

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Varsity Arts Artist of the Year Top 10: Instrumental and vocal music

STAFF REPORT

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This year, 391 high school juniors and seniors were nominated by their teachers as the top Orange County students in theater, dance, instrumental music, vocal music, visual arts and film. Now, the quest is on to determine the top young artist in each discipline.

After reading application statements from the teachers and students, reviewing examples of the students' performances and artwork, and examining the artistic résumés of the nominees, we, with the help of a panel of arts teachers, have narrowed the complete list of nominees to a Top 10 in each discipline, for a total of 60 finalists.

Over the next few weeks, the Top 10 artists in each category will be interviewed by a panel of experts in their discipline. These experts include distinguished artistic professionals and faculty members from

Southern California universities as well as a few representative high school teachers. During the interviews, the students will present their art form, and afterward the panels will decide who will be named artist of the year for each discipline.

This week, we present the Top 10 nominees in instrumental and vocal music. Initially, 51 students were nominated in instrumental music and 60 in vocal music. In profiling the artists, we have included quotes from them that refer to their artistic aspirations and submitted works.

Instrumental musicians include those who perform in classical groups (orchestras, concert bands and chamber groups), marching bands, jazz ensembles and combos, and contemporary groups (pop, rock, folk, etc.). Vocal musicians include those who perform in the styles of classical, jazz, Broadway, contemporary and pop/rock.

Next week's issue of Varsity Arts will reveal the Top 10 nominees in theater and dance.

The winners will be announced May 1 in Varsity Arts.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

DORIAN APITZ

ESPERANZA HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: saxophone

"In the future, I want to be a recording artist. I would love to wake up every day knowing that I am doing what I love. I want to be part of a team of talented musicians that are able to work together and make one of the most beautiful things in the world: music. This would justify all the countless hours of practice and allow me to achieve my dreams."

GAVIN THORNBURG

TESORO HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: trumpet

"My favorite quote from an honor group conductor goes as follows: 'Where the body goes, the mind goes, and where the mind goes, the music follows.' It taught me that expression is something to be worked for and can take on much more meaning than I ever realized. My whole life I have been trying to understand what art means to me, and at the end of the day, the best forms of art I have experienced have been performing with other talented musicians and directors as we interpret the sounds, emotions and feelings from their composed works."

ALEXANDER FLAVELL

VALENCIA HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: piano

"My selections range from a slow ballad to up-tempo stride playing to a technical romantic selection. What I would like the audience to experience is a snapshot of the music that has influenced my development and the range of my emotions when I'm playing. Most of all, I hope that my music can speak for who I am."

NICHOLAS IM

BECKMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: cello

"Music has greatly influenced many aspects of my life. To be honest, the grand majority of my life revolves around music. Whenever I am not practicing the cello, I'm probably playing a different instrument. ... I've also developed everything that defines my person through music. Through music, I gained a better understanding of myself and what I aim to do with my life."

HANNAH KIM

ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Instrument: flute

"I hope that when people hear me play, they not only hear the composer's intentions but also the ways I make a piece my own. I hope that when people hear my interpretation of a piece, they can connect my performance to a memory or associate my performance with a feeling that will stay ingrained in their minds."

EMMA LEE

CREAN LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: cello

"The first piece I presented is Tchaikovsky's "Pezzo Capriccioso," one of the most romantic pieces you will ever play. It has a glorious beginning with lyrical melodies. This is the kind of piece you want to hear forever. The second piece is Chopin's "Polonaise Brillante." This piece is so much fun to play. I feel as though I'm dancing with my cello. Unlike serious pieces, I'm able to smile, have fun on stage and let the audience enjoy its playfulness with me."

JULIET KIM

CORNELIA CONNELLY SCHOOL

Instrument: violin

"I've chosen the Bruch Violin Concerto in G minor to perform because it is a piece that I've studied which embodies the romantic passion that I feel when performing. The piece begins slowly, building up into the fiery passion. This contrast pulls the audience into the piece."

JAMES RO

ORANGE LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: clarinet

"It is true that classical music has faded behind the popularity of modern music, like rap and pop music. However, as an artist, I want to teach and inform younger generations that classical music is a mode of human expression that reveals complex emotions. In general, I want to reawaken the public to the beauty that is classical music."

REBECCA SUH

IRVINE HIGH SCHOOL

Instrument: cello, violin, French horn

"The Lalo Cello Concerto ... allows the soloist to shine in many areas with passionate phrases, technical runs and cadenzalike flourishes. I was drawn to this piece for its exceptionally written solo lines as well as the raw emotion used by Lalo. In my rendition of this work, I aspire to tell a story. As I play I infuse drama, romance, tenderness and passion, but I leave it up to the listener to fill in the storyline."

JEMELEE WANG

ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Instrument: cello

"I play (music) because as someone who cannot produce colorful language to express certain emotions, I use music to do so. I love the freedom it gives me, its beauty so unique to itself, and the empowering and motivating meanings which underlie it. ... As an artist, I want to use my ability to spread classical music and give it greater accessibility. I want to help make it so that classical music is no longer alienated but rather much more relatable to the public."

VOCAL MUSIC

GABRIEL ANDRADE

GODINEZ FUNDAMENTAL HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal styles: contemporary cabaret/stage, musical theater

"The song that I'll be submitting is titled 'If I Can't Love Her' from the musical 'Beauty and the Beast.' This piece means a lot to me mainly because I performed it while I was going through a rough obstacle in my life. ... I cried on stage as I performed this piece because I was no longer myself for those four minutes of singing – I had become someone else."

KAITLIN BARRON

JSERRA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: classical/opera

"I love singing in German, and 'Verborgenheit' by Hugo Wolf really captures the emotions of love and loss. Another song, 'Dream a Little Dream of Me,' is a piece that I love because it can be sung in many different

styles. I chose to sing it in a jazz/folk style. This song is fun to perform because it expresses the happier side of someone in love.”

KATHERINE CHATMAN

HUNTINGTON BEACH HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: contemporary cabaret/stage

“I want to pursue (singing professionally) because I think it is amazing that I can have a job that makes me happy because I am doing what I love, but at the same time I am able to bring joy to people that I have never met before. Someone could be going through a rough time and if I am able to bring them a little joy during my performance, then I feel as though I have succeeded in doing my job.”

BRIANNA CLARK

BREA OLINDA HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: contemporary cabaret/stage

“I want to make an impact on the musical theater world. I want to inspire younger girls to know that it's OK to take a chance on something as spectacular as singing. ... I want to bring the art of storytelling through song to audiences and inspire ordinary people to do something extraordinary and bring a moment of joy into the life of others who may be looking for peace.”

SYDNEY DARDIS

ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Vocal style: classical/opera

“As artists, we are taught to figure out why we're singing, what we're singing and what the composer is trying to convey. When I sing 'Caro Nome' from 'Rigoletta' I am singing every cadenza and every trill as an expression of that feeling inside. Verdi's music touches me very deeply, and I would like the listener to feel like this piece touches them in such a way that it means something to them ... to me that would be magical.”

JASON RISDANA

ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Vocal style: classical/ opera

“In my aria, 'Aprite un po' quegli occhi' from 'Le Nozze di Figaro' by Mozart, my character feels a broad spectrum of emotions, ranging from defiant and seething with anger to heartbroken and void of any joy in his life. I thought it would be a fun challenge to sing this and get this aria in my body to perform. I hope people can feel the same loneliness, the same anger and the same hurt that my character does at this moment.”

KYLE GABRIEL

VALENCIA HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: classical/ opera

“In the future, I simply want to bring music to as many people as possible, be it through performance or composition, arranging or recording in a studio. I guess you could say a driving issue for me is the fact that so many people go about their lives never fully experiencing, nor appreciating the value, significance and power of the art of music. Thus, I seek to put forth my voice in the world, among the many other unique voices.”

JOSIAH HAUGEN

FULLERTON UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: classical/opera, contemporary cabaret/stage

“An aspect that I love about music is its ability to jump across borders and barriers that are placed by differences in language, culture or race. ... It is the very nature of human beings to share what that they love with others in order that they too might experience it, and so I long to share with others the beauty of music whether that be as a performer, teacher or music enthusiast.”

JENNA LEA ROSEN

LOS ALAMITOS HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: contemporary cabaret/ stage

“‘Now When the Rain Falls’ from ‘The Scarlet Pimpernel’ is one of my favorite songs to sing because the melody is so beautiful, and I really connect with the heartfelt and haunting lyrics. This song reminds me of my great grandma, and I think of her every time I sing it. During this song, I hope the audience can feel my emotion and my love of the song.”

MEDORA ZANI

DANA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Vocal style: classical/opera

“Music positively affects all other parts of my life. It has brought me closer with people that I didn’t think I would necessarily get along with. It has helped me with other parts of my life, and I am so thankful for that.”

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