

APRIL 19, 2023

The Music Center Names 14 Talented Teen Artists As Grand Prize Finalists for The Music Center's 35th Annual Spotlight Program

Southern California's Free and Long-Standing Performing Arts Competition and Artistic Development Program for High School Students Has Awarded More Than \$2.7 Million in Scholarships

LOS ANGELES (April 19, 2023)—**The Music Center** today announced 14 Grand Prize finalists from more than 1,300 applicants in *The Music Center's 35th Annual Spotlight* program, a free nationally acclaimed performing arts competition, scholarship and artistic development program for teens. A program of The Music Center's programming arm TMC Arts, **Spotlight** offers Southern California teens expert advice, coaching, audition experience and mastery classes taught by professional artists and arts administrators in seven categories: acting, ballet, dance, classical voice, non-classical voice, classical instrumental and jazz instrumental. The program recognizes and rewards all participants throughout the competition with a range of benefits, such as individual feedback from industry professionals, performance opportunities and more than \$100,000 in cash awards through three rounds of auditions. To date, The Music Center has given over \$2.7 million in scholarships.

Held for the first time in The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion since 2014, this year's *Spotlight Grand Finale* performance will be held on **Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.**; the finale will showcase the finalists' incredible performances and offer a look into each of their lives with behind-the-scenes footage detailing their artistic journey and *Spotlight* experience and how they persevered through multiple rounds of auditions, improved their technical skills based on feedback by industry experts and further honed their craft by attending classes with world-renowned experts in their discipline.

The 14 *Spotlight* Grand Prize finalists are comprised of two young artists in each of the seven categories. In addition to performing in the finale event, each student will receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

This year's *Spotlight* Grand Prize Finalists are:

- Acting:** **Millie Liao**, 18, a senior at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts; and **Ruby Moncrieff-Karten**, 17, a junior at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts.
- Ballet:** **Campbelle Malicse**, 16, a junior at Palos Verdes Distance Learning Academy; and **Chase Rogers**, 18, a senior at California Preparatory Academy in San Juan Capistrano.
- Dance:** **Aubrey Abella**, 15, a freshmen at Great Oak High School in Temecula; and **Calli Perryman**, 15, a sophomore at Murrieta Valley High School.
- Classical Voice:** **Tiffany Hsu**, 15, a sophomore at Mayfield Senior School of the Holy Child Jesus in Pasadena; and **Lilliana Mindel**, 16, a junior at Orange County School of the Arts.
- Non-Classical Voice:** **Brooke Bailey**, 18, a senior at John Burroughs High School in Burbank; and **Maya Clayton**, 17, a senior at CHAMPS Charter High School of the Arts in Van Nuys.
- Classical Instrumental:** **Erica Wang**, 17, a senior at Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego; and **Nathaniel Yue**, 16, a sophomore at San Marino High School.
- Jazz Instrumental:** **Jackson Petty**, 15, a sophomore at Hamilton High School in Los Angeles; and **William Schwartzman**, 18, a senior at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts.

"Congratulations to this year's 14 *Music Center Spotlight* finalists for a phenomenal achievement! From the time they applied to the program to the Grand Finale, their yearlong journey was not easy; it included countless hours of auditions and rehearsals met with anticipation, perseverance and passion," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "I know they, and all of this year's applicants, have learned a great deal from our professional artists and arts administrators and will be able to apply the invaluable feedback they received to guide them toward a successful future in the arts or wherever their career journeys take them."

"To have our judges select the 14 *Spotlight* Grand Prize finalists each year is an exciting, yet challenging, feat because every applicant of our longstanding program is a bona fide star," said Jeri Gaile, Fredric Roberts director, *The Music*

Center's Spotlight. "It has been an honor for the *Spotlight* team to inspire thousands of young artists in Southern California for 35 years. This year's finalists rightfully earned their place on stage of The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion--a return to the iconic venue, for the first time in nine years, which feels like coming home. So, please join us on June 8 for an evening of celebration, achievements and unbelievable talent!"

In addition to the Grand Prize Finalists, The Music Center also named an Honorable Mention in each category, awarding each student with a \$1,000 scholarship. The Honorable Mentions include: Acting: Anaiya Asomugha, a junior from The Archer School for Girls in Los Angeles; Ballet: Alfredo-Totocani García, a junior who is homeschooled; Classical instrumental: Kyle Yeung, a freshman from Pacific Academy in Irvine; Classical Voice: Victoria Curet, a junior from San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts; Dance: Megan Reta, a freshman from El Dorado High School in Placentia; Jazz instrumental: Jack Lieberman, a junior from Agoura High School; and Non-Classical Voice: René Harris, a senior from Burbank High School.

An important part of The Music Center's fundamental support for arts learning, *Spotlight* offers performance opportunities, audition experiences and mentorship, plus technical and artistic insights provided by professional artists and arts administrators. *Spotlight* is completely free with no financial barriers for participants, which gives equal footing to all aspiring artists no matter their talent level. This year, more than 1,300 teens auditioned for the prestigious program, representing more than 245 schools, 170 cities and eight counties. All *Spotlight* applicants receive written feedback from distinguished panels of judges following each audition round to help students improve and gain knowledge in their specific performance discipline.

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; Adam Lambert and Josh Groban, pop recording artists; Kris Bowers, Emmy® Award-winning composer whose work includes the scores for *Bridgerton*, *Green Book* and *Dear White People*; Lindsay Mendez, Tony Award® winner for her role in the Broadway revival of *Carousel* and from the television drama *All Rise*; 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, 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 social media (Facebook, Instagram and TikTok).

To RSVP for free tickets to this year's *Spotlight Grand Finale*, visit musiccenter.org/spotlightfinale.

spotlight-2023-finalists-table

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT:

The Music Center's 35th Annual Spotlight Grand Finale

Selected from more than 1,300 teen applicants, 14 Grand Prize finalists will showcase their artistry on stage in front of a live audience at The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. *The Music Center's Spotlight* is a free nationally acclaimed performing arts competition, scholarship and artistic development program for Southern California teens in seven categories: acting, ballet, dance, classical voice, non-classical voice, classical instrumental and jazz

instrumental.

WHEN:

Thursday, June 8, 2023

7:00 p.m.

WHERE:

The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

135 N. Grand Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90012

TICKETS:

FREE

To RSVP for tickets, visit musiccenter.org/spotlightfinale

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. 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 Gloria Molina 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 *Glorya 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 Gloria Molina 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.

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