

Press Release – “Spotlight on Talent” Will Shine on These Finalists

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The 39th annual “Spotlight on Talent” competition is back in the theater! The Heritage Arts Center Producers had to make do last year in a fellowship hall with no audience, because of covid. We’re very excited to invite one and all to attend the 2 final shows at the beautiful theater at Wesley Chapel High on Saturday, March 12, 2022

The preliminary audition was held recently - once again a whirlwind of talented students, all primed to compete to be named a finalist. This year the audition saw 72 acts, a total of over 120 students! It was a 12 hour day for the producers, and a most challenging job for the judges. A great variety of performing arts were displayed - both solos and groups.

The group will again be presenting the \$1,000 “Pasco Heritage Scholarship” which will go to the graduating Pasco County senior who receives the highest judges’ scores. Last year's recipient was pianist Agnes Hernandez.

The performing arts competition includes two final shows because of the huge numbers of applicants and quality of the talent. The top 60 scoring acts, 109 students, were chosen to perform. The Matinee show at 12 noon will be younger solos and groups, and the Evening show at 7 pm will be older solos and groups. Our emcees will be Clint Roberson, lawyer, and David West, Rotarian and pastor. Tickets for adults will be \$12 or both shows for \$20, students through high school are \$6 or both for \$10 (under 5 is free). Tickets can be purchased ahead at heritagearts.org, or at the door.

This competition is a regional one, with contestants coming from all of Pasco County and the surrounding areas including Tampa, Spring Hill, Bushnell and Webster. There will be many different teachers and studios represented, who have been working with these students all year in preparation. All of the final performances will be awarded a trophy, and two professional panels of judges will have the task of selecting winners for cash prizes. In total over \$4,000 in cash, trophies, and ribbons will be presented to winners in eight different categories. The finalist performances vary greatly in style. The audiences will enjoy piano music from Chopin to Liszt; songs Broadway to Gershwin and Adele; and all styles of dance. Guitar solos are classical to hard rock, and we have both a poetry and haiku performance.

"Spotlight" is definitely a family affair. There are two sets of brothers and sisters, and husbands/wives and mothers/daughters volunteer together.

With a 39 year history, this competition has now come “full circle”. Spotlight “alums” are now in positions of responsibility for the production. One is on the Heritage Arts Board of Directors, and assistant producer Michael Roberts was an annual contestant from the age of five. The Spotlight competition costs over \$16,000 to produce and would not be possible without wonderful sponsorship from generous area businesses and individual supporters. Executive producer, Barbara Friedman invites all from our area who love the arts and young people to attend these most exciting and inspiring shows. She will be glad to answer any questions at spotlight@heritagearts.org or 352-424-0135.