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ACTORS’ PLAYHOUSE AT THE MIRACLE THEATRE
AND THE CHILDREN’S TRUST ANNOUNCE THE 2020 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS COMPETITION WINNERS

CORAL GABLES, FL – September 29, 2020 – Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre, together with presenting sponsor The Children’s Trust, are proud to announce the 2020 winners of Young Talent Big Dreams, the most widespread local youth talent contest in Miami-Dade history. A marathon of semifinal competitions for student performers ages 8-17 culminated in the virtual finals held this past Saturday, September 26, on YouTube Live. You can watch a video of the Finals at www.actorsplayhouse.org. Prizes ranged from master classes and performing arts scholarships to cash awards and performance opportunities. This year, courtesy of WSVN CH7, the grand prize winner also received a free trip – including airfare and hotel – to attend the Teen Choice Awards in Los Angeles, plus $500 cash.

The countywide competition, which began in January, had just wrapped up its second round of live auditions when the pandemic hit South Florida earlier this year, forcing the competition to shut down all in-person events. But organizers would not let COVID-19 close the curtain on Miami’s top talent. The competition then went virtual, with hundreds of young performers vying for a chance to win by submitting preliminary round audition videos that showcased their talents. Participation was free and limited to residents of Miami-Dade County. The competition featured a total of six individual categories: pop/rock/rap vocals, musical theatre/jazz standards/classical vocals, dance, musical instrument, original spoken word and original vocal and/or instrumental composition. Group categories (six or fewer members) included dance, musical instrument/bands and vocal groups.

“Despite the transition from live stage auditions to virtual auditions in this unprecedented year, the 10th Anniversary Young Talent Big Dreams competition was better than ever,” said Actors’ Playhouse Executive Producing Director Barbara S. Stein. “We are proud of all of the contestants who did a terrific job of submitting
their auditions virtually and sharing their talent with us. Each and every participant is a true winner for making the effort.”

“Every year, Young Talent Big Dreams is a great showcase for the talent that the youth in Miami-Dade County possess. But this year it was even more,” said The Children’s Trust President and CEO James R. Haj. “Despite the limitations and distractions imposed by the pandemic, the competitors refused to let the situation stop them. They showed that they would not let their talents be held down. What a show they put on! Congratulations to all of them.”

Young Talent Big Dreams is modeled after reality TV talent shows that offer similar opportunities to contestants through a series of auditions, performances and professional mentoring. Judges include a host of local celebrities and professionals from Miami’s performing arts community; this year’s finals judges included David Arisco, artistic director, Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre; Suki Lopez, multiplatform creative and arts education professional best known for her role as “Nina” on Sesame Street; Howard Cohen, features writer, the Miami Herald; Christine Cruz, WSVN 7 News Anchor; and Gabrielle Graham, Carbonell Award-nominated actress and singer.

Past winners of the competition include Zachary Roy who just reached the Semifinals on Season 15 of NBC’s “America’s Got Talent,” Joana Martinez who achieved a Top 10 placement as part of “Team Gwen (Stefani)” on Season 17 of NBC’s “The Voice,” Angelina Green who went on to earn the coveted golden buzzer from judge Heidi Klum on Season 12 of NBC’s “America’s Got Talent,” and Gino Cosculluela who brought home the third place title on Season 16 of FOX’s “So You Think You Can Dance.”

For detailed information on Young Talent Big Dreams, please visit www.actorsplayhouse.org.

2020 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS CONTEST WINNERS:

Individual Musical Instrument and Overall Grand Prize Winner
Jessica Olivera, 15, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer

Individual Original Spoken Word Winner
Brenis Bostick, 17, Miami Norland Senior High School

Individual Dance Winner
Sophia Torrens, 13, St. Rose of Lima Catholic School

Individual Original Composition Winner
Story Walker, 12, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer

Individual Vocal – Pop/Rock/Rap Winner
Jessica Jeanty, 16, Miami Edison Senior High School

Individual Vocal – Broadway/Jazz/Classical Winner
Vanessa Bittar, 16, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer
Group Musical Instrument Winner
Conflei
Ari Jake Willig, 16, and Kevin Puig Carrasco, 15, both students at Coral Reef Senior High School

Vocal Groups Winner
Sociedad Actoral Hispanoamericana - Musical Theater Group
Juliana Moreno, 14, Ronald W. Reagan/Doral Senior High School; Dalila Lugo, 15, New World School of the Arts; Rachel Samantha, 16, New World School of the Arts; Agustina Coretti, 17, Immaculata-La Salle High School; Fernando Flores, 16, New World School of the Arts; Darelis Figuera, 17, Doral Academy Preparatory School

Group Dance Winners
Bowl of Cherries
Gabrielle Lieberman, 14, Ransom Everglades School and Georgie Weir, 12, Southwood Middle School

About Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre
Founded by Dr. Lawrence E. Stein, and under the leadership of Executive Producing Director Barbara S. Stein, Artistic Director David Arisco and Children’s Theatre Director Earl Maulding, Actors’ Playhouse is an award-winning nonprofit regional professional theatre company celebrating 32 years of artistic excellence. Located in the historic Miracle Theatre on Miracle Mile in downtown Coral Gables, Actors’ Playhouse is a Florida Presenting Cultural Organization and one of 13 major cultural institutions in Miami-Dade County. The company produces five Mainstage and four professional Children’s Theatre productions annually, a year-round Theatre Conservatory and Summer Camp Program, educational arts outreach programs, and the Young Talent Big Dreams countywide youth talent contest in partnership with The Children’s Trust. To learn more about Actors’ Playhouse, visit www.ActorsPlayhouse.org.

About The Children’s Trust
The Children’s Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County. To learn more about The Children’s Trust, visit www.TheChildrensTrust.org.

About StayHome.Miami
Created by The Children’s Trust, StayHome.Miami is a website with free activities, resources and other digital tools to help parents, caregivers and children in Miami-Dade flourish at home during the coronavirus pandemic. Learn more at StayHome.Miami.