Office for the Arts Announces 2020 Arts Prize Winners

FOURTEEN HARVARD STUDENTS RECEIVE PRIZES FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

(Cambridge, MA) — The Office for the Arts at Harvard (OFA) and the Council on the Arts at Harvard, a standing committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, announce the recipients of the annual undergraduate arts prizes for 2020.

The awards, presented to more than 162 undergraduates for the past 37 years, recognize outstanding accomplishments in the arts undertaken during a student’s time at Harvard. Council on the Arts members at the time of selection were: Robin Kelsey (Chair), Shirley Carter Burden Professor of Photography, History of Photography and American Art, and Dean of Arts and Humanities; Alicia Anstead, Associate Director for Programs, Office for the Arts; Jack Megan, Director, Office for the Arts Diane Borger, Producer of the American Repertory Theater; Federico Cortese, Senior Lecturer on Music, Conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra; Jorie Graham, Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory; Jill Johnson, Dance Director, OFA Dance Program, Senior Lecturer, Theatre, Dance & Media; Sarah Lewis, Assistant Professor of History of Arts and Architecture and of African American Studies (on leave); Ruth Stella Lingford, Professor of the Practice of Animation, Film Study Center Fellow (on leave); Diane Paulus ‘88, Artistic Director, American Repertory Theater; Matt Saunders ‘97, Assistant Professor of Art, Film and Visual Studies; Elaine Scarry, Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value and Senior Fellow of the Society of Fellows; Nora Schultz, Assistant Professor of Arts, Film and Visual Studies; Marcus Stern, Associate Director, American Repertory Theater and head of Directing for Theater, Dance and Media; Yosvany Terry, Senior Lecturer on Music, Director of Jazz Bands.
Anna Lee ’20 and George Liu ’20, recipients of the Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts. The prize recognizes outstanding artistic talent and achievement in the composition or performance of music, drama, dance, or the visual arts. This prize honors the sum of a student’s artistic activities at Harvard.

A resident of Lowell House concentrating in Comparative Literature, Anna Lee is a violinist and soprano who has performed regularly on campus as a featured guest in House concerts, as a member of the Harvard University Choir, and in collaboration with her peers and colleagues in independent projects. Off-campus, she has performed as violin soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, and Singapore Symphony Orchestra, among others. She has also performed with world-renowned musicians including Christoph Eschenbach, Mitsuko Uchida, and Steven Isserlis at the Marlboro Music Festival, the Kronberg Academy Festival, the Aspen Music Festival and School. In 2019, she received an Artist Development Fellowship from the OFA to support her participation in the Ravinia Festival’s Steans Music Institute. In her senior thesis, Lee explored the role of music in society and the interconnected relationship between her physical voice and her violin’s voice by philosophically examining the link between nature and culture through poetry, music, and the play of sound and meanings. Lee previously studied at the Juilliard School Pre-College Division in New York City and the Kronberg Academy in Germany; she is also passionate about music education and has taught chamber music at summer festivals, most notably at Festival MusicAlp in France and the Kronberg Academy’s Mit Musik—Miteinander festival in Germany.

A resident of Adams House and concentrator in Art, Film, and Visual Studies (AFVS), George Liu is recognized for their work in visual arts. A 2019 OFA Artist Development Fellow, Liu attended the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art, an intensive six-week artist residency for rising undergraduate seniors. They performed with Ei Arakawa at the Artists Space opening weekend in New York City. They are also an AFVS Student Ambassador. They intend to continue making art after graduation.

Hope Green ’20 and Memie Osuga ’20, recipients of the Council Prize in Visual Art. The prize recognizes outstanding work in the field of visual arts.

A resident of Eliot House and concentrator in AFVS, Hope Green is recognized for her work as an artist and filmmaker. In addition to having produced her own film projects, Green worked as an intern in 2019 with Anonymous Content, a production and management company. Throughout her college career, Green has been writing poems, drawing pictures, and writing screenplays. Most recently, Green has finished work on her senior thesis film Nobody Touch, which explores the life of a reclusive woman and her feigned pregnancy. At the close of the present pandemic, Green hopes to move to Los Angeles to pursue a life as a filmmaker.

A resident of Adams House and concentrator in AFVS, Memie Osuga works primarily in animation, for which she won the 2019 Boston Asian American Film Festival Short Waves -more-
competition. She also received the 2018 Sydney Williams Travelling Fellowship. Her work has been featured in film festivals, student publications, and art shows including the newly launched Asian anglophone *The Wave* magazine and the Harvard Student Art Show. In her time at Harvard, Osuga has also been involved in the Asian Student Arts Project. Osuga’s work focuses on feelings of belonging and connection and often works to highlight her Asian American identity.

**Julia Riew ’21, recipient of the Radcliffe Doris Cohen Levi Prize.** The prize recognizes a Harvard college student who combines talent and energy with outstanding enthusiasm for musical theater at Harvard and honors the memory of Doris Cohen Levi, Radcliffe ’35.

A resident of Lowell House joint-concentrating in Theater, Dance, Media (TDM) and Music, Julia Riew is a composer/lyricist, playwright, music director, and performer. On campus, she is the co-founder and president emeritus of the Harvard College Asian Student Arts Project (ASAP) and the co-Vice President of the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club (HRDC). Her original musical *The East Side* (2019), co-written with John Lim (’20) and Jared Leong (Emerson ’19), was the ASAP inaugural production and a semi-finalist in the 2020 Eugene O’Neill National Musical Theater Conference. As a composer/lyricist, playwright, or both, Riew has written five original musicals, including two commissions for the American Repertory Theater’s Family Holiday Show: *Jack and the Beanstalk: A Musical Adventure* (2020), and *Thumbelina: A Little Musical* (2019). She also wrote *Hitched: The First-Year Musical* (Agassiz Theater, 2018), and *Hart: A New Musical* (John Burroughs School, 2017).

**Aaron Olkin ’20, recipient of the Louise Donovan Award.** The award recognizes a Harvard student who has done outstanding work behind the scenes in the arts (e.g., as a producer, accompanist, set designer, or mentor and leader in the undergraduate arts world).

A resident of Lowell House and concentrator in Computer Science, Aaron Olkin has worked as a designer, producer, and technician on more than 25 productions on campus. Olkin served as production manager for *Mamma Mia* on the Loeb Mainstage, *Sweeney Todd* in OBERON, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Summer Theater production of *House of Several Stories* in the Loeb Experimental Theater (Loeb Ex). As a designer, Olkin designed and built the sets for *Mamma Mia* and multiple Harvard Ballet Company (HBC) performances, among other productions, and served as lighting designer to *Saccharine*, a club-styled music thesis in the Loeb Ex; *columbinus*, a TDM thesis in Farkas Hall; TEATRO’s *In the Heights* in OBERON; and Harvard-Radcliffe Modern Dance Company (HRMDC) performances. Olkin has also served two years on the HRDC board, first as Treasurer and later as Vice President/Mainstage Coordinator, building and revitalizing HRDC policies and infrastructure. As the current Executive Producer of Harvard-Radcliffe Summer Theater, Olkin is in the process of expanding and strengthening the programming it offers to students and the community.
Margaret Canady ’20 and Mara Milner ’20 recipients of the Suzanne Farrell Dance Prize. Named for the acclaimed dancer and former prima ballerina of New York City Ballet, the prize recognizes a Harvard undergraduate who has demonstrated outstanding artistry in the field of dance.

A resident of Leverett House and concentrator in Psychology with a secondary in TDM, Margaret Canady is both a dancer and choreographer. She has immersed herself in the Harvard dance community, performing and choreographing in more than 30 productions on campus. Canady served as the Director of the HBC in 2019, directing in search of on the Loeb Mainstage and she is in Farkas Hall, as well as serving as the Producer of the HRMDC in 2018. Canady’s scholarly interest in dance developed throughout college and accumulated in her senior thesis, for which she introduced a dance intervention to children with depression in a local hospital. In lieu of directing like a good conversation, an independent dance show originally set to premiere in the Loeb Ex in May 2020, Canady worked with the show’s collaborators on a short dance film.

A resident of Winthrop House and concentrator in Social Studies, Mara Milner is as a dancer, director and producer. Prior to joining Harvard, Milner spent 15 months dancing professionally with The Richmond Ballet. Upon arriving at Harvard, she has been extensively involved with the HBC, performing in every HBC production since joining. Milner served as HBC Director in 2018, presenting two productions on the Loeb Mainstage, Out of Orbit and on quarter, commemorating the HBC 25th anniversary and forming the company’s Graduate Board. She served as HBC Technical Producer in 2019, presenting in search of on the Loeb Mainstage and she is in Farkas Hall. Milner has also performed with the Harvard Dance Project, the HRMDC, Harvard’s annual ARTS FIRST Festival and in an original collaborative work at the New York Baryshnikov Arts Center celebrating choreographer Merce Cunningham. Milner’s senior thesis studied the relationship between hierarchy, elitism and democracy in ballet.

Anisa Ahmed ’20 and Gabriele Preston ’20, recipients of the Robert E. Levi Prize. This prize acknowledges a Harvard College senior who has demonstrated outstanding arts management skills over the course of an undergraduate career. The recipient’s dedication, organizational talent and creative problem solving, as well as ability to nurture artistry, have been critical factors in the success of one or more arts organizations and/or projects. The award honors the memory of Robert E. Levi, Harvard College class of 1933 and Harvard Business School, MBA, 1935.

A resident of Kirkland House concentrating in English with a secondary in Spanish, Anisa Ahmed has worked on multiple theatrical productions as a producer, stage manager, and designer. She has worked as a Venue Manager for theatrical venues on campus as well as serving as a Production Assistant for the past two years. Alongside her role as a Production Assistant, she
produced the annual Harvard Playwrights Festival in addition to producing the 2019 Harvard Black Playwright’s Festival. Outside of theater, Ahmed is also interested in film and TV, recently submitting an original feature film script as her creative thesis to the English Department.

An affiliate of Dudley House and concentrator in Anthropology with a secondary in TDM, Gabrielle “Gabby” Preston has worked as a chair, director, producer or technical director of many productions, festivals and gatherings on campus. Preston served as a technical director and/or technical producer for all BlackCAST productions from 2017 to 2019, including Bootycandy, Loveconjure/blues, Vanity Lane, /underground on the Loeb Mainstage, and for colored girls who consider suicide when the rainbow is enuf. Preston directed the second annual Harvard Black Playwrights Festival and was selected to chair the 2019 Black Arts Festival of the Kuumba Singers of Harvard College. Preston is a current president of BlackCAST, and formerly served in two other positions on the board, as well as Technical Liaison of the HRDC board. Preston has also contributed to the arts as a performer/creator through several experimental projects and hopes to continue to develop and perform devised theater works in the future.

Alexander “Sasha” Yakub ’20, recipient of the Robert Levin Prize in Musical Performance. This prize has been established to recognize an extraordinarily gifted undergraduate musician, preferably of the senior class. The award honors Robert Levin ’68, Professor Emeritus and former Dwight P. Robinson Jr. Professor of the Department of Music at Harvard University.

Alexander “Sasha” Yakub ’20, a resident of Currier House concentrating in Music, received a 2019 Artist Development Fellowship to attend the Vienna Summer Music Festival’s Instrumental Composition program and work with British violinist, Irvine Arditti. Yakub has composed on commission for the Southeastern Piano Festival, the Brattle Street Chamber Players, and the American Repertory Theater. He also serves as composer-in-residence for The Goat Exchange, an experimental theater company at Harvard. Recently, Yakub served as a Violin Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center and appeared as soloist with New Music New Haven premiering a new concerto. Yakub is also a part of Duo 404, a music duo who traveled in during the summer of 2019 to England to study with Thomas Adès at the international Musicians Seminar – Prussia Cove.

Celia Kenney ’20 and Julius ZR Wade ’20, recipients of the Jonathan Levy Award. This prize recognizes the most promising undergraduate actor at the College.

A resident of Adams House concentrating in English with a secondary in TDM, Celia Kenney is an active member of the Harvard arts community, known for her work in screenwriting, playwriting, and, primarily, performing. As a Weissman Fellow, Kenney spent a summer travelling to England to work on the production team of the Port Eliot Festival and study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. She’s also studied acting at the Stella Adler Conservatory and with Harvard’s Remo Airaldi and Marcus Stern. Some of her notable Harvard performance credits include Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Cassandra (The Trojan Women), Rebel (columbinus),

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Ilse (Spring Awakening), and Sophie (Mamma Mia). Kenney also performed as Jacques Ofalltrades (HPT 171: France France Revolution) and Hugh Yagonnacall (HPT 172: Mean Ghouls), in the Hasty Pudding Theatricals’ first ever shows to include female performers.

A resident of Pforzheimer House and joint concentrator in History & Literature and TDM, Julius ZR Wade has appeared in numerous productions at a variety of venues across campus and at the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), some of his featured roles include Othello (OTHELLO/DESDEMONA), Stanley (A Streetcar Named Desire), Trigorin (The Seagull), Emperor (Emperor's New Clothes), Dionysus/D (Polaroid Stories), Second Man (Three Americanisms) and Narrator (Rocky Horror Picture Show). An active member of the arts community, he has also directed several theater productions, appeared in several student films, been an active member of On Thin Ice (OTI) short-form improv comedy troupe, founded the Society of Harvard Magicians (SHaM), and is the former Executive Producer of On Harvard Time (OHT) YouTube sketch comedy club. A 2018 OFA Artist Development Fellow, Wade apprenticed Moisés Kaufman (Tectonic Theater Project), Ping Chong (Ping Chong + Co.), and Michel Hausman (Miami New Drama), and studied improv comedy at Upright Citizens Brigade in New York City. Wade recently completed his one-man Harvard Art Museums senior thesis production Terminal Hip: American Dream in HD, for which he was director, designer, and performer. A recipient of the Gardner Traveling Fellowship, Wade will be living in Berlin next year and plans to pursue a career in film and theater.

Sabrina Richert ‘20, recipient of the Alan Symonds Award. The Alan Symonds Award, administered by the Office for the Arts and given by the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players in honor of Alan Symonds ’69-’76, HRG&SP alumnus and former Technical Director for Harvard College Theatre, recognizes outstanding work in technical theater and commitment to mentoring fellow student technicians.

A resident of Currier House and concentrator in AFVS with a specialization in animation and a secondary in TDM, Sabrina Richert has been a set designer, set advisor, paint charge, producer, and assistant technical director for 25 shows on campus, and has been a general advisor and mentor to many new technicians. Richert has been heavily involved with the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players, previously serving as president and treasurer.

The following students received Honorable Mentions in recognition of their work in the following art fields: Aish Lovett ‘20 (Visual Arts), Miranda Mize ‘20 (Musical Theater) and Daniel Rivera ‘20 (Dance).
The Office for the Arts at Harvard (OFA) supports student engagement in the arts and integrates the arts into University life. Through its programs and services, the OFA teaches, mentors, and fosters student artmaking, connects students to accomplished artists, commissions new work, and partners with local, national, and international constituencies. By supporting the development of students as artists and cultural stewards, the OFA works to enrich society and shape communities in which the arts are a vital part of life. For more information about the OFA, call 617.495.8676, or visit ofa.fas.harvard.edu.