



2018  
T W E N T Y  
E I G H T  
T E E N



13TH ANNUAL  
**ARIZONA  
POETRY  
OUTLOUD**  
STATE FINALS



SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018  
**ARIZONA PBS**  
P H O E N I X  
A R I Z O N A

# Letter from the Executive Director

## Welcome to the **Thirteenth Annual 2018 Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals.**

Tonight's event is the culmination of months of participation by high school students and teachers from communities throughout the state of Arizona. Over 10,000 high school students participated in this year's program. Those of you here to witness tonight's recitations are in for a rare treat.

Many of you already know what we are about to experience. Witnessing these students recite poems of their choosing is quite amazing. Through the commitment and dedication of their teachers, students who participate in Poetry Out Loud build public speaking skills, and learn about their literary heritage.

**To the students who are here today to compete:** Congratulations on your accomplishment. What you have achieved in representing your schools and regions at the state finals is no small feat.

**To the parents and teachers who accompanied students today:** Thank you. Thank you for your commitment to instilling skills that will live with these students beyond today and beyond this program; skills that will help them compete in a 21st century workforce.

**To our partners who make the program possible:** Your dedication to serving Arizona residents and communities is remarkable. Thank you for the opportunity you've provided these students.

**To the audience:** Poetry Out Loud is one of many arts programs in our state that deliver the benefits of arts education to young people. Through these programs, students often improve their academic performance, demonstrate greater leadership and social skills, and develop advanced creative problem solving. Such programs are made possible thanks to funding from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts. If this program and others like it are important to you, your family, and your community, we encourage you to thank your state legislators and congressional representatives for their continued support.

Finally, it is with great gratitude that we thank Arizona PBS studios for hosting and filming this year's State Finals.



Jaime Dempsey, Executive Director  
Arizona Commission on the Arts

Photo by Alonso Parra





## City of Phoenix OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

MAYOR GREG STANTON



Greetings!

The vibrant and growing City of Phoenix boasts a breadth of businesses, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, arts and cultural institutions and more.

One of the many things that make our city unique is the breadth of outstanding nonprofit arts and culture organizations. These organizations serve neighborhoods and communities, provide programs and services for citizens and visitors in countless ways, and have an annual economic impact of over \$300 million. For these reasons and more, Phoenix is a fitting host for this year's *Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals*.

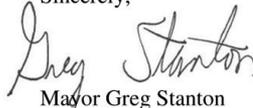
Though I cannot attend tonight, I am pleased to congratulate the teachers and school administrators who brought this program to their schools over the past months. The guidance you provide to these students through POL will stay with them as they move into their next year at school or transition to their next steps beyond high school. The self confidence and public speaking opportunity the program gives student participants is remarkable.

My gratitude and congratulations also go to the Arizona Commission on the Arts and its distinguished regional partners, for bringing this program to our state. The services you provide bring impactful arts education experiences to students of all ages, all across the state.

And to the student competitors that have worked so hard to get to the state finals competition, you are to be commended for this accomplishment. Be proud of the time you committed to deepening your understanding of a great art form, and to building a skill set that will serve you time and time again.

And finally, to participants, facilitators and audience members, welcome to Phoenix. If you have time, visit our museums, explore the public art along the Light Rail line and beyond, or see a show. Make yourself at home here in Phoenix; a city where we take great pride that the arts are embedded in community, and artists and arts educators are valued and deeply respected.

Sincerely,



Mayor Greg Stanton



[www.facebook.com/mayorstanton](http://www.facebook.com/mayorstanton)



[www.twitter.com/mayorstanton](http://www.twitter.com/mayorstanton)

[greg.stanton@phoenix.gov](mailto:greg.stanton@phoenix.gov)

[www.phoenix.gov/mayor](http://www.phoenix.gov/mayor)

A blue-tinted background image showing a group of people, likely students, sitting at tables and looking at papers, possibly participating in a poetry workshop or competition. The image is partially obscured by a red header bar at the top.

## **Recitation Schedule**

### **Welcome to the 13th Annual Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals**

Saturday, March 3, 2018

2:00 – 4:00pm

**Arizona PBS, Studio A  
Arizona State University**  
555 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix AZ 85004

**Welcome**

**Opening Remarks**

**First Round**

**Second Round**

**Guest Performance**

**Announcement of Top Finalists**

**Final Round**

**Announcement of State Champion  
and Runner-Up**

## **FOLLOW THE JOURNEY**

### **Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals to be broadcast on Arizona PBS**

Filming for the Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals was generously provided by Arizona PBS. To watch the broadcast following tonight's event, visit [www.azpbs.org](http://www.azpbs.org) for up-to-date information on program listings for analog and digital channels in your area.

### **The Arizona State Champion will compete at Poetry Out Loud National Finals on April 23–25, 2018 | Washington, DC**

Over the past 13 years, Poetry Out Loud has reached more than 3 million students and 45,000 teachers from 10,000 schools nationwide. The winner of tonight's competition will advance to the Poetry Out Loud National Finals on April 23–25, 2018 in Washington, DC, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed.

**Live Broadcast.** The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will be webcast live. For broadcast information, visit [www.poetryoutloud.org/competition/national-finals](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/competition/national-finals).

**Viewing Party.** If you want to bring the poetry celebration to your classroom, home, library, or community center with a viewing party, learn more about the art of poetry, and cheer on the state champion, visit [www.arts.gov/partnerships/poetry-out-loud](http://www.arts.gov/partnerships/poetry-out-loud) for information on how to register, host, and promote your viewing party.

## **FOLLOW POETRY OUT LOUD ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Facebook** @azartscommission

**Twitter** @azartscomm @PoetryOutLoud @NEAarts

**Instagram** @azartscomm @NEAarts

**Use #POL18 #iampetryoutloud**

## HOST

Tomás Stanton, Phonetic Spit

## JUDGES



### **Dr. Rosemarie Dombrowski**

Appointed in December 2016, Dombrowski is the inaugural Poet Laureate of Phoenix, AZ. She is the founder of *merge* poetry journal and rinky dink press, an editor for *Four Chambers* journal and press, and the co-founder and host of the Phoenix Poetry Series. She is a Senior Lecturer at Arizona State University where she teaches courses on the poetics of street art, women's literature, and creative ethnography.



### **Monique Espinoza**

Espinoza is a poet, performer and writer based out of Phoenix, Arizona. She has written poetry and articles for various local websites and recently began performing at open mics. She has found a home at WordPlay Cafe, performing monthly at The Nile. Espinoza hopes to continue her journey as a writer by publishing a collection of her work, as well as mentoring youth and continuing to compete.



### **Hunter Hazelton**

Hazelton is a sophomore studying English Secondary Education and creative writing at Northern Arizona University. After three years of competing in Poetry Out Loud, he championed Arizona at the 2016 National Finals and has returned each year to assist with the state program. His work has been featured in the Best Arizona Teen Writing of 2016 and the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition.



### **Caress Russell**

Lady Caress has dedicated her life to the art of communication as both a poet and public speaker. She has presented at Upward Bound, YMCA, Iowa's National Night, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX. She has toured colleges and universities with her solo show and was awarded 2017 Campus Activities Spoken Word Artist of the Year. She has appeared on BET at the 365 Black Awards and Season 4 of "Verses and Flow" on TvOne.



### **Dr. Laura Tohe**

Dr. Tohe is Diné. She holds a PhD in Indigenous American Literature and is a librettist and an award-winning poet. She wrote a commissioned libretto, *Enemy Slayer, A Navajo Oratorio*, for the Phoenix Symphony. She is currently writing a libretto to be produced in Europe in 2019. She is Professor with Distinction in Indigenous Literature at Arizona State University, and is the Navajo Nation Poet Laureate for 2015-2019.

## STUDENT FINALISTS



### **Lily Sklar, The Gregory School, Tucson**

Lily Sklar, a senior at The Gregory School, is thrilled to compete for the second year. A self-proclaimed connoisseur of dinosaur chicken nuggets and jazz hands, she believes all the world is her stage. She enjoys pennywhistles, long walks on the beach, pina-coladas, and getting caught in the rain.

"Ode to the Electric Fish that Eat Only the Tails of Other Electric Fish" by T. Lux; "Backdrop addresses cowboy" by Margaret Atwood; "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by W.B. Yeats



### **Carly Cairns, Herberger Young Scholars Academy, Phoenix**

Carly Cairns is an IGCSE level scholar at Herberger Young Scholars Academy. She is thrilled to advance to the State Finals. Her interests are the arts and sciences, and medicine--specifically world health. She wishes warm regards to her fellow finalists and thanks her mother for inspiration and encouragement, and Ms. Waring for providing the opportunity to compete.

"Mrs. Caldera's House of Things" by Gregory Djanikian; "The Children of the Poor" by Gwendolyn Brooks; "Ode" by Arthur O'Shaughnessy



### **Sophie Weinzinger, Coconino High School, Flagstaff**

Sophie Weinzinger is a senior at Coconino High School, competing in her third year of Poetry Out Loud. When not participating in Flagstaff's arts, she can be found at Coconino Community College working on her accounting certificate or downtown with a chai and a good book.

"Hysteria" by Dioniso D. Martinez; "Tarantulas on the Lifebuoy" by Thomas Lux; "Dirge in the Woods" by George Meredith



### **Sylvia Dale, Ganado High School, Ganado**

Sylvia Dale is from Mexican Water, but lives in Kinlichee. She is a sophomore at Ganado High School. She loves reading, writing and reciting poetry. She enjoys being able to put her feelings and emotions into the poetry for her audience.

"When You Are Old" by William Butler Yeats; "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou; "I Find No Peace" by Sir Thomas Wyatt



### **Braden Steiner, Sonoran Science Academy, Tucson**

Braden Steiner has been interested in literature ever since he could read. This is his second year with Poetry Out Loud, and his first time as a finalist. Poetry Out Loud represents a new form of performance for him--he is inspired to write his own poetry and has discovered a love of performing, including poetry and other forms of acting.



Victoria Aiken, North High School, Phoenix

Victoria Aiken is a senior at North High School. She loves cats and doing her natural hair. She intends on majoring in American Literature and Black Studies at Widener University.

"to the notebook kid" by Eve L. Ewing; "Friendship After Love" by Ella Wheeler Cox; "The Healing Improvisation of Hair" by Jay Wright



Emma Collier, Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy, Flagstaff

Emma Collier is a senior at Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (FALA). This is her second year competing in Poetry Out Loud. She has been a community theatre actor for six years and is currently working on an original piece, *On Thinking*. She thanks FALA and Allison Gruber for the opportunities and their unrelenting support of the arts.

"One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop; "Early Elegy: Headmistress" by Claudia Emerson; "Love Armed" by Aphra Behn



Antonio Juarez, Willow Canyon High School, Surprise

Antonio Juarez has been involved in the performing arts throughout his high school career. He was vice president of the Willow Canyon Show Choir and has had lead roles in both musical and non-musical plays. His favorite performances include *All Shook Up* and *Game of Tiaras*. He loves poetry, music, dance, and getting caught in the rain.

"Spanglish" by Tato Laviera; "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold; "That Everything's Inevitable" by Katy Lederer



Paul Cassidy, Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix

Paul Cassidy is a junior at Brophy College Preparatory. He is very excited to represent his school among the other talented poets in the state. He is a second-degree black belt in Taekwon-do, and enjoys drawing, filming and editing videos, and acting. He is very grateful to his parents and Austin Pidgeon for their support.

"Slant" by Suji Kwock Kim; "Propositions" by Stephen Dunn; "Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments" by William Shakespeare



John Oboyski, St. Augustine Catholic High School, Tucson

John Oboyski is a sophomore at St. Augustine Catholic High School. One of his favorite activities is acting; his favorite subjects are Theater and English. He always tries to keep a positive attitude, make others smile, and is as courteous as possible.

"Nocturne" by Louise Glück; "Ode" by Arthur O'Shaughnessy; "Domestic Situation" by Ernest Hilbert

# About Poetry Out Loud

**Poetry Out Loud** is a national poetry recitation contest for high school students that begins in the classroom and culminates with the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington D.C. By inviting the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theatre into the English class, Poetry Out Loud encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry by studying, memorizing, and performing some of the most influential and timeless poems of the English language. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

A program of the **National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation**, Poetry Out Loud is delivered in all 50 states and three territories through partnerships with the State Arts Agencies. The Arizona Poetry Out Loud program is managed and supported by the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

Participation in Arizona Poetry Out Loud continues to grow with over 10,000 students in communities throughout the state participating in the program each year.

School finalists compete at one of three regional competitions: Central, Northern and Southern. Finalists will be selected at each regional competition to advance to the State Finals where they will compete for the title of **Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Champion**. The winner of the 2018 Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finals will receive \$200 and the winner's school library will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second place finalist will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library.

In addition, the Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Champion will receive an all-expenses-paid trip (with a chaperone) to compete at the National Finals in Washington D.C., April 23-25, 2018. The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

## Contest Structure and Evaluation Criteria.

2018 Arizona Poetry Out Loud includes three levels of competition: School Finals, Regional Competitions and the State Finals.

**School Finals.** Each participating high school held a school contest at the end of their Poetry Out Loud unit or program. The top scoring students from each school final advanced to their region's competition.

**Regional Competitions.** Students competed at three regional competitions: Central, Northern, and Southern. At each regional competition, students recited two to three poems; the scores of these poems were tallied and the students with the highest scores advanced to the state finals.

**State Finals.** Students—from each region—will perform recitations in tonight's event. Each student will recite two poems, one in each of the first two rounds. The scores of these two recitations will be tallied and the four students with the highest scores will recite a third poem in a final round of recitations. The score of the third poem will be added to each of the students' first set of scores. The highest scoring student will be named the Arizona State Champion; the second highest scoring student, the First Place Runner-up.

Scoring in Poetry Out Loud is cumulative between judges' scores and from round to round, however scores from previous competitions do not carry over to subsequent contests.

Each student will be evaluated on a scale from one (weak) to six (outstanding) using the following criteria: **Physical Presence, Voice and Articulation, Dramatic Appropriateness, Evidence of Understanding and Overall Performance**. Additionally, a maximum of eight points will be assigned for accuracy.

For more information on Poetry Out Loud, visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) or [www.azarts.gov/pol](http://www.azarts.gov/pol).

# Reflections of a State Champion

For Arizona's 2015 Poetry Out Loud state champion **Zaskia Villa**, the road to the National Finals got off to a bumpy start:

"My first time competing was my freshman year, but I didn't do very well in the classroom competition because I had friends in the class that were making me laugh throughout my poem."

Three years later, as a senior at Nogales High School, Villa travelled to Washington, D.C., to represent Arizona at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals competition.

"Poetry Out Loud has given me an opportunity to see a new part of the world and its people, and create memories that I'll never forget."

For Villa, hearing her fellow competitors recite is the best part of participating in the program.

"The aspect I've loved the most about Poetry Out Loud is getting to meet new people and to listen to them recite. It's incredible to hear the way others conceive and express poems."

She wasn't always such a fan of poetry recitation, though.

"I always had an idea of what poetry recitation was like: rather monotone, and maybe quite dull, like an audiobook," she admits. "My views changed when I was first exposed to slam poetry by my freshman English teacher, Ms. Zinke. There was something in the levels and speeds of the voices in the slam videos that I was captured by in an instant."

In Poetry Out Loud, Villa found an opportunity to personally explore the craft of poetry recitation.

"The art of altering a voice to trigger different feelings was fascinating to me, so when Ms. Zinke told my class about the Poetry Out Loud competition, I was mostly attracted by the opportunity to experiment with my voice and different techniques to enhance the words in my chosen poems."

Thanks to the humorous distractions of her classmates, Villa didn't advance past the classroom level her first year participating in Poetry Out Loud, but she applied greater focus her junior



year and placed second in the school competition.

Her ultimate success in the program was all the more impressive considering she didn't have a coach. She practiced by writing her poems out long-hand and taking every opportunity to recite.

"I've recited my poems for my English class, at school board meetings, and for the community."

Now, as a sophomore at University of Arizona pursuing concurrent degrees in Marketing and Film and Television, Villa continues to find strength and inspiration in her Poetry Out Loud experience.

"I was always interested in the performing arts, singing, dancing, and acting, but I had never realized my love for speaking until my involvement with Poetry Out Loud. It was somewhere between the voice dynamics and the silent, listening eyes during practice recitations that I fell in love with sharing my voice with others and being able to make a connection with them, at the same time."

"I feel so lucky to have been a part of Poetry Out Loud. Although the experience is over, I will keep the memory alive in my heart forever."

# Special Thanks

The Arizona Commission on the Arts would like to give special thanks to the following **2018 Arizona Poetry Out Loud** national and regional partners and venue.



## NATIONAL PARTNERS

The **National Endowment for the Arts** is an independent federal agency that funds, promotes, and strengthens the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation.



**The Poetry Foundation**, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience.



## REGIONAL PARTNERS

**Central Region: Phonetic Spit.** Through the intersections of Literary Arts, Youth Development, and Social Justice programs, Phonetic Spit creates Brave Space to empower young and emerging adults to find, develop and publicly present their voices as agents of societal change.



**Southern Region: The University of Arizona Poetry Center** is a leading literary institution and a living archive of poetry. As a premier example of a thriving public/private partnership, the Poetry Center connects the University of Arizona with the greater literary community in Tucson and beyond.



**Northern Region: William Cordeiro** is a published poet and writer, and Honors College Professor at **Northern Arizona University (NAU)**. NAU is a public university whose academic programs, research, public service, and creative endeavors enrich lives and create opportunities in Arizona and beyond.



## STATE FINALS HOST

**Arizona PBS** specializes in the education of children, in-depth news and public affairs, lifelong learning, and the celebration of arts and culture—utilizing the power of noncommercial television, the Internet, educational outreach services, and community-based initiatives.



## ABOUT THE ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

One of 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States, the **Arizona Commission on the Arts** is a 51-year-old agency of the State of Arizona and a leading force in the creative and professional development of Arizona's arts sector. Through robust programs, research initiatives and strategic grantmaking, the Arts Commission catalyzes arts-based partnerships that strengthen Arizona communities through the arts.

**We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.**

### Front Cover Photo Credits:

2016 State Champion Hunter Hazelton, Betty Fairfax High School, Laveen. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2012 State Champion, Joshua Furtado, Tucson Magnet High School, Tucson. 2013 State Champion, Cassandra Valadez, Sunnyside High School, Tucson. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2011 State Champion Steffi McNerney, St. Gregory College Preparatory High School, Tucson. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2014 State Champion, Matthew Kaplan, Tesseract School, Phoenix. (Photo by Jeff Smith.) 2015 State Champion Zaskia Villa, Nogales High School, Nogales. (Photo by Alonso Parra.)



For more information on Poetry Out Loud,  
visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) or [www.azarts.gov/pol](http://www.azarts.gov/pol).