

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
and
POETRY FOUNDATION
present



2014 NATIONAL FINALS

April 29–30

Lisner Auditorium
The George Washington
University
Washington, DC



The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.



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. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative partnerships, prizes, and programs.

MID ATLANTIC
ARTS FOUNDATION



Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation develops partnerships and programs that reinforce artists' capacity to create and present work, advance access to and participation in the arts, and promote a more sustainable arts ecology.

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the State and Jurisdictional Arts Agencies of the United States.



The Poetry Out Loud National Finals are webcast live at arts.gov.

[f](#) [t](#) Follow the Finals on Twitter at #POL14 and like us on Facebook at

Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest.

Welcome to our nation's capital and the final competition of the 2014 Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest.

Some 365,000 students representing more than 2,300 schools participated in Poetry Out Loud this year, and 53 have reached the National Finals—one from every state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Great courage and hard work brought them here, and we congratulate all the state champions on their success. Of course, they could not have done it alone, so we also offer an enthusiastic round of applause for the family, friends, teachers, and state arts agency staff and partners who have inspired and supported them along the way.

Every audience member—whether with us in person or watching the webcast from home or following us on Twitter at #POL14—will witness how a poem is transformed when taken off the page and spoken aloud. These students have spent hours studying the intricacies of each poem and brought their own experiences to the interpretation and delivery. It is their task to give the poem back to the American people, to make it new. You will likely hear a few poems recited more than once, so consider what each unique perspective reveals.

Poetry is an ancient art that not only survives but thrives in our popular culture because of its magical simplicity, its allegiance to imagination and invention, and its ability to distill human thought and feeling into a few pure lines of text. As poet James Longenbach recently observed about listening and inspiration, “The greatest poems we will write already exist, and the work of a lifetime is to recognize them as our own.” Poetry recitation strengthens our common story by circulating wisdom and connecting us to the past and to one another.

A warm welcome to all of our guests, and best of luck to our contestants.



Joan Shigekawa
Acting Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts



Photo courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts



Robert Polito
President
Poetry Foundation



Photo courtesy of the Poetry Foundation

SEMIFINALS PROGRAM

April 29

Semifinal One

9:00 am

Semifinal Two

1:00 pm

Semifinal Three

5:00 pm



Welcome and Introductions

Eleanor Billington

Hosts

Stephen F. Schmidt

Josephine Reed

First Round

Second Round

Intermission

Announcement of Regional Finalists

Top eight competitors in each semifinal
will recite a third poem

Third Round

Awards Presentation

Announcement of National Finalists

Top three competitors in each semifinal
will advance to the National Finals

7:00 pm

FINALS PROGRAM

April 30

Welcome
Neda Ulaby

Roll Call of State Champions

Opening Remarks
Patrice Walker Powell, Deputy Chairman
for Programs and Partnerships
National Endowment for the Arts

First Round

Remarks
Stephen Young, Program Director
Poetry Foundation

Second Round

Announcement of Three Finalists

Final Round

Performance
Meklit

Announcement of
Poetry Out Loud
National Champion

Host and Judges

Host

Neda Ulaby is a reporter on arts, entertainment, and cultural trends for National Public Radio's Arts Desk. Ulaby's radio and online stories reflect political and economic realities, cultural issues, and artistic adventurousness. She has earned multiple fellowships at the Getty Arts Journalism Program at USC Annenberg as well as a fellowship at the Knight Center for Specialized Journalism to study youth culture. In addition, her weekly podcast of NPR's best arts stories, *Culturetopia*, won a Gracie Award from the Alliance for Women in Media Foundation. Prior to her position at NPR, Ulaby worked as managing editor of Chicago's *Windy City Times* and co-hosted the program *What's Coming Out at the Movies*. Her film reviews and academic articles have been published across the country and internationally. A former doctoral student in English literature, Ulaby worked as an intern for the features desk of the *Topeka Capital-Journal* after graduating from Bryn Mawr College.

Judges

Lee Briccetti is the executive director of Poets House, a national poetry archive and meeting place for poets and poetry readers. Under her leadership, Poets House developed the Poets House Showcase, an annual exhibit of new poetry books, as well as Poetry in The Branches, a national outreach program that assists public libraries throughout the country in providing poetry services. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and her first book of poetry, *Day Mark*, was published in 2005 by Four Way Books. Briccetti is the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Award for Poetry and a Poetry Fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

Tope Folarin is the recipient of writing fellowships from the Institute for Policy Studies and *Callaloo*, the premier journal of arts, letters, and cultures of the African Diaspora. He won the 2013 Caine Prize for African Writing with his short story "Miracle." Folarin was educated at Morehouse College and the University of Oxford, where he earned two master's degrees as a Rhodes Scholar. He serves on the board of the Hurston/Wright Foundation and is currently writer-in-residence at the Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice at Georgetown University.

Valerie Martínez is a poet, translator, teacher, playwright, and collaborative artist. Her most recent book of poetry, *Each and Her* (winner of the 2011 Arizona Book Award), was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, among many other prestigious awards. Martínez's poetry, translations, and essays have appeared widely in literary magazines, including *American Poetry Review*, *AGNI*, *Parnassus*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *The Colorado Review*. She is executive director and core artist with Littleglobe, an artist-run nonprofit that collaborates with communities in the creation of public art and performance. Martínez was the Poet Laureate for the City of Santa Fe from 2008 to 2010 and most recently was a visiting professor of English at the University of Miami.

Ming Di is the author of six collections of original poetry in Chinese and one original collection in English translation, *River Merchant's Wife* (Marick Press, 2012). She also translates poetry and literary essays from English into Chinese with two volumes published in Taiwan and two forthcoming in China. She is the editor and co-translator of *New Cathay—Contemporary Chinese Poetry* (Tupelo Press, 2013). Ming Di is the co-founder and editor of *Poetry East West*, a Chinese-English bilingual magazine published in China and the U.S., and she is a recipient of the Henry Luce Foundation Chinese Poetry and Translation Fellowship at Vermont Studio Center.

Chris Sarandon is a stage, film, and television actor known to many for his role as Prince Humperdinck in *The Princess Bride*. He was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his film debut performance as Leon in Sidney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon*. In addition to film, Sarandon has made numerous appearances on television, including roles on *The Practice* and *StarTrek: Deep Space Nine*. He has also performed on Broadway, most recently as Comte de Guiche in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Sarandon serves on the Advisory Board for the Greenbrier Valley Theatre in Lewisburg, West Virginia.

SEMIFINALS

Hosts and Judges

Hosts

Josephine Reed is the media producer for the Public Affairs office at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). She produces and hosts the NEA's weekly podcast, *Art Works*, a program that features interviews with artists and creative thinkers. Before coming to the NEA, she directed XM Satellite Radio's book and contemporary theater channel and hosted the program *Writers on Writing*. In partnership with the NEA, she also created the series, *The Big Read on XM*. Passionate about language, she has interviewed writers of all genres throughout her career, including novelists, historians, playwrights, and poets.

Stephen F. Schmidt has been a professional actor for more than 30 years and has lived and worked in New York, Los Angeles, and for the past 25 years, in the DC-Baltimore area. He is also a teaching artist through Ford's Theatre and for the past six years has helped conduct a course called "Oratory in American Culture" at Central High School in Prince George's County as well as Distance Learning with schools in Arizona, Idaho, and Colorado. He just closed *Violet* at Ford's and will be performing in *One Destiny* (a two-man show about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln) at Ford's this spring. He can also be seen in the third episode of the latest season of Netflix's *House of Cards* as Senator Abner.

Judges

Dan Brady is the poetry editor of *Barrelhouse* magazine, a bi-annual print journal featuring poetry, interviews, and essays, and the former editor of *American Poet*, the journal of the Academy of American Poets. His most recent chapbook is *Cabin Fever/Fossil Record* (Flying Guillotine Press, 2014). Brady's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Artifice*, *Big Lucks*, *BlazeVox*, *Dark Sky*, *Gargoyle*, *H_NGM_N*, and *Shampoo*, among others.

Robert Casper is the head of the Poetry and Literature Center at the Library of Congress. He previously worked at the Poetry Society of America and the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. Casper was the founding publisher of the literary magazine *jubilat*, which has been featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. He served on the Brooklyn Borough President's Literary Council and as a juror for the inaugural National Student Poets Program.

Allison Hedge Coke is the author of several volumes of poetry, including *Blood Run* (Salt Publishing, 2006) and *Off-Season City Pipe* (Coffee House Press, 2005). She has worked as a mentor and teacher with Native Americans and at-risk youth and was named Mentor of the Year in 2001 by the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers. Hedge Coke is currently the visiting artist-writer at the University of Central Oklahoma and has poetry collections forthcoming from MadHat Press and Coffee House Press.

Teri Cross Davis is the poetry and lectures coordinator at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Ford Foundation and Cave Canem. Cross Davis's poems have been published in many anthologies, including *Bum Rush the Page: a Def Poetry Jam*, *Gathering Ground: A Reader Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*, and *Poetic Voices Without Borders 2*.

Philippa Hughes founded the Pink Line Project, a calendar of all things cool and creative in DC, and writes a widely read blog highlighting the best of the DC art scene. Hughes created the Pink Line Project to inspire creative thinking in everyone, to build community, and to open portals to art and culture for the curious. She hopes to help both residents and visitors see beyond the institutions and politics of DC and view the city as being filled with amazing people doing amazingly creative things using art, technology, and good old-fashioned ingenuity.

Dorothea Lasky is the author of three full-length collections of poetry published with Wave Books: *AWE* (2007), *Black Life* (2010), and *Thunderbird* (2012). Her poems have appeared in a number of prominent publications, including *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Boston Review*, and *American Poetry Review*. Lasky is co-editor of *Open the Door: How to Excite Young People About Poetry* (McSweeney's, 2013). She was awarded a Bagley Wright Fellowship in 2013 and is currently an assistant professor of poetry at Columbia University's School of the Arts in New York City.

Celeste Mendoza is co-founder and co-director of CantoMundo, a master writers' workshop and retreat for Latina/o poets located in Austin, Texas. Mendoza's chapbook, *Cande te estoy llamando*, won the Poesia Tejana Prize in 1999, and her first full-length poetry manuscript, *Beneath the Halo*, was published in September 2013 by Wings Press. She is also a performer and playwright, and her work has been produced in Austin and San Antonio. Mendoza is currently a writer-in-residence at Hedgebrook in Seattle and is at work on her second volume of poetry.

Roger Reeves's poems have appeared in journals such as *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *American Poetry Review*, and *Tin House*, among others. Copper Canyon Press published his first poetry collection, *King Me*, in 2013. He is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including a Ruth Lilly Fellowship, a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and two Cave Canem Fellowships. Reeves is currently an assistant professor of poetry at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Dan Vera is the co-founder of VRZHU Press, the publisher of Souvenir Spoon Books, and the managing editor of the journal *White Crane*. He is the author of *Speaking Wiri Wiri* (Red Hen Press, 2013), winner of the Letras Latinas/Red Hen Poetry Prize. Vera's poetry has been featured in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Notre Dame Review*, and *Divining Divas: A Hundred Gay Men on Their Muses*, among others. He has served on the boards of Split This Rock and Rainbow History Project.

2014 State Champions

Alabama

Khadijah Thompson

Bob Jones High School

Alaska

Maeva Ordaz

West Anchorage High School

Arizona

Matthew Kaplan

Tesseract School

Arkansas

Jalen A. Bell

Bell Academy Homeschool

California

Shayna Maci Warner

Marin School of the Arts at Novato High School

Colorado

Alice Kilduff

Denver School of the Arts

Connecticut

Michaella Toledo

Mercy High School

Delaware

Kathleen Becker

Red Lion Christian Academy

District of Columbia

Kayla Forde

Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Florida

Emily Rodriguez

Academy of the Holy Names

Georgia

Ashlie Robertson

Oconee County High School

Hawaii

Brady Jernigan

Homeschooled

Idaho

Savina Magdalena Barini

Xavier Charter School

Illinois

Monica Labelle

Wheaton Warrenville South High School

Indiana

Emma Libersky

Plymouth High School

Iowa

Josephine R. Everett

Sioux City West High

Kansas

Leanne Chun

Olathe South High School

Kentucky

Taryn Syck

Pike County Central High School

Louisiana

BreAnna LaVerne Smith

Baton Rouge Magnet High School

Maine

Charlotte Feinberg

Gorham High School

Maryland

Akash Menon

Urbana High School

Massachusetts

Courtney Stewart

Springfield Central High School

Michigan

Matthew Webb

Cass Technical High School

Minnesota

Faizah Abubakar

Ubah Medical Academy

Mississippi

Joy Cariño

Starkville High School

Missouri

Thomas K. Fields

St. Louis University High School

Montana

Sowmya Sudhakar

Butte High School

Nebraska

Amanda M. Pohlman

Skutt Catholic High School

Nevada

Christian Schunke

Yerington High School

New Hampshire

Hannah Burke

Jesse Remington High School

New Jersey

Natasha Simone Vargas

Lawrence High School

New Mexico

Zoe Webb-Sagarin

Bosque School

New York

Schuyler Iona Press

Professional Performing Arts School

North Carolina

Casey Ryan Goggin

Pinecrest High School

North Dakota

Julia Johnson

Shanley High School

Ohio

Lake Wilburn

Centennial High School

Oklahoma

Edson Alvarado

Bethany High School

Oregon

Roselynn Reyes

The Center for Advanced Learning

Pennsylvania

Elliot Davidson

Lewisburg Area High School

Puerto Rico

Zoryán Rodríguez Feliciano

Sergio Ramírez de Arellano-Hostos Regional Bilingual Secondary School

Rhode Island

Yesenia Rego

Barrington Christian Academy

South Carolina

Nicole Sadek

Charleston County School of the Arts

South Dakota

Shivalo Soldier Wolf

Little Wound High School

Tennessee

Anita Norman

Arlington High School

Texas

Kristina L. Watkins

Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design

United States Virgin Islands

Angelique J.P. Flemming

St. Croix Central High School

Utah

Ashlei Havili

American Fork High School

Vermont

Samuel Boudreau

Bellows Free Academy

Virginia

Isabelle Andrews

St. Catherine's School

Washington

Elizabeth Mo

Kamiakin High School

West Virginia

Austin Gage

Wheeling Park High School

Wisconsin

Anna Alicia Wolfs

Arrowhead Union High School

Wyoming

Sara Ellingrod

Arvada-Clearmont High School

Out of more than 365,000 contestants in the 2014 Poetry Out Loud Recitation Contest, these are the 53 State Champions from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Congratulations to all!

April 29
9:00 am

Semifinal One

Connecticut

Michaella Toledo

“Self-Inquiry Before the Job Interview” by Gary Soto
“I Am the People, the Mob” by Carl Sandburg

Delaware

Kathleen Becker

“Sestina: Like” by A.E. Stallings
“Channel Firing” by Thomas Hardy

District of Columbia

Kayla Forde

“For the young who want to” by Marge Piercy
“On Monsieur’s Departure” by Queen Elizabeth I

Maine

Charlotte Feinberg

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos
“Monet Refuses the Operation” by Lisel Mueller

Maryland

Akash Menon

“The Fair Singer” by Andrew Marvell
“A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road
Unknown” by Walt Whitman

Massachusetts

Courtney Stewart

“Monet Refuses the Operation” by Lisel Mueller
“Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night”
by Walt Whitman

New Hampshire

Hannah Burke

“It Isn’t Me” by James Lasdun
“In the Desert” by Stephen Crane

New Jersey

Natasha Simone Vargas

“Ecology” by Jack Collom
“A Locked House” by W.D. Snodgrass

New York

Schuyler Iona Press

“Contraction” by Ravi Shankar
“An Autumn Sunset” by Edith Wharton

North Carolina

Casey Ryan Goggin

“The Bad Old Days” by Kenneth Rexroth

“Chorus Sacerdotum” by Fulke Greville

Ohio

Lake Wilburn

“Double Dutch” by Gregory Pardlo

“When You Are Old” by William Butler Yeats

Pennsylvania

Elliot Davidson

“Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)”

by Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Rhode Island

Yesenia Rego

“Friendship After Love” by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

“Sestina: Like” by A.E. Stallings

South Carolina

Nicole Sadek

“The Hospital Window” by James L. Dickey

“To Live with a Landscape” by Constance Urdang

United States Virgin Islands

Angelique J.P. Flemming

“Romance” by Claude McKay

“On Quitting” by Edgar Albert Guest

Vermont

Samuel Boudreau

“Requests for Toy Piano” by Tony Hoagland

“The Empty Dance Shoes” by Cornelius Eady

Virginia

Isabelle Andrews

“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” by
Sir Walter Raleigh

“The Poet at Seventeen” by Larry Levis

West Virginia

Austin Gage

“I Find No Peace” by Thomas Wyatt

“Strange Meeting” by Wilfred Owen

April 29
1:00 pm

Semifinal Two

Alabama

Khadijah Thompson

“Sestina: Like” by A.E. Stallings
“Numbers” by Mary Cornish

Arkansas

Jalen A. Bell

“Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night”
by Walt Whitman
“Onions” by William Matthews

Florida

Emily Rodriguez

“The Empty Dance Shoes” by Cornelius Eady
“Memory As a Hearing Aid” by Tony Hoagland

Georgia

Ashlie Robertson

“Monet Refuses the Operation” by Lisel Mueller
“On Monsieur’s Departure” by Queen Elizabeth I

Illinois

Monica Labelle

“Ovation” by Carol Muske-Dukes
“Echo” by Christina Rossetti

Indiana

Emma Libersky

“Mending Wall” by Robert Frost
“To Autumn” by John Keats

Iowa

Josephine R. Everett

“Desert” by Josephine Miles
“Entirely” by Louis MacNeice

Kansas

Leanne Chun

“God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins
“Eagle Plain” by Robert Francis

Kentucky

Taryn Syck

“Ah! Why, Because the Dazzling Sun” by
Emily Jane Brontë
“The Great Blue Heron” by Carolyn Kizer

Louisiana

BreAnna LaVerne Smith

“At the New Year” by Kenneth Patchen

“Solitude” by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Michigan

Matthew Webb

“Echo” by Christina Rossetti

“Or,” by Thomas Sayers Ellis

Mississippi

Joy Cariño

“The Greatest Grandeur” by Pattiann Rogers

“Monet Refuses the Operation” by Lisel Mueller

Missouri

Thomas K. Fields

“Sestina: Like” by A.E. Stallings

“The Canonization” by John Donne

Nebraska

Amanda M. Pohlman

“Zacuanpapalotls” by Brenda Cárdenas

“Let the Light Enter” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Oklahoma

Edson Alvarado

“Zacuanpapalotls” by Brenda Cárdenas

“Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night” by
Walt Whitman

Puerto Rico

Zoryán Rodríguez Feliciano

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

“A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road
Unknown” by Walt Whitman

Tennessee

Anita Norman

“The Layers” by Stanley Kunitz

“Mourning Poem for the Queen of Sunday”
by Robert E. Hayden

Wisconsin

Anna Alicia Wolfs

“Mrs. Caldera’s House of Things” by Gregory Djanikian

“Virtuosi” by Lisel Mueller

April 29
5:00 pm

Semifinal Three

Alaska

Maeva Ordaz

“Zacuanpapalotls” by Brenda Cárdenas

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” by John Keats

Arizona

Matthew Kaplan

“Candles” by Carl Dennis

“It Isn’t Me” by James Lasdun

California

Shayna Maci Warner

“Ode for the American Dead in Asia” by Thomas McGrath

“On Monsieur’s Departure” by Queen Elizabeth I

Colorado

Alice Kilduff

“My Brother, the Artist, at Seven” by Philip Levine

“God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Hawaii

Brady Jernigan

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

“The Death of Allegory” by Billy Collins

Idaho

Savina Magdalena Barini

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” by John Donne

“Passing” by Toi Derricotte

Minnesota

Faizah Abubakar

“To the Desert” by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

“I Am Offering this Poem” by Jimmy Santiago Baca

Montana

Sowmya Sudhakar

“Isla” by Virgil Suárez

“In the Basement of the Goodwill Store” by Ted Kooser

Nevada

Christian Schunke

“I Am the People, the Mob” by Carl Sandburg

“American Smooth” by Rita Dove

New Mexico

Zoe Webb-Sagarin

“Lunar Baedeker” by Mina Loy

“Bereavement” by William Lisle Bowles

North Dakota

Julia Johnson

“I Am the People, the Mob” by Carl Sandburg

“Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night”

by Walt Whitman

Oregon

Roselynn Reyes

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

“Blackberrying” by Sylvia Plath

South Dakota

Shivalo Soldier Wolf

“Under the Vulture-Tree” by David Bottoms

“Camouflaging the Chimera” by Yusef Komunyakaa

Texas

Kristina L. Watkins

“Hap” by Thomas Hardy

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

Utah

Ashlei Havili

“It would be neat if with the New Year” by

Jimmy Santiago Baca

“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

Washington

Elizabeth Mo

“In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.” by June Jordan

“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

Wyoming

Sara Ellingrod

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

“A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road

Unknown” by Walt Whitman

Prizes

NATIONAL FINALS

1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | 4th–9th places
\$20,000 award | \$10,000 award | \$5,000 award | \$1,000 award

The schools of the top nine finalists will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry books.

The fourth-place student in each semifinal competition will receive an honorable mention award of \$1,000, with \$500 to their school library for the purchase of poetry books.

STATE FINALS

More than \$50,000 in cash and school stipends were awarded at state final competitions.

Awards will be made in the form of lump sum cash payouts, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families.

Production

Michael Baron (director) is the artistic director of Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and has directed more than 75 productions at theaters across the country. Most recently at Lyric, he directed *Disney's Tarzan*, *Big River*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, Irving Berlin's *Call Me Madam* with Tony-winner Beth Leavel, *Spring Awakening*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Oliver!*, and *Ragtime*. Baron's other directing highlights include the production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre and *A Year with Frog and Toad* at Adventure Theatre for which he received a 2012 Helen Hayes award for Best Direction of a Musical. He earned his MFA in directing from Trinity Repertory and a BA in theater from Wake Forest University.

Chris Burns (DJ) has pioneered an original DJ and production style inspired by the dance culture of yesteryear with a modern, eclectic twist. His work as a DJ, music producer, label owner, and promoter has been recognized through critical acclaim by local outlets such as *The Washington Post*, *The Washington City Paper*, *Brightest Young Things* and others. Burns is regularly called upon to play at some of DC's most acclaimed venues, including U Street Music Hall, Flash, Eighteenth Street Lounge, and the 9:30 Club. 2014 is shaping up large for Burns with music releases and collaborations slated for *Italians Do It Better*, *Mysteries of the Mind*, and *Quantize Recordings*.

<http://chrisburnsdc.com>

<http://soundcloud.com/chrisburns>

Musical Guest

Meklit is an Ethiopian singer and songwriter known for combining jazz, folk, and East African influences in her music. Her debut album, *On a Day Like This...*, was released in 2010 to wide critical acclaim, and she has recorded five albums to date. Meklit was named a TED Global Fellow in 2009, and she founded the Arba Minch Collective, a group of Ethiopian artists seeking to nurture artistic ties to their homeland. Meklit is an artist consultant for the Association of Performing Arts Presenters and has served as an artist-in-residence at New York University, the de Young Museum, and the Red Poppy Art House. She is currently touring the country with her latest solo album, *We Are Alive* (Six Degrees Records, 2014).

<http://www.meklitmusic.com>

ASL Interpreters

Semifinals

Round One: Andrea K. Smith and Jeff Williamson

Round Two: Andrea K. Smith and Jeff Williamson

Round Three: Jeff Williamson and Heidi Johnson

Finals

Jessica Gabrian and Andrea K. Smith

Acknowledgments

POETRY OUT LOUD IS RUN AT THE STATE LEVEL BY

Alabama State Council on the Arts
Alaska State Council on the Arts
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Arkansas Arts Council
California Arts Council
Colorado Creative Industries
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DC Commission on the Arts
and Humanities
Florida Division of Cultural Affairs
Georgia Council for the Arts
Hawaii State Foundation on Culture
and the Arts
Idaho Commission on the Arts
Illinois Arts Council Agency
Indiana Arts Commission
Iowa Arts Council
Kansas State Department of Education
Kentucky Arts Council
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Minnesota State Arts Board
Mississippi Arts Commission
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Tennessee Arts Commission
Texas Commission on the Arts
Utah Division of Arts & Museums
Vermont Arts Council
Virgin Islands Council on the Arts
Virginia Commission for the Arts
Washington State Arts Commission:
ArtsWA
West Virginia Division of Culture
and History
Wisconsin Arts Board
Wyoming Arts Council
and many incredible partners



THE NATIONAL FINALS ARE THE RESULT OF THE REMARKABLE EFFORTS OF Karen Newell and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Peggy Dahlquist, Michael Baron, DJ Chris Burns, Meklit, guest hosts and judges, staff at the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation, and the 53 State and Jurisdictional Arts Agencies of the United States.

Let your soul stand cool and composed
before a million universes.

—Walt Whitman

www.poetryoutloud.org

