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The Music Center Names 114 Southern California High School Students As Semifinalists in The Music Center's 36th Annual Spotlight Program

Nationally Recognized Arts Learning Program and Competition Offers \$100,000+ in Scholarships for Aspiring Artists with Performance Opportunities and Invaluable Professional Feedback

LOS ANGELES (March 7, 2024)-- The Music Center today announced 114 of Southern California's most talented high school students have advanced to become semifinalists in **The Music Center's 36th Annual Spotlight** program, a free, nationally acclaimed performing arts competition, scholarship and artistic development program for teens. This year, more than 1,520 teens, representing 265 schools, 177 cities and eight counties, auditioned for the prestigious program.

A program of The Music Center's programming arm TMC Arts, *Spotlight* offers Southern California teens expert advice, coaching, auditions and mastery classes taught by professional artists and arts administrators in seven categories: acting, ballet, dance, classical voice, non-classical voice, classical instrumental and contemporary instrumental. The program recognizes and rewards participants throughout the competition with more than \$100,000 in cash awards following three rounds of auditions. To date, The Music Center has given over \$2.8 million in scholarships.

All *Spotlight* applicants receive written feedback from distinguished panels of judges following each audition round to help them improve and gain insight in their performing arts discipline. An initiative of The Music Center's fundamental support for arts learning, *Spotlight* provides students with the opportunity to develop and hone their performance abilities, receive crucial college preparedness skills and gain the confidence to pursue their dreams in the performing arts. Through a supportive environment, students also develop vital life skills, including self-esteem, preparation and perseverance, that benefit them beyond the stage.

"Congratulations to this year's *Spotlight* semifinalists for advancing this far! It is encouraging to see so many young people from throughout Southern California apply for this program, which is testament not only to their talent and potential, but also to their courage and dedication to the performing arts," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "Dorothy Buffum Chandler, the founder of The Music Center, was an ardent supporter of introducing the performing arts to youth, and we are both honored and proud to keep her vision alive 60 years later and for many years to come. By nurturing the next generation of performing artists, we are supporting them on their individual journeys to serve the public through their art."

Spotlight semifinalists have the rare opportunity to attend a special mastery class within their discipline with highly regarded artists, who share their expertise on performance technique, training and professional life. Experts provide students with invaluable feedback about their performances, offering the students a rich learning experience. Each semifinalist will audition again before a new panel of judges, who will then select the top two finalist performers in each category for a total of 14 Grand Prize Finalists (two from each category). Judges will also name an Honorable Mention in each category. The Grand Prize Finalists will perform in *The Music Center's Spotlight Grand Finale* on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., at The Music Center's Walt Disney Concert Hall.

"We are thrilled to see so many students applying for this prestigious competition. As expected, it becomes increasingly challenging for our judges to select our list of semifinalists because of the students' sheer talent and determination," said Jeri Gaile, Fredric Roberts director, *The Music Center's Spotlight*. "The Music Center launched *Spotlight* 36 years ago because we saw the enormous potential of young artists who can make a positive difference in the world. We encourage them to keep exploring their artistic skills because the performing arts transforms lives."

The Music Center's *Spotlight* program awards more than \$100,000 in cash scholarships annually. Semifinalists each receive \$500. Grand Prize Finalists will each receive \$5,000 scholarships; one Honorable Mention in each category will receive \$1,000. Making an indelible impression on this year's audition judges, 70 students (10 selected from each category) will each receive a \$100 Merit Award; this special honor acknowledges their achievement in the competition and their potential in the performing arts.

To help students interested in applying to the *Spotlight* program, The Music Center created **The Spotlight Academy** as

an episodic series of online videos and tutorials. Designed for young artists, parents and educators, *The Spotlight Academy* features more than a dozen webisodes that focus on subjects related to applying for the *Spotlight* program as well as advice for anyone considering a career in the arts, both on- or offstage. The videos provide a deep dive into the program's seven categories and discuss curated topics featuring alumni and experts in the field, including New York City Ballet principal dancer Tiler Peck, *Superstore* actress Carla Renata, mezzo-soprano opera singer Suzanna Guzmán and more.

Since its launch in 1988, *Spotlight* has transformed the lives of more than 54,000 high school students hailing from Santa Barbara to San Diego. Numerous *Spotlight* participants have gone on to successful professional careers. For example, nearly two dozen finalists are Presidential Scholars, and many more have joined or performed with professional companies, such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. Notable *Spotlight* alumni include Misty Copeland, who made history in the dance world as the first African American principal dancer for American Ballet Theatre; recording artists Adam Lambert and Josh Groban; Emmy® Award-winning composer Kris Bowers, whose work includes the scores for *Bob Marley: One Love*, *Bridgerton*, *Green Book* and *Dear White People* and who is the co-director of the Academy Award-nominated short documentary *The Last Repair Shop*; Lindsay Mendez, Tony Award® winner for her role in the Broadway revival of *Carousel* and current star of Broadway's *Merrily We Roll Along*; Erin Mackey, star of Broadway's *Wicked*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Anything Goes*, *Chaplin*, and *Amazing Grace*; Matthew Rushing, associate artistic director for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Yao Guang Zhai, associate principal clarinet of the Toronto Symphony; and Gerald Clayton, GRAMMY® Award-winning jazz recording artist; among numerous others.

Major support for *The Music Center's Spotlight* program is provided by Fredric Roberts, Helen and Peter Bing, Edgerton Foundation, Terri and Jerry Kohl, Marie Song, The Hearst Foundations and an anonymous donor. Fredric Roberts is founding chairman of *Spotlight*; the late Walter E. Grauman is the creator.

For more information about *The Music Center's Spotlight* program, visit musiccenter.org/spotlight or follow @musiccenterspotlight on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok and @spotlightawards on X.

ABOUT THE MUSIC CENTER

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. Celebrating its 60th year in 2024, the \$70 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Grand Park--a 12-acre adjacent green space--in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County and on a digital platform called The Music Center Offstage. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with Glorja Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K-12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Grand Park, which comprise \$2 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies--Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @MusicCenterLA.

The Music Center's 36th Annual Spotlight Semifinalists

HOME CITY	FULL NAME	PROGRAM NAME	SCHOOL	GRADE
Agoura Hills	Charles French	Contemporary Instrumental	Agoura High School	11
Agoura Hills	Jordan Klein	Contemporary Instrumental	Agoura High School	11
Agoura Hills	Jack Lieberman	Contemporary Instrumental	Agoura High School	12
Altadena	Salvatore Lodi	Ballet	Excellence In Education Academy	12
Arcadia	Jiayi Xu	Classical Instrumental	Arcadia High School	10

Burbank	Jane Hasty	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Burbank	Lorenzo Luppi	Contemporary Instrumental	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Burbank	Emerson Riley	Non-Classical Voice	John Burroughs High School	12
Calabasas	Riley Eichberg	Non-Classical Voice	Calabasas High School	11
Canyon Lake	Jailen Bates	Acting	California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley	12
Carlsbad	Blanche Pizzurro	Dance	San Marcos High School	10
Carlsbad	Caroline Skrable	Dance	Carlsbad High School	12
Chino Hills	Joseph Yoo	Classical Instrumental	Diamond Bar High School	11
Chula Vista	Quentin Davis	Acting	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts	12
Chula Vista	Mia Rivera	Non-Classical Voice	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts	12
Claremont	Meghan Linnington	Classical Voice	California Connections Academy	12
Corona	Clara Riggs	Ballet	Epic Charter School	10
Diamond Bar	Jesse Hu	Classical Instrumental	Diamond Bar High School	10
Diamond Bar	Amy Jong	Classical Instrumental	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Downey	Celine Bautista	Non-Classical Voice	Downey High School	9
El Segundo	Milena Vanek	Acting	El Segundo High School	11
Fountain Valley	Bailey Curtis	Non-Classical Voice	Huntington Beach High School	12
Fullerton	Madison Becerra	Classical Voice	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Fullerton	Isabella Kim	Acting	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Fullerton	David Lim	Contemporary Instrumental	Idyllwild Arts Academy	10
Huntington Beach	Aubrey Banaag	Ballet	Orange County School of the Arts	9
Idyllwild	Adin Joseph	Dance	Idyllwild Arts Academy	11
Inglewood	Kalai Brockington	Non-Classical Voice	Ramon C. Cortines High School	12
Irvine	Aimee Cho	Ballet	Crean Lutheran High School	12
Irvine	Aimee Cho	Dance	Crean Lutheran High School	12
Irvine	Minji Choi	Classical Instrumental	Northwood High School	9
Irvine	Diane Doberstein	Ballet	Woodbridge High School	10
Irvine	Asher Hinton	Non-Classical Voice	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Irvine	Isabella (Izzy) Howard	Ballet	Nevada Learning Academy	10
Irvine	Isabella (Izzy) Howard	Dance	Nevada Learning Academy	10
Irvine	Michelle Lu	Ballet	Portola High School	11
Irvine	Logan Macy	Dance	Orange County School of the Arts	9
Irvine	Ian Shin	Contemporary Instrumental	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Irvine	Isabella Silva	Dance	Orange County School of the Arts	10
Irvine	Nathan Tatsuta	Contemporary Instrumental	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Irvine	Genevieve Velarde	Classical Voice	Irvine High School	12
Irvine	Towako Wunsch	Ballet	Irvine High School	12

Irvine	Jeffrey Yang	Classical Voice	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Irvine	Kyle Yeung	Classical Instrumental	Pacific Academy, Irvine	10
Irvine	Kailey Yun	Classical Instrumental	Arnold O. Beckman High School	12
Irvine	Helaine Zhao	Classical Instrumental	Pacific Academy, Irvine	12
La Jolla	Emma Donnelly	Dance	The Bishop's School Will Parsons	11
Laguna Niguel	Pavel Kulev	Ballet	Cabrillo Point Academy	12
Lake Forest	Viveka Saravanan	Classical Voice	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Long Beach	Alfredo-Totocani Garcia	Ballet	<i>Homeschooled</i>	12
Long Beach	Chloe Ness	Classical Voice	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Los Angeles	Lauren Ashley	Non-Classical Voice	Venice High School	12
Los Angeles	Anaiya Asomugha	Acting	The Archer School for Girls	12
Los Angeles	Isabelle Balderrama	Classical Voice	Louisville High School	12
Los Angeles	Asher Bartfeld	Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Los Angeles	Nola Bowie	Acting	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Los Angeles	Jesse Brasler	Non-Classical Voice	Calabasas High School	11
Los Angeles	Jesse Brasler	Acting	Calabasas High School	11
Los Angeles	Matilda Luz Concha Pearson	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Los Angeles	Lena Embry	Non-Classical Voice	California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley	12
Los Angeles	Calder Feinstein	Ballet	<i>Homeschooled</i>	12
Los Angeles	Sadie Ferguson	Dance	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Los Angeles	Roy Kim	Classical Voice	Campbell Hall	10
Los Angeles	Taylor Lee	Contemporary Instrumental	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Los Angeles	Sophie Leung	Classical Instrumental	Oak Crest Academy	11
Los Angeles	Hawkins Meek	Acting	Village Christian Schools	12
Los Angeles	Ariel Meron	Contemporary Instrumental	Harvard-Westlake Upper School	12
Los Angeles	Micah MikoLevine	Acting	Westridge School - Upper School	11
Los Angeles	Harry Orenstein	Acting	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Los Angeles	Nathan Pak	Classical Instrumental	Taft High School	10
Los Angeles	Julian Pankowski	Non-Classical Voice	Van Nuys Senior High School	11
Los Angeles	Dilan Patton	Classical Voice	Van Nuys Senior High School	10
Los Angeles	Dilan Patton	Non-Classical Voice	Van Nuys Senior High School	10
Los Angeles	Hayden Radonsky	Acting	Beverly Hills High School	12
Los Angeles	Mae Ryness	Acting	California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley	12
Los Angeles	Samuel Siskind	Classical Voice	Lindamood-Bell Academy	11
Los Angeles	Kai Spatzier	Contemporary Instrumental	Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies	12
			Los Angeles County High School for the	

Los Angeles	Kai Wright	Non-Classical Voice	Arts	11
Mission Viejo	Gracyn French	Dance	Mission Viejo High School	9
Mission Viejo	Keilah Park	Classical Instrumental	Orange County School of the Arts - OCSA	11
Monterey Park	Skyla Woodard	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Monterey Park	Skyla Woodard	Acting	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Oak Park	Max Gilbert	Contemporary Instrumental	Agoura High School	12
Oak Park	Gavin Russell	Contemporary Instrumental	Agoura High School	12
Orange	Jonathan Archer	Dance	Orange County School of the Arts	9
Orange	Preston Walker	Ballet	Orange County School of the Arts	10
Pasadena	Trinity Dela Cruz	Classical Voice	Marshall Fundamental School	12
Pasadena	Isabelle Lin	Ballet	Polytechnic High School	10
Pasadena	Callie Chae Pyken	Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Pasadena	Callie Chae Pyken	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Pasadena	Callie Chae Pyken	Acting	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Placentia	Savannah Tweedt	Contemporary Instrumental	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Riverside	Kayla McCarty	Acting	Ramona High School	11
San Diego	Amelie Bott-Suzuki	Ballet	California Connections Academy	9
San Diego	Amelie Bott-Suzuki	Dance	California Connections Academy	9
San Diego	Evonne Fangao	Classical Voice	The Cambridge School	9
San Diego	Amara McDuffie	Acting	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts	11
San Diego	Daniel Torrero	Classical Instrumental	Scripps Ranch High	12
San Marino	Emilia Bernstein	Classical Voice	San Marino High School	10
San Marino	Ruoxin (Cindy) Jia	Classical Instrumental	San Marino High School	12
Santa Ana	Andrea Martínez	Dance	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Santa Clarita	Emma Rose Crawford	Dance	Laurel Springs School	11
Santa Clarita	Ananya Joseph	Dance	Academy of the Canyons	9
Santa Clarita	Vinay Sundar	Classical Instrumental	Valencia High School	12
Santa Monica	Jaxson Glowacki	Classical Voice	Brentwood High School	12
Seal Beach	Ariel Tello	Dance	Orange County School of the Arts	10
Simi Valley	Luciano Soriano	Contemporary Instrumental	Westlake High School	12
South Pasadena	Holly Lacey	Classical Instrumental	South Pasadena High School	11
Temecula	Lane Whitehurst	Ballet	Mission Vista Academy	10
Temple City	Alvin Wang	Classical Instrumental	California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley	12
Thousand Oaks	Saoirse Sipes	Contemporary Instrumental	Thousand Oaks High School	10
		Contemporary	Los Angeles County High School for the	

Torrance	Joaquin Garde	Instrumental	Arts	11
Torrance	Mai Ishiyama	Ballet	Excel High School	10
Yorba Linda	Megan Reta	Dance	El Dorado High School	10

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