

Press Release – “Spotlight on Talent” Competition Celebrating 40 Years!

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The “Spotlight on Talent” performing arts competition is celebrating a very special 40year anniversary. As if they anticipated the excitement, a record 200 talented students K – 12 auditioned to be in one of the two final shows on Saturday, March 25. The 12 noon show is by younger performers – soloists and groups, and the 7 pm show is older solos and groups. Both entertaining shows are open to the public and held at the beautiful theater at the Wesley Chapel High School on Wells Road. Heritage Arts Center Association, the non-profit that produces this competition is proud to have been able to offer this contest without even a break during the Covid pandemic!

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 dancer Faith Phaller.

The performing arts competition includes two final shows because of the huge numbers of applicants and quality of the talent. The top 65 scoring acts, 151 students, were chosen to perform. Our emcees will be Charles Spinner, lawyer, and Allen Altman of the Pasco School Board. 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, Port Richey 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 Rachmaninoff; songs Broadway to Adele; and all styles of dance. Guitar, violin, and mandolin instrumentals will be heard – even a saxophone quartet. Interestingly, Chopin’s famous “Revolutionary Etude” will be played twice – once at the younger show, and again by an older pianist at 7 pm.

With its 40year 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, one is assistant producer, and a regular dance contestant now owns her own studio and is sending her students! The Spotlight competition costs over \$18,000 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.