



# Office for the Arts at Harvard

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## PRESS RELEASE

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For More Information

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## Office for the Arts Announces 2021 Arts Prize Winners

### FIFTEEN 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 2021.

The awards, presented to more than 176 undergraduates for the past 38 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 include Robin Kelsey (Chair), Shirley Carter Burden Professor of Photography, History of Photography and American Art, and Dean of Arts and Humanities; Jack Megan, Director, Office for the Arts; Alicia Anstead, Associate Director for Programs, 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 Art, Film, and Visual Studies; Marcus Stern, Associate Director, American Repertory Theater and head of Directing for Theater, Dance & Media; Yosvany Terry, Senior Lecturer on Music, Director of Jazz Bands.

**Joy Nesbitt '21** and **Eli Zuzovsky '21** are 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 Leverett House and a joint concentrator in Social Anthropology and Music, **Joy Nesbitt** is a theatrical director, music director, musician and songwriter. Nesbitt has directed four productions while at Harvard, three of which were performed online during the pandemic in association with Harvard BlackCAST (*Dreamgirls*, *God of Carnage*, *R&J: An Ultramodern Fantasia* and *Reasons to be Pretty*). The Zoom productions raised money to assist communities most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. She had the privilege of assistant directing the American Repertory Theater's (A.R.T.) Zoom production of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, written by Julia Riew '21 and directed by Rebecca Aparicio. She has also music directed three musicals in various spaces at the A.R.T. (*A Very Potter Musical*, *Mamma Mia* and *Dreamgirls*). She worked as a music assistant to Madeline Smith '14, Daniel Lazour and Patrick Lazour on the premiere of their original musical, *We Live in Cairo*, at the A.R.T. Nesbitt has served as co-president of BlackCAST, president of Harvard Keychange and a performing member of the Harvard-Radcliffe Veritones. As a musician, Nesbitt is a jazz-influenced neo-soul artist. She has written, produced and recorded an EP, *...Another Day in Paradise...* (2019) and an album, *Atlas Rising* (2021). In the summer of 2020, Nesbitt was a songwriting mentee in She Is The Music's mentorship program which culminated in her appearance as a featured participant in Alicia Keys' Masterclass episode on songwriting. Upcoming in the 2021-2022 school year, Nesbitt will be attending The Lir Academy of Dramatic Art in partnership with Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, as a George J. Mitchell Scholar through the US-Ireland Alliance.

A resident of Dudley Community and joint concentrator in Art, Film, and Visual Studies (AFVS) and English with a secondary field in Theater, Dance & Media (TDM), **Eli Zuzovsky** is an aspiring director, screenwriter, playwright and journalist. He is a 2021 Rhodes Scholar-Elect. At Harvard, he has created numerous plays and short films, served as the features editor of *The Harvard Advocate* and an Arts Board member of *The Harvard Crimson*, and worked as an assistant to conductor Karmina Šilec and filmmaker Sylvia Schedelbauer. Zuzovsky has received honors including the OFA Artist Development Fellowship, Phi Beta Kappa, The John Harvard Scholarship, The Sydney Williams Traveling Fellowship and The Martin McPeck Prize. His short film *Tonight You Belong to Me* was selected for the Short Film Corner at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. His play *Minotaur* won the 2017 Jaffa Spring Festival. His work has been presented at The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, A.R.T. and Tzavta Theater, among others. His writing and translations have recently appeared in *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel* and *Harvard Political Review*. Zuzovsky was the editor of *Bamahane*, Israel's oldest weekly magazine, and won the Editor-in-Chief Award for Excellence twice. He is currently completing his senior thesis, *Mazel Tov*, a novella and a short film featuring Maya Dagan (Israeli Academy Award winner), Amit Rahav (from Netflix's *Unorthodox*) and Amir Khoury (from Netflix's *Fauda*).

**Dani Pérez '21** is the recipient of the Council Prize in Visual Art. The prize recognizes outstanding work in the field of visual arts.

A resident of Leverett House and a joint concentrator in History & Literature and Art, Film, and Visual Studies, **Dani Pérez** is a photographer, videographer and arts educator. For four years, they have served as a volunteer teacher and co-director for Harvard Student Theatre Advancing Growth and Empowerment (STAGE), an after-school theater arts education program for elementary students in Greater Boston public schools. As part of their joint thesis project, Pérez is currently working on an installation about the impact of social media on virtual community-building and identity formation within the Venezuelan diaspora, drawing specifically from their family's experiences. A member of the Harvard Teacher Fellows Program through the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Pérez will be teaching middle school English and Language Arts next year.

**Harry Sage '22** and **Elle Shaheen '21** are recipients 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 junior in Winthrop House and a joint concentrator in Music and Classical Languages and Literatures, **Harry Sage** is a composer, arranger, multi-instrumentalist and bass-baritone with a wide range of musical interests spanning from the contemporary avant-garde to folk music of the U.S. and the British Isles. He has written works for chorus, chamber ensemble and orchestra, including compositions for the Harvard Glee Club and Harvard Pops Orchestra. He has often been involved in theater on campus, playing violin, viola or electric bass in myriad pit orchestras and most notably working as arranger and orchestra manager for *Death Do Us Part* on the Loeb Mainstage (2019). Sage currently serves as Co-President of the Harvard Composers' Association and in the past has served as Assistant Librarian and Librarian of the Harvard Glee Club.

A resident of Leverett House and Theatre, Dance & Media (TDM) concentrator, **Elle Shaheen** is a performing artist with a passion for musical theater. At Harvard, Shaheen immersed herself in the arts community. Her senior thesis production, *Recorded Live! The Great American Family Jukebox Cabaret*, was the only performance thesis presented this year, and Shaheen was the creator, writer, lead performer, choreographer and producer of the show. She was one of the first six women cast in the Hasty Pudding Theatricals (HPT) – after 170 years without female cast members – and performed in HPT 171 and 172. She starred as Donna Sheridan in *Mamma Mia*, played the role of Celia in *As You Like It* and Ginny Weasley in *A Very Potter Musical*. In *Truth Hurts*, TDM's first student-generated fall production directed by Carmelita Tropicana, she played Coco Rogers and, in the Visiting Director's project, she delivered a 12-minute monologue as Zahra for *Jogging*. Shaheen was also a series performer with Harvard College Musical Theater and Harvard Pops Orchestra, including appearances at the annual ARTS FIRST Festival, produced by OFA. In addition to performing, she served on the Executive Board of the Harvard- Radcliffe Dramatic Club (HRDC) and completed an internship at the A.R.T. Along with her

work in the arts, she was actively engaged in Harvard's Institute of Politics as a Director's Intern and Research Fellow. Prior to her time at Harvard, Shaheen founded Type E Productions and first produced and also played the title role in *The Diary of Anne Frank* with proceeds from the show going to Joslin Diabetes Center, for which she was recognized with a *Global Achievement Award*. She earned an Emmy Award as the featured actress in a public service campaign. She was also the recipient of the Kennedy Center Playwright Discovery Very Special Arts Award. Shaheen recently completed a screenplay and is developing a TV show.

**Nivi Ravi '21** is the 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 Leverett House and joint concentrator in Neuroscience and Music, **Nivi Ravi** has performed, produced, and managed a variety of productions at Harvard. Her leadership in the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum and Harvard College Opera (HCO) have been marked by lasting initiatives that have bridged the performing and visual arts communities. As president of Collegium, Ravi helped organize a recent multimedia virtual performance of Handel's *Messiah* (2021), leading efforts to incorporate visual art and interrogate the resonances of the piece in a modern context. She founded and led committees within the choir devoted to diversity, equity, and inclusion and community engagement, and organized musical exchanges in local healthcare facilities as well as in Cambridge and Boston Public Schools. As Recital Coordinator for HCO, she has collaborated with the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery at the Radcliffe Institute, producing and managing concerts such as *Cloths of Heaven* (2018), *Turbulent Tremors* (2019), and most recently, *Nevertheless, She Persisted* (2021), attended by hundreds of listeners worldwide. Throughout the past year of virtual singing, she has nurtured her artistic communities, creating spaces for students to engage in musical expression during a time filled with isolation and grief. As a classical vocalist, Ravi has performed in workshops for *Iphigenia*, a new opera by Wayne Shorter and Professor Esperanza Spalding of the Harvard Department of Music. Students observed a series of workshops as part of a course on exploratory and collaborative practices in opera, led by Spalding and Professor Carolyn Abbate. Ravi is also an active member of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and Cambridge Common Voices, a neurodiverse student choir that promotes accessible community music-making and advances the conventions of choral practice.

**Yuri-Grace Ohashi '21** and **Noah Ramos '21** are 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 Cabot House and concentrator in Psychology with a Classics secondary, **Yuri-Grace Ohashi** has been dancing for 18 years spanning many genres including classical, contemporary, ballet, pointe, jazz, tap, modern, hip hop, heels and musical theater. At Harvard, Ohashi has been involved with Expressions Dance Company, EXP, Eleganza Show, Harvard Dance Center (HDC) and the OFA in various capacities. She served as a choreographer and director for Expressions, as well as the company's first Executive Director – positions through which she helped produce six sold-out performances. Ohashi was also the youngest, and first two-time Scene Director selected in Eleganza's 25-year history. She has interned with HDC since fall 2018, helping to

coordinate programmatic and internal affairs for the Center, TDM and student organizations. Furthering her dedication to the arts and dance, Ohashi pursued a Psychology honors thesis on identity, body image and disordered eating among adolescent ballet dancers, for which Ohashi has received a 2021 Hoopes Prize nomination, as well as invitations to present on two research panels and at the International Conference on Eating Disorders.

A resident of Cabot House and concentrator in Psychology with a secondary in Computer Science, **Noah Ramos** is a dancer with a foundation in breaking and hip hop. He has choreographed and performed for a wide range of groups and shows including *EXP*, *Eleganza*, *Yardfest* and *Cultural Rhythms*. Ramos has also represented Harvard at dozens of intercollegiate and international dance competitions on the East Coast, reaching the Top 16 in events such as *RUBreak Melee* and *BreaksU*. He served as president of the Harvard Breakers, and has striven to build Harvard's dance community by organizing major dance competitions such as *Battle for Boston* and *Breakeasy*, in addition to regularly teaching dance workshops across campus. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, he produced, choreographed and edited a series of dance concept videos, accumulating thousands of views online.

**Mikaela Ritchie '21** and **Abigail Sage '21** are 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 Currier House, an English concentrator, and a committed trumpet player in Harvard's Monday Night Jazz Band, **Mikaela Ritchie** served as manager of the Harvard Jazz Band for more than two years. Throughout her tenure as manager, she acted as the student leader to the group, operating as the liaison between the director and Jazz Band musicians. In addition to advocating for band members with administrators and serving as a point person for events such as *Visitas* and guest artist residencies, she helped coordinate numerous performances: concerts featuring the Grammy Award-winning and Latin-jazz legend Chucho Valdés and saxophonist and educator Bill Pierce; a tribute concert honoring the renowned Ray Santos; three concerts with the Yale Jazz Band at Scullers Jazz Club; appearances at the annual OFA ARTS FIRST Festival with artists such as Don Braden '85; and masterclasses with award-winning trumpeter Bria Skonberg, Grammy-nominated pianist Gerald Clayton and award-winning saxophonist Camille Thurman. As a member of WHRB Harvard Radio, she hosted weekly jazz shows during which she interviewed Pierce, Thurman and Grammy Award-winning drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts and discussed on-air upcoming events with Grammy Award-nominated musician and Harvard Senior Lecturer on Music Yosvany Terry. Ritchie ran the WHRB Harvard Radio jazz department for more than a year before establishing and assuming the new position of Community and Safety Chair, in which she created a relationship between the radio membership and anti-harassment resources on Harvard's campus.

A resident of Adams House and a concentrator in History and Literature with a secondary in Theater, Dance, and Media, **Abigail Sage** is a stage manager and producer who has worked on more than 15 productions with the HRDC, A.R.T. and TDM. Sage has served on the Executive Board of the HRDC for all four years of her Harvard career, first as the Campus Liaison and later as President for multiple terms. In the summer of 2019, she was awarded the Harvard-Cambridge Summer Fellowship and worked at the Gate Theatre in London, assisting with stage management, theater administration and front-of-house operations. Throughout the pandemic, she has worked extensively with virtual theater, serving as the stage manager for BlackCAST's summer 2020 production of *R&J: An Ultramodern Fantasia* as well as a production of *Reasons to Be Pretty*. Upon graduation, Sage will be continuing her studies at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London.

**Martin Bernstein '21** and **Tony Yang '21** are recipients 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.

An affiliate of Dudley Community concentrating in History & Literature, recorder player **Martin Bernstein** has been heard with numerous ensembles across the world, in venues such as 17th-century Italian palazzos, modern art museums in Reykjavik and concert halls of New York City. Bernstein began studying recorder at age 5, first with Charles Sibirsky and later with Nina Stern. At 18, he left New York City to study at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague with Reine-Marie Verhagen and Han Tol. Bernstein holds the third prize from the 2019 Moeck/SRP International Recorder Competition, widely recognized as the world's most important competition for recorder. He has been invited to give mainstage solo recitals at some of America's leading early music concert series, including Music Before 1800 and the Amherst Early Music Festival. His other honors and awards include: first prize in Piffaro's 2013 Young Performers Competition in Philadelphia, PA; first prize in the under-22 category at the 2014 Internationale Prijs Mieke van Wedingen in Leuven, Belgium; an appearance on U.S. National Public Radio's *From the Top* program for young classical musicians in 2015; a 2016 National YoungArts gold finalist scholarship; and second prize in the 2017 international young talent search hosted by Maurice Steger and the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. Bernstein serves on the faculty at the Amherst Early Music Festival and teaches at several American festivals and workshops. He is the president of the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra and the Harvard Early Music Society.

A resident of Currier House and a concentrator in Economics, pianist **Tony Yang** is the youngest-ever laureate in the history of the Chopin Competition in Warsaw and a prizewinner at the Van Cliburn Competition. Noted by the legendary Martha Argerich as a "talent of great artistic expression, appealing temperament, and a unique sensitivity to musical nuances", Yang performs extensively worldwide, including appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Orchestre Métropolitain and Toronto Sinfonietta, as well as performances for

Her Royal Highness Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He has also been featured on many TV programs, including the *Inspiration Generation* series on Global TV, where he was selected as one of six outstanding Canadian young people. He was appointed Youth Cultural Ambassador to the city of Guangzhou, as well as Music Consultant to the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. At Harvard, he performed at President Lawrence Bacow's inauguration, in a multimedia presentation with Carissa Chen '21, combining Debussy's *Clair de Lune* with real-time painting over a large canvas. He continues to be an active part of the artistic community at Harvard, regularly performing with other musicians, including collaborations with the Bach Society Orchestra, and in classes on chamber music with the Parker Quartet and on contemporary improvisation with Vijay Iyer.

**Ruva Chigwedere '21** is the recipient of the Jonathan Levy Award. This prize recognizes the most promising undergraduate actor at the College.

A resident of Mather House and a joint concentrator in TDM and History and Literature, **Ruva Chigwedere** has performed with multiple theater groups on campus, such as Hyperion Shakespeare Company, HCO and Black Community and Student Theater (BlackCAST). Some of her favorite credits include Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* (London Academy of Dramatic Art (LAMDA)), Alana Raleigh in *God of Carnage* (BlackCAST), Clytemnestra in *Electra*, and the Lady in Purple in *For Colored Girls* (BlackCAST). She has experience in Shakespeare, contemporary acting and experimental theater, and has taken acting courses at Harvard College, LAMDA, and the SoHo Shakespeare company. Chigwedere has acted in the U.S., England, Germany and Turkey. A trained vocalist, she sang with the Kuumba Singers of Harvard College and Harvard University Choir and placed in the National Association of Teachers of Singing's Musical Theater Boston Auditions. She has recently delved into playwriting. Her play *For Daughters of Ezili; or How to Be a Black Girl and Find Love and Survive 101* was written for her senior thesis. She served as co-president of BlackCAST (2019–2020) and serves as the 2021 class representative for TDM.

**Devonne Pitts '21** is the recipient of a Council on the Arts Special Citation in Theater.

A resident of Leverett House with joint concentrations in TDM and History & Literature, **Devonne Pitts** is being recognized for work in theater. Pitts is a multidisciplinary artist who works primarily as a director/writer in theater and film and as a poet. Her theatrical directing credits include a production of Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (2019) in the Loeb Ex and *R&J: An Ultramodern Fantasia* (2020), a virtual retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* through the hybrid use of live Zoom performance and film. In addition to her work as a writer and director, Pitts has assisted undergraduate productions as a dramaturg, light designer, tech director and producer. Her performance credits include acting in four undergraduate productions (*Jogging*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *House of Several Stories* and *Absinthe*) and performing with the short-form improv comedy troupe, On Thin Ice. Pitts served as the Vice President of BlackCAST, the undergraduate theater club that uplifts black theater artists and their work, during the 2019-2020 academic year. Other administrative positions also include being a member of the executive board of *The Harvard Advocate* (2019-2020), and the historian for both HRDC (2017-18) and BlackCAST (2018-2019).

**Jonathan Castillo '21** is the 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.

**Jonathan Castillo** is a resident of Adams House concentrating in TDM with a secondary in the Comparative Study of Religion. Castillo has been nominated for the Alan Symonds Award and the Louise Donovan for his theatrical work throughout his four years at Harvard. He has a love and passion for all forms of art, especially theater. He has been involved as a director, actor, producer, technician and more. Throughout his time at Harvard, Castillo was involved in more than 20 theater productions, working in a variety of different roles and venues. He has been a board member for the HRDC for more than two years as both a Technical Liaison and Publicity Coordinator. Castillo works on art, such as paintings and short films, as well. He has been involved in the A.R.T. family show and has been working on radio plays.

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**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](http://ofa.fas.harvard.edu).