



**2017 BE INSPIRED Essay Contest | Age Group: Grades 6-7**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner: Asia Hall  
Age: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
School: Urban Pathways 6-12 Charter School

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**Rise Soldier**

Erykah Badu is a two time Grammy Award winning neo-soul artist born 1971 in Dallas, Texas. She danced and sung for her mother at a young age which was the beginning of her becoming a successful artist. At 14 she spoke on public radio and freestyled to millions of people under the name of DJ apples and even performed at the Dallas Theatre Center. She attended Grambling State University an historically black college in Louisiana where she majored in theatre. In 1993 she left to pursue her passion for music by working as a drama teacher, while recording an demo.

Erykah Badu is has the courage to speak her mind even though her words may offend others. She shows much passion in her work because she truly enjoys performing and being an artist, even as a little girl. People may debate about Erykah Badu not being afraid of change or saying her music style changed. Erykah Badu is committed to continue making music that comes from her life experiences.

Erykah Badu and Maya Angelou express how they feel through poetry. In Erykah's song "Solider" she talks about how much people are struggling in the neighborhoods and how you should not follow what people do or say. In Maya Angelou "Still I Rise" poem she speaks about how much she doesn't care about people ridicule or comments and how she will rise up despite her surroundings.

Erykah Badu "Solider" talk about how a boy is a very respectable who lives in the violent neighborhood. He was described as a solider because he stands out from the others and eventually will become a hero despite the odds. In Maya Angelo's is poem "Still I Rise" is about how she don't care what you throw at her she will still be strong. Both of these artist encourage people to not give into the stereotypes.

Badu and Angelou are really committed to what they do as artists. As an inspiring artist myself, I think that having passion and courage is very important for your future. There are even now when I feel like I failed, but like in Maya Angelou's poem and Erykah Badu's song, I can still rise and that I am a solider.