represent the next generation of creative minds poised to impact the world positively. They will be at the forefront of addressing critical issues and making a social, scientific impact through their work.

We are honored to witness the transformative moment when these young artists embark on a journey of entertainment and inspiration. Please join us in recognizing their achievements and supporting their future success by considering contributions to the Tampa Bay BCA Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship program.

Give young creative minds a voice for generations to come when you include the Tampa Bay BCA and the Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship program in your estate plan.

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If you want to learn more about pARTnership with Tampa Bay BCA and the Charlie Houchell Art Stars Scholarship program, please contact Zora Carrier, Ph.D., Executive Director, at ZoraCarrier@tbbca.org.