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The Music Center Selects 100 Southern California High School Students as Semifinalists in The Music Center's 34th Annual Spotlight Competition

Nationally Recognized Performing Arts Competition, Scholarship and Artistic Development Program Offers More than \$100,000 in Scholarships for Aspiring Teen Artists with Performance Opportunities and Valuable Professional Feedback

LOS ANGELES (March 2, 2022)--The Music Center today announced 100 of Southern California's most talented high school students as semifinalists in *The Music Center's 34th annual Spotlight (Spotlight) program*, a free nationally acclaimed performing arts competition, scholarship and artistic development program for teens. A TMC Arts program, *Spotlight* provides Southern California teens with expert advice, coaching, auditions and mastery classes taught by professional artists and arts administrators. 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.

This year, more than 1,300 teens representing more than 256 schools, 181 cities and 8 counties auditioned for the prestigious program. Students compete in seven categories: acting, classical voice, non-classical voice, ballet, dance, classical instrumental and jazz instrumental. All applicants receive written feedback from distinguished panels of judges following each audition round to help students improve and gain knowledge in their particular performance discipline. An important part of The Music Center's fundamental support for arts learning, the program provides students the opportunity to develop their performance abilities, receive valuable college preparedness skills and gain confidence to pursue their dreams in the performing arts. Through a supportive environment, students also develop important life skills, including building self-esteem, preparation and perseverance, that benefit them beyond the stage.

"After nearly two years of online programming and distanced arts learning, The Music Center is thrilled to bring the *Spotlight* performance and in-person arts experiences back to our campus. *Spotlight* offers participants multiple opportunities for artistic development that help these aspiring young performers hone their craft and guide their aspirations, whether that be on stage or in the boardroom," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "We want to ensure young people have a supportive and nurturing environment and performance experiences that allow them to develop their talents and determine their path. *Spotlight* offers the means for them to do that."

"Despite the limitations we all faced during the pandemic, *The Music Center's Spotlight* persevered. We were fortunate to be able to continue the program as a completely free competition, and the results are simply spectacular, with so many young people from across the Southland applying and inspiring all of us with their enthusiasm, talent and passion for the arts," added Jeri Gaile, Fredric Roberts Director of *The Music Center's Spotlight* program. "While *Spotlight* is very much a competition, we also focus on developing each student's artistic skills and nurturing their growth. Our goal is to support each applicant in every way possible, be that providing detailed notes from a judge on how to better their performance or showing them alternative careers in the arts beyond the stage."

Spotlight semifinalists have the rare opportunity to attend a special mastery class in their discipline with highly regarded artists, who share their expertise on performance technique, training and professional life. Experts provide students with highly valuable feedback on their performances, offering them 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. Judges will also name an Honorable Mention in each category. The Grand Prize Finalists will perform in *The Music Center's Spotlight Grand Finale Performance* on June 15, 2022, at 7:30 p.m., at The Music Center's Ahmanson Theatre.

The Music Center's Spotlight program awards more than \$100,000 in cash scholarships annually. Semifinalists each receive \$300. The eventual Grand Prize Finalists will each receive \$5,000 scholarships, plus one Honorable Mention in each category will receive \$1,000. The Music Center also celebrates five students in each category with the Merit Award, which acknowledges students who inspire the judges by their commitment and dedication to their art form; *Spotlight* Merit Award recipients each receive \$100.

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 15 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 *Superstore* actress Carla Renata, opera singer Suzanna Guzmán and New York City Ballet principal dancer Tiler Peck, among others.

Since its launch in 1988, *Spotlight* has transformed the lives of 53,000 high school students from Santa Barbara to San Diego by being a competition and more. Numerous *Spotlight* participants have gone on to successful professional careers. Twenty-three finalists are Presidential Scholars, and many more have joined or performed with professional companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, among others. 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 now starring in 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; Gerald Clayton, GRAMMY® Award-winning jazz recording artist; and many others.

Fredric Roberts is the founding chairman of *The Music Center's Spotlight* program. The late Walter E. Grauman is the creator. *The Music Center's Spotlight* program is generously supported by The Hearst Foundations.

For more information about *The Music Center's Spotlight* program, visit musiccenter.org/spotlight or join the conversation on facebook.com/MusicCenterSpotlight/.

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 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 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 34th Annual Spotlight Program Semifinalists

Name	Program Name	Home City	School	Grade
Jack Lieberman	Jazz Instrumental	Agoura Hills	Agoura High School	10
Oscar Yum	Classical Voice	Altadena	Flintridge Prep School	11
Dyllan Blackburn	Dance	Anaheim	Canyon High School - Anaheim	10
Tiffany Hsu	Classical Voice	Arcadia	Mayfield Senior School of the Holy Child Jesus	9
Taylor Fuchs	Acting	Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills High School	12
Ruby Laks	Classical Voice & Jazz Instrumental	Beverly Hills	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Rhett Hemingway	Non-Classical Voice & Acting	Burbank	John Burroughs High School	12
Cassidy May-Benullo	Non-Classical Voice	Calabasas	Calabasas High School	11
Evan Dexter	Jazz Instrumental	Chatsworth	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Kaitlyn Ortega	Dance	Chino Hills	Chino Hills High School	10
Michael Davis	Acting	Chula Vista	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts	12
Fiona Poth	Ballet & Dance	Coto de Caza	Avenues Online: The World School	10
Ashley Chung	Ballet	Cypress	Cypress High School	11
Mackenzie Wrap	Non-Classical Voice	Foothill Ranch	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Angeline Kiang	Classical Instrumental	Fremont	Colburn Music Academy	12
Landon Wouters	Acting & Non-Classical Voice	Fullerton	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Maya DeSousa	Acting	Glendale	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Elias Robles	Non-Classical Voice	Hacienda Heights	Los Altos High School	12
Michaela Capulong	Dance	Huntington Beach	Huntington Beach High School	12
Grace Briella Wilcox	Acting	Huntington Beach	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Preston Atkins	Classical Instrumental	Idyllwild-Pine Cove	Idyllwild Arts Academy	12
Justine Moore	Acting	Inglewood	The Archer School for Girls	12
Emma Chen	Ballet	Irvine	Portola High School	11
Aimee Cho	Ballet & Dance	Irvine	Crean Lutheran High School	10

Ella Horan	Dance	Irvine	University High School (Irvine)	11
Sophia Koo	Ballet	Irvine	Arnold O. Bechman High School	9
Sanjana Khurana	Classical Voice	Irvine	Sage Hill School	12
Madeleine Lee	Ballet	Irvine	Pacific Academy, Irvine	9
Addison Leitch	Dance	Irvine	Arnold O. Beckman High School	10
Zachary Lin	Classical Instrumental	Irvine	University High School (Irvine)	12
Lauren Mei	Acting	Irvine	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Kaya Sparnicht	Acting	Irvine	Orange County School of the Arts	9
Nathan Tatsuta	Jazz Instrumental	Irvine	Orange County School of the Arts	10
Christopher Tsukada	Ballet	Irvine	University High School (Irvine)	10
Michelle Lu	Ballet	Irvine	Portola High School	9
Kangsan Kim	Classical Voice	La Habra	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Mia Baron	Classical Voice	Ladera Ranch	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Tessa Espinola	Acting	Laguna Beach	Orange County School of the Arts	9
Leo Sui	Classical Instrumental	Laguna Hills	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Justin Padilla	Ballet	Lake Forest	Home Schooled	10
Ava Ulloa	Non-Classical Voice	Lake Forest	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Bella Aboulhosn	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles	Chaminade College Preparatory High School - Canoga	11
Anaiya Asomugha	Acting	Los Angeles	The Archer School for Girls	10
Dakotah Faunteroy	Dance	Los Angeles	Calabasas High School	11
Katie Gaven	Acting	Los Angeles	Oakwood Secondary	12
Nikka Gershman-Pepper	Classical Instrumental	Los Angeles	Colburn Music Academy	9
Hwaseop Jeong	Classical Instrumental	Los Angeles	Colburn Music Academy	12
Samuel Karpinski	Acting	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Ruby Moncrieff-Karten	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Leilani Patao	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Sophie Pollono	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles	John Burroughs High School	11
Kaela Seltzer	Jazz Instrumental	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Noah Silva	Classical Voice	Los Angeles	John Marshal High School	11
Stellan Swanlund	Jazz Instrumental	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Laila Takiyama	Ballet	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	9
Drew Tillman	Non-Classical Voice	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Ashley Tsai	Classical Instrumental	Los Angeles	Colburn Music Academy	12
Ava Louise Winer	Ballet	Los Angeles	Marlborough School	12
Jiahe Zhang	Classical Instrumental	Los Angeles	Colburn Music Academy	11
Sophia Papouchado	Jazz Instrumental	Manhattan Beach	Vistamar School	11
Gael Saldaña	Jazz Instrumental	Montclair	Diamond Ranch High School	12
Lila Tsang	Dance	Monterey Park	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Noe Lynds	Ballet	Murrieta	Susan H. Nelson High School	9
Calli Perryman	Dance	Murrieta	Murrieta High School	9
Emmitt Butler	Acting	Newport Beach	Newport Harbor High School	12
Evan Richards	Classical Voice	Newport Beach	Orange County School of the Arts	12
Max Gilbert	Jazz Instrumental	Oak Park	Agoura High School	10
Jacqueline Lane	Ballet & Dance	Palos Verdes Estate	Palos Verdes High School	11
Ryan Liddy	Classical Voice	Pasadena	Loyola High School of Los Angeles	11
Caroline Patterson	Non-Classical Voice	Pasadena	Polytechnic High School (Pasadena)	12
Max Fan	Classical Instrumental	Rolling Hills Estate	Home Schooled	9

Tommu Su	Classical Instrumental	Rowland Heights	Home Schooled	12
Rhyan Foerster	Ballet	San Clemente	California Preparatory Academy	9
Anaïs Feller	Classical Instrumental	San Diego	Classical Academy High School	11
Holden Kunowski	Ballet	San Diego	Del Norte High School	12
Grace Li	Dance	San Diego	Canyon Crest Academy	11
Lia Zheng	Classical Voice	San Diego	Canyon Crest Academy	11
Victoria Curet	Classical Voice	San Diego	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts	10
Lily Keating	Classical Voice	San Marino	Polytechnic High School (Pasadena)	12
Grace Navarro	Classical Voice	San Marino	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Mia Lopez	Dance	Santa Ana	Orange County School of the Arts	11
Andrew Bond	Acting	Santa Clarita	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Alexander Levin	Jazz Instrumental	Santa Monica	Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences	11
Milla Moretti	Classical Voice	Santa Monica	Santa Monica High School	12
William Schwartzman	Jazz Instrumental	Santa Monica	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	11
Chloe Stavis	Non-Classical Voice	Santa Monica	Santa Monica High School	12
Jassir Rivera	Non-Classical Voice	Simi Valley	Grace Brethren	11
Qiao Zhang	Classical Instrumental	Simi Valley	Sierra Canyon-Upper School	9
Mihilo Kato	Classical Instrumental	South Pasadena	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	10
Luciano Soriano	Jazz Instrumental	Thousand Oaks	Westlake High School	10
Adam Zilberman	Jazz Instrumental	Thousand Oaks	Westlake High School	12
Julian Najah	Jazz Instrumental	Topanga	Home Schooled	12
Tegan Chou	Ballet & Dance	Tustin	Home Schooled	10
Kennedy Percival	Classical Voice & Non-Classical Voice	Upland	Home Schooled	11
Frederick Chiu	Classical Instrumental	Walnut	Walnut High School	11
Andrew Shi	Classical Instrumental	Walnut	Diamond Bar High School	12
Lulu Royce	Non-Classical Voice & Acting	West Hollywood	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	12
Aidan Farrell	Jazz Instrumental	Westlake Village	Agoura High School	12
Luciana Vun	Dance	Winchester	Green Oak High School	11
Addyson Smith	Dance	Woodland Hills	Calabasas High School	9

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