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# New Orleans Center for Creative Arts

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**New Orleans Center for Creative Arts**, or **NOCCA****Riverfront**, is a professional arts training center for secondary school-age children. NOCCA is located in New Orleans, Louisiana. The school offers instruction in creative writing, dance, media arts, music, theatre arts, and visual arts. It provides a summer program for individuals seeking to broaden their knowledge through the discipline of their choice, or to earn additional credit before the school year begins. It also provides a full year course that begins in the Fall, and extends through June, in which the students study half of the day at their core school, and spend the remainder of the day at NOCCA Riverfront, under the supervision of their instructors.<sup>[1]</sup>

The theatre arts program includes drama, musical theatre and theatre design. Drama is taught by Ray Vrazel, the movement instructor; Janet Shea, the vocal instructor; and J. Patrick McNamara<sup>[1]</sup> (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0573688/>) , the theatre history and literature instructor. Musical theatre is headed by Blake Coheley, the dance instructor; and Jefferson Turner, the vocal instructor. Theatre design is taught by Dan Zimmer, the design instructor. He is joined by Davis Barron, design instructor; and Julie Winn, the costume design instructor.

The music program includes classical, jazz and vocal. The classical music program is headed by classical piano teacher Sakiko Ohashi. The jazz program, previously headed by noted New Orleans clarinetist Alvin Batiste, is supported by teachers/musicians Michael Peller and Michael Rihner, among others. The classical vocal program centers on operatic-style singing, and is headed by Phyllis Treigle. Classical vocal teachers include Kristen Marchiafava and Gloria Cuadradro.

The creative writing program includes study in poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and a variety of other works. Students study poetry and literature in depth, and produce a literary magazine each year, *Umbra*. The department is headed by Anne Gisleson. Andy Young and Lara Naughton also teach.

NOCCA Riverfront has a prominent position in art schools throughout the United States, as well as around the world. Every year, over 90 percent of those graduating from NOCCA Riverfront move on to colleges, many of the students continuing their education in the arts. Several world-class artists have graduated from NOCCA. Some famous alumni include Harry Connick Jr., Terence Blanchard, Nicholas Payton, the Marsalis brothers, Trombone Shorty, Jonathan Batiste, and DJ Hollygrove.

Admission to NOCCA is by audition only. Although it is recommended that the students maintain a decent GPA upon auditioning, skill and level of artistry present the largest portion of acceptance. Most of the students study half-time at a conventional academic secondary school in New Orleans or in the surrounding parishes, and train the rest of the time in one of the programs offered by NOCCA Riverfront.

NOCCA was founded in 1973. The school was housed for many years in an old elementary school building located in Uptown New Orleans. That facility lacked performance space. In 2000, the school moved to a newly-built campus located in the Faubourg Marigny neighborhood, and it was then that they began using the name **NOCCA Riverfront**.

While the facilities experienced some wind and rain damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the location on the high ground of Old Marigny escaped the flooding of the city in the storm's aftermath (see Effect of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans).

## References

- <sup>^</sup> "Magro, Anthony. "Contemporary Cat: Terence Blanchard with Special Guests", Scarecrow Press (2002)"

## External links

- NOCCA|Riverfront (<http://www.nocca.com/>) official Web site

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Hidden categories: Articles lacking sources from January 2008 | All articles lacking sources

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