

The Chicago
Academy for the Arts

**SPRING
NEWSLETTER**

"Limits of an Office Space"
by Isabel Weiss (Visual Arts '21)

Dear Friends,

When I first emailed families about COVID-19, little did we know how dramatically our lives would change over the course of the next 12 months.

Here at The Academy, we quickly pivoted to an online program — no small feat for a community that relies on in-person interactions and training. However, we have always been innovative and resourceful, and our faculty and students embraced the challenges.

Our gala went online and featured incredible digital performances like [“What You Know”](#), a great rock tune recorded by four students, each isolated in their own house. (Seriously, watch that right now.) The annual Senior Lunch was held on Zoom, and the toasts were every bit as emotional. And, many staff and faculty and I drove more than 400 miles to hand-deliver diplomas to graduating seniors. (Check out the news coverage of the “diploma parade” in the Tribune and on [Windy City Live!](#))

Many faculty members gave up their entire summer to plan for the fall, and we resumed school in August in a “hybrid” model: Academic classes have been meeting online, and arts classes have been both online and on campus.

The results have been stunning. Since the fall, each department has produced incredible virtual events: online exhibits, concerts, recitals, plays, and festivals with a combination of pre-recorded and live material. Some have been straightforward — the Emmy Award-winning HMS media filmed the Senior-Choreographed Dance Concert (performed in an empty theatre), and we streamed the event in February. Others have required a complete re-thinking of the artform: Theatre, for example, created the original piece *Brainstorm*, designed for Zoom, and eight actors each performed in separate broadcast pods — complete with curtains, lighting, and sound — built throughout the school.

The annual AIDS Benefit was its usual success, and we are thrilled that a relatively new student-produced event — the Black Student Union’s moving Black History Month Show — has continued to gain momentum and had a large virtual audience in February.

Each production, without exception, has not only highlighted the excellence and passion that drives our students, but the spirit of our entire community. Bravo to our teachers and students!

I hope that you enjoy the stories, photographs, and news throughout this newsletter. Make sure to check out the information about *Academy Night Live!*, a major event on April 17 that will not only set a new standard for virtual productions in high schools, but will delight audiences far and wide!

As always, we are grateful for your support and goodwill.

With much gratitude,

Jason Patera
Head of School

IN THIS ISSUE

Academy Highlights

Academy Night Live!

Program Spotlight

Admissions Notes

Summer Program

Academy in the Media

Alumni Updates

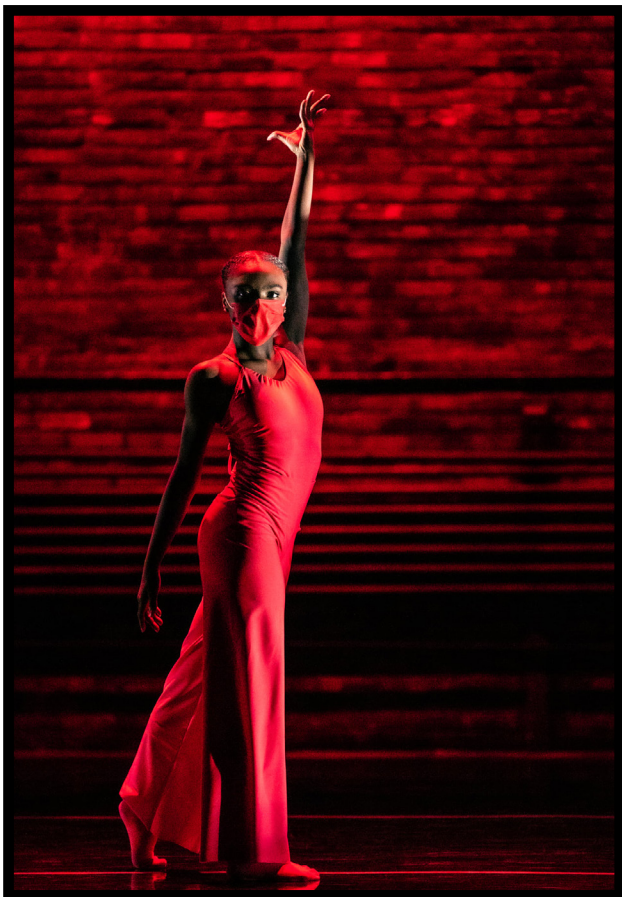
Coming up at The Academy

Follow Us

Senior-Choreographed Dance Concert

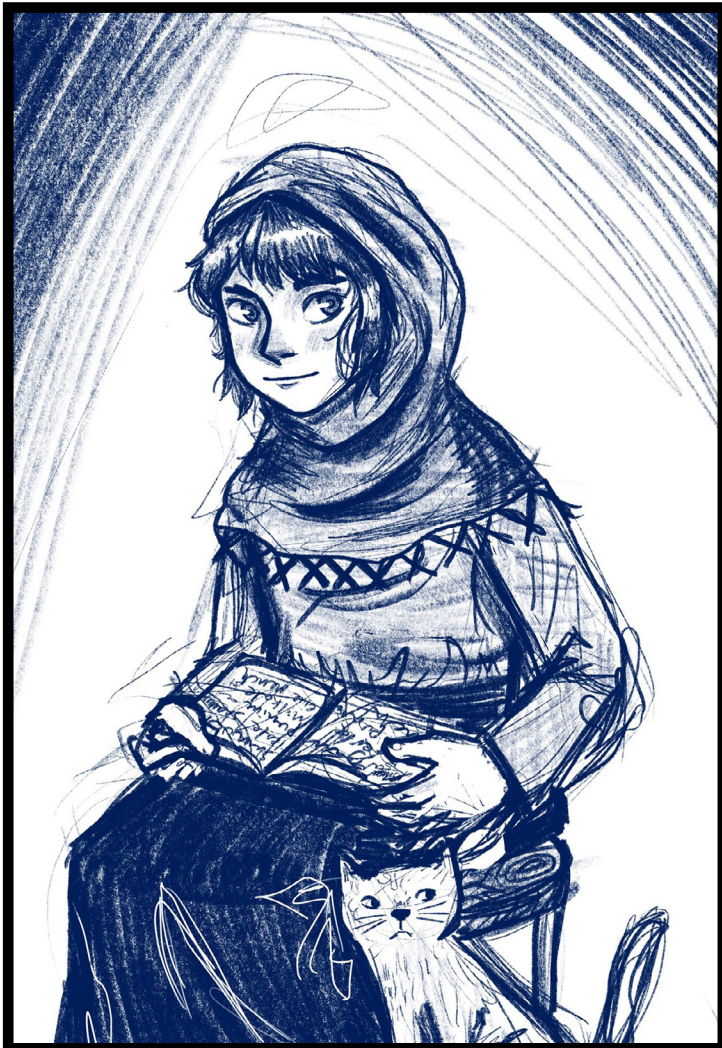


[View Show Here](#)



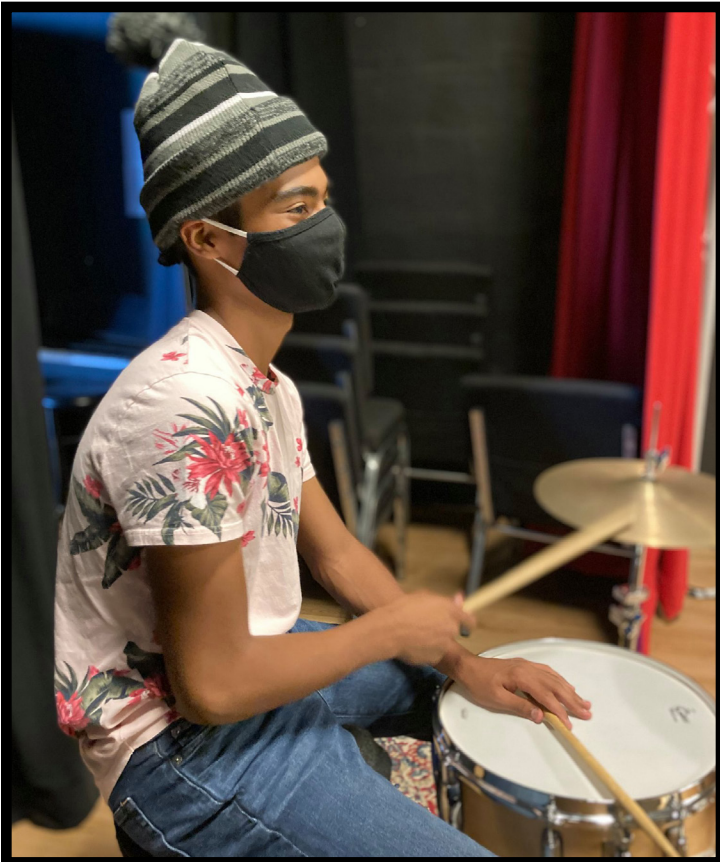
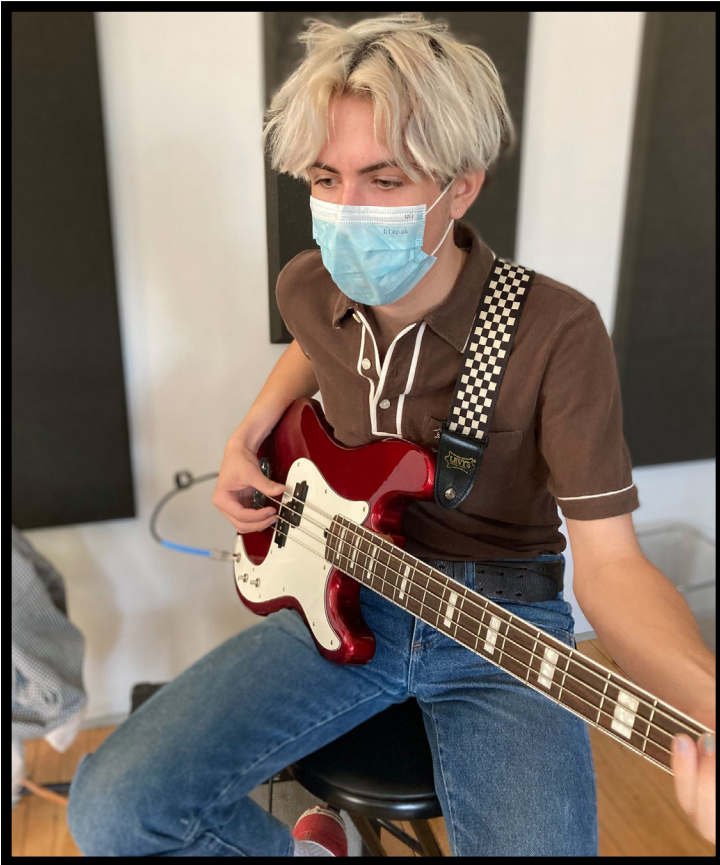
Visual Arts Winter Exhibition: Screens





[View Show Here](#)

Around The Academy





Shakespeare Festival

THE CHICAGO ACADEMY
FOR THE ARTS

THEATRE & MUSICAL THEATRE
DEPARTMENTS

10th ANNUAL

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

AS YOU LIKE IT ROMEO AND JULIET THE TAMING OF THE SHREW THE TEMPEST

JANUARY 28 - 31, 2021 • TICKETS AT CHICAGOACADEMYFORTHARTS.ORG

[View *As You Like It* Here](#)

[View *Romeo and Juliet* Here](#)

[View *The Taming Of The Shrew*
Here](#)

[View *The Tempest* Here](#)

Black History Month Show



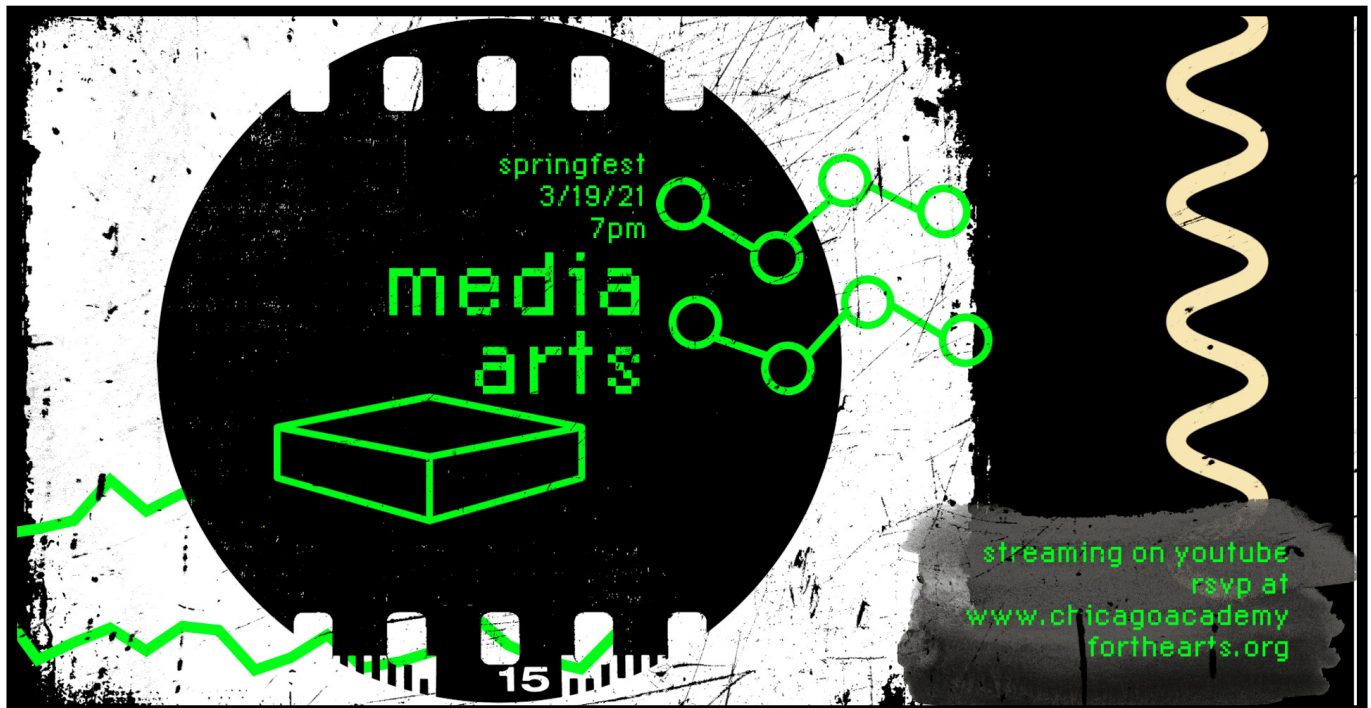
[View Show Here](#)

Women Composers Concert



[View Show Here](#)

Media Arts Spring Festival



[View Show Here](#)

Program Spotlight :

The Justin Tranter Recording Studio



Three years ago, the addition of the Justin Tranter Recording Studio to our facility made such an impact on The Academy. In the last two years, we have been able to offer our students hands-on experience working with state-of-the-art tools to produce original music and foster their abilities as artists.

This state-of-the-art recording facility was made possible thanks to a generous gift from Academy alum and hit songwriter Justin Tranter (Musical Theatre, '98). A graduate of Berklee College of Music, Justin has taken the music world by storm. With countless hits performed by today's top artists, Justin is a Grammy-nominated songwriter and has twice been named BMI's songwriter of the year. In addition to the physical facility and equipment, Justin's gift has funded The Academy's new Recording Arts and Commercial Music program led by Director Jack Murray.

These students have another avenue to develop and harness the power of their creative voices, just as Justin did at The Academy more than two decades ago. Recording classes are being taught to students across the school, opening up this amazing resource to students from departments beyond Music. Not only are Media Arts students learning music composition for their films, but one Musical Theatre senior has taken the opportunity for an independent study class in songwriting and recording. Finally, this year Music is beginning to integrate electronic music into the curriculum along with our traditionally taught jazz and classical music.

[**Read More Here**](#)

LIVE FROM CHICAGO, IT'S

ACADEMY NIGHT

LIVE

ALL-SCHOOL SHOWCASE & VIRTUAL BENEFIT!

Academy Night Live!

Saturday, April 17, 2021 • [RSVP Here](#)

Broadcast begins at 6:00 p.m. Show from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Hosted by Ben Dicke & Jessi Meliza

Have you purchased your ticket yet? We are already at 25% capacity and tickets are selling fast. Reserve your spot today and join us for an unforgettable night celebrating The Academy.

Academy Night Live! is a community-wide event featuring the live student performances of Showcase and the prize opportunities and packages of our annual benefit.

Your **sponsorship or ticket** gets you all of that, plus optional dinner and snack packages, raffle drawings, an online and live auction with amazing items, and cool swag.

Visit bit.ly/AcademyNightLive now to learn more, get your ticket, or make a donation!

Get Your Tickets Here

A Note From Admissions

The Chicago Academy for the Arts is still accepting applications for 9th through 11th grades. During rolling admission, applications will be considered based on grade and art department availability and applicants will be contacted by the Admission Office to schedule an audition on an individual basis.

The first step of the application process is to learn more about The Academy through our Virtual Events and Programs. You may also register for our Spring Saturday Program and 2021 Summer Program.

We look forward to guiding you through our process and learning more about your family and you!

Kitsana Salyphone

Director of Enrollment Management

ksalyphone@chicagoartsacademy.org

Jessie Phelan

Assistant Director of Admissions

jphelan@chicagoartsacademy.org



Spring & Summer Programs



The Academy's Summer & Saturday Programs are a unique opportunity for middle school students who are passionate about the arts. The students who participate in these programs have the opportunity to build lasting relationships and collaborate with other young artists who have the same interests. While we do not require any prior study to participate in our programs, students will be immersed in our arts-focused community and choose one discipline to study for the two weeks. The curriculum of our Summer & Saturday Programs is modeled after what our current students experience everyday and is taught by our faculty, so the students who participate get to know The Academy first-hand.

This summer we will offer a two week-long in-person Summer Program. Our programs will be split between the two weeks, students are welcome to register for one or both weeks. Week One includes our Music & Visual Arts programs (Monday, June 21 - Friday, June 25) and Week Two includes Dance, Media Arts & Musical Theatre/Theatre (Monday, June 28 - Friday, July 2). Each day begins at 10:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:00 p.m. The program culminates in a final showcase where parents are invited to view what the students have learned and accomplished throughout the program. The registration fee for one week is \$475. The registration fee for enrollment in both sessions is \$825. For more information and registration, [click here](#).

For more details about the curriculum of each of our arts programs, [please check out our website](#). If you have any questions, please contact Director of Summer and Saturday Programs Jessie Phelan:

jphelan@chicagoartsacademy.org

or

(312) 421-0202 ext. 1152



Register Here

The Academy in the Media

Jack Henning-Sepkoski (Theatre '21)
Featured in Block Club Chicago

“Ohio is one of 28 states where LGBTQ Americans are at higher risk of discrimination, according to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation and the Equality Federation Institute’s 2020 State Equality Index.

In comparison, Illinois is rated as one of 17 states working toward innovative equality, the highest category in the report. In 2017, the Illinois General Assembly passed a law allowing corrected gender markers

on birth certificates. Transgender or non-binary people in Illinois can apply to change their gender markers on their state IDs and driver’s licenses, as well.”



Jack Henning-Sepkoski (Theatre '21)
Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago

[Read Full Article Here](#)

Caleb Marcella (Music '24) on WGN



[See Full Article Here](#)

The Academy in the Media

Jason Patera on FOX Chicago



[See Full Video Here](#)

Jesse Langen on WTTW - Chicago PBS



[See Full Program Here](#)

Alumni Updates

Kimberly Jones (Musical Theatre '94)

After the success of her NAACP Image Award-nominated and New York Times best-selling novel *I'm Not Dying With You Tonight*, Kimberly Jones (MT, '94) used her platform and voice in the wake of the death of George Floyd. The viral video "How Can We Win?" was so powerful that it soon caught international attention, being shared by celebrities and news channels. She worked tirelessly last year to advocate for a better society, a better America. Jones has been named in The Root's *100 Most Influential African Americans* in 2020. Kimberly's book on *How Can We Win?* is slated to be released late 2021 and a film adaptation of *I'm Not Dying With You Tonight* is in the works.



**Click Here to Buy
Kimberly's Book,
*I'm Not Dying With
You Tonight***

Kevin Mimms (Theatre '08)

Like many of you, quarantine has meant watching a lot more TV and commercials. It seems like every other commercial we're seeing a familiar face... Jake? No, it's our very own Kevin Mimms! Kevin graduated from The Academy's Theatre department in 2008 before moving on to Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts and eventually Los Angeles to start his career. Over the last year, Kevin has been gracing our television screens in a variety of State Farm commercials, alongside celebrities like Patrick Mahomes, Aaron Rodgers, and even one with Drake that aired during the Superbowl. Most recently, Kevin was interviewed by Forbes about his skyrocketing career.



*Courtesy of Roger Kent Snider
ariety*

[**Read More Here**](#)

Coming up at The Academy . . .

APRIL

- 2: Visual Arts Department Senior Exhibition
- 17: Academy Night Live!
- 30: Visual Arts Department Spring Exhibition

MAY

- 1&2: Theatre Department Spring Production, *She Kills Monsters*
- 12: Music Department Spring Concert
- 13-16: Musical Theatre Spring Production, *Into The Woods*
- 16: Music Department Opera
- 11: Classical Vocal Concert



Follow Us!

Be sure to follow The Academy on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)!
We use the hashtags **#SmartArtistsSmartArt**, **#ArtMatters**, and **#CAArts**

