

Press Release – “Spotlight on Talent” Competition - Finalists Chosen

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The “Spotlight on Talent” performing arts competition is continuing a 41 year history. On Saturday, Feb. 10, over 160 talented students K – 12 auditioned to be in one of the two final shows on Saturday, March 16. The 12 noon show will be 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 Lauren Scotch.

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, 117 students, were chosen to perform. Our emcee will be Ben Alexander – always fun. 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 east Pasco and beyond – Tampa, Odessa, Webster, Brooksville. This year there is an exchange student from Italy! 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 Jon Schmidt; songs Broadway to Adele; all styles of dance; drama performances; and a lovely instrumental with piano and 2 violins.

With its long history, this competition has now come “full circle”. Spotlight “alums” are now in positions of responsibility for the production. One is President of the Heritage Arts Board of Directors, several are now judges, 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.