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ACTORS’ PLAYHOUSE AT THE MIRACLE THEATRE AND THE CHILDREN’S TRUST ANNOUNCE THE 2021 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS COMPETITION WINNERS

CORAL GABLES, FL – June 9, 2021 – Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre, together with presenting sponsor The Children’s Trust, are proud to announce the 2021 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, June 5, 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, the grand prize winner also received four tickets to Universal Orlando and a hotel stay for two nights, courtesy of WSVN 7News, plus $500 cash sponsored by the Coral Gables Rotary Club.

While staying safe at home and practicing social distancing, hundreds of kids between the ages of 8-17 answered the 2021 call to competition this season 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 five individual categories: pop/rock/rap vocals, musical theatre/jazz standards/classical vocals, dance, musical instrument and original vocal and/or instrumental composition. Group categories (six or fewer members) included dance, musical instrument/bands and vocal groups.

“Each year we marvel at the talent of the young people in our community, said Barbara S. Stein, executive producing director of Actors’ Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre. “Many of these individuals will go on to develop important arts careers, but regardless, they have made an impression with their fortitude and confidence in being part of this special youth event. We are very proud of the winners and of all the young people who participated in YTBD 2021.”

“As always, the youth of Miami-Dade County showcased their incredible talents throughout the Young Talent Big Dreams competition and especially in the finals,” said James R. Haj, president and CEO of The Children’s
Trust. “They continued to hone their amazing abilities during the pandemic and gave all of us a treat with their amazing performances.”

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; Howard Cohen, features writer, The Miami Herald; Ilisa Rosal, choreographer, dancer and artistic director, Ballet Flamenco La Rosa; Reggie Whitehead, two-time Carbonell Award-winning actor and national musical theatre director; and Karen Peterson Corash, founder, president and artistic director, Karen Peterson and Dancers.

2021 YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS CONTEST WINNERS:

**Individual Musical Instrument and Overall Grand Prize Winner**
Luka McLean-Gekic, 10, Virginia A. Boone Highland Oaks Elementary School

**Individual Dance Winner**
Luna Roseman, 12, Miami Arts Charter School

**Individual Original Composition Winner**
Elisa Echeverri, 13, Miami Arts Charter School

**Individual Vocal – Pop/Rock/Rap Winner**
Martina Travieso, 13, Miami Arts Charter School

**Individual Vocal – Broadway/Jazz/Classical Winner**
Anabelle Calles, 14, Miami Lakes Middle School

**Group Musical Instrument Winner**
Martina & Isabella
Martina Travieso, 13, Miami Arts Charter School; and Isabella Rose Sky, 15, Florida Virtual School

**Vocal Groups Winner**
Katerina Morin & Florencia Nieto
Katerina Morin, 13, and Florencia Nieto, 12, both students at Palmer Trinity School

**Group Dance Winners**
AP Mays MS Dancers
Emily Luna Martinez, 14; Jamilah Miller, 14; Nyla Smith, 12; all students at Arthur & Polly Mays Conservatory of the Arts

Past winners of the competition include Zachary Roy who 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.

**About Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre**

Actors' Playhouse is an award-winning nonprofit regional professional theatre company celebrating 33 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.

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