



May 30, 2017

## **Songbook Academy® announces 2017 finalists**

Forty of nation's top teen vocalists earn positions for week of mentoring  
by Michael Feinstein and other arts and entertainment professionals

*Who will be crowned Songbook Youth Ambassador for the year?  
Tickets for public performance finals go on sale June 1*

CARMEL, IN – They rank among the top high school-age vocalists in the nation, hailing from Los Angeles, Portland, Houston, Miami, New York City, Detroit, St. Louis and right here in central Indiana. For one week this summer, they will experience a rigorous, exciting, expert-led introduction to the world of professional performing arts.

Founded by five-time Grammy nominee Michael Feinstein and now in its eighth year, the Great American Songbook Foundation's annual Songbook Academy® is the only high school intensive in the United States focused on the timeless pop, jazz, Broadway and Hollywood standards that have come to be known as the Great American Songbook. The 2017 Academy, sponsored nationally by the Central Indiana Community Foundation's Efrogmson Family Fund, is scheduled July 15-22 at the Songbook Foundation's headquarters, the Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel.

To apply, hundreds of young hopefuls submit audition videos for review by a panel of judges, who provide detailed personal feedback to every applicant. Only 40 students nationwide are selected each year to attend the Academy, a life-changing opportunity to experience workshops, master classes and mentoring from music industry professionals and respected university educators. Along with Feinstein, past mentors have included Broadway stars Laura Osnes and Jarrod Spector, Grammy-nominated jazz singer Jane Monheit and the Manhattan Transfer's Cheryl Bentley and Janis Siegel.

Participants are able to network with peers and pros, perform before live audiences and join the Songbook Academy Alumni Network to stay connected and informed about college programs, auditions and performance opportunities. The week culminates in the July 22 Songbook Academy Finals, a performance and competition presented by the Center for the Performing Arts in its acoustically superior 1,600-seat Palladium concert hall. Tickets go on sale Thursday, June 1, at (317) 843-3800 or [TheCenterPresents.org](http://TheCenterPresents.org).

Awards are presented for excellence in several categories, and top performers are invited to represent the Songbook Foundation and sing with Michael Feinstein at such venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the nation's top cabaret clubs. One alumna of the program is Maddie Baillio of League City, Texas, who claimed the 2014 Songbook Youth Ambassador title. Among other career steps since then, she appeared on national television last year as Tracy Turnblad in NBC's *Hairspray Live!* broadcast.

(continued)

The 2017 finalists are:

**Joie Bianco, Staten Island, NY**  
Talent Unlimited High School, NYC

**Taylor Bickett, Carmel, IN**  
Carmel High School

**Yarden Borshevsky-Barr, Friendswood, TX**  
Friendswood High School

**Logan Branch, East Greenwich, RI**  
East Greenwich High School

**Lucy Breedlove, Vienna, VA**  
James Madison High School

**Haley Burgh, Greenwood, IN**  
Center Grove High School

**Weston Clark, Zionsville, IN**  
Park Tudor High School, Indianapolis

**Kayla Daubenspeck, Lebanon, IN**  
Lebanon High School

**Morgan Demetre, Portland, OR**  
Cleveland High School

**Elizabeth DeVoto, St. Louis, MO**  
Nerinx Hall High School

**Hayden Elefante, Zionsville, IN**  
Zionsville Community High School

**Matt Engelken, Dubuque, IA**  
Hempstead High School

**Emily Estep, Fresno, CA**  
University High School

**Mathew Fedorek, Finleyville, PA**  
Lincoln Parks Performing Arts Charter School, Midland, PA

**Caleb Freeman, Webb City, MO**  
Webb City High School

**Sofia Gonzalez, San Gabriel, CA**  
Alverno High School

**Cynthia Kauffman, Zionsville, IN**  
Zionsville Community High School

**Cinderella Ksehati, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI**  
Grosse Pointe South High School

**Tara Lacy, Carmel, IN**  
Carmel High School

**Sara Lewandowski, Sylvania, OH**  
Sylvania Northview High School

**Ella Marcus, New York, NY**  
Fiorello LaGuardia High School

**Alec Melosini, Trabuco Canyon, CA**  
Santa Margarita Catholic High School

**Jonathan Mitzenmacher, Miami, FL**  
Coral Reef Senior High School

**Anja Reese, Carmel, IN**  
Carmel High School

**Finnian Sagal, La Cañada Flintridge, CA**  
La Cañada High School

**Jared Sayers, Lexington, KY**  
Lafayette Senior High School

**Adriana Scalice, Penfield, NY**  
Penfield High School

**Madeline Seitles, East Moriches, NY**  
Westhampton Beach High School

**Isabella Shiff, Glendale, CA**  
Lycee International de Los Angeles

**Joseph Silva, Reseda, CA**  
Notre Dame High School

**Wilson Smith, Greenwood, IN**  
Center Grove High School

**Sami Staitman, Woodland Hills, CA**  
Calabasas High School

**Lexi Staubi, Darien, CT**  
Darien High School

**Zoë Stewart, Mendon, MA**  
Home-schooled

**Lydia Talamante, Herndon, VA**  
Oakton High School

**Audrey Trullinger, Ambler, PA**  
Mount Saint Joseph Academy

**Emily Tschirhart, Ann Arbor, MI**  
Community High School

**Grace Tucker, Zionsville, IN**  
Zionsville Community High School

**George Walker, Decatur, IL**  
Eisenhower High School

**Cole Winston, Hartland, WI**  
Arrowhead High School

**About the Great American Songbook Foundation**

The mission of the Great American Songbook Foundation, founded by five-time Grammy® nominee Michael Feinstein, is to inspire and educate by celebrating the timeless songs of pop, jazz, Broadway and Hollywood. The Foundation is committed to preserving and elevating this rich legacy by curating physical artifacts of its creators, performers and publishers; offering programs for the public and research opportunities for scholars, historians and performers; providing educational opportunities and multidisciplinary curricula for student musicians; overseeing the Songbook Hall of Fame; and operating a multimedia gallery for public exhibition of its collections. More information is available at [www.TheSongbook.org](http://www.TheSongbook.org).

**CUTLINES**

- Michael Feinstein coaches Sam Mulligan of Mount Zion, IL, through a masterclass at the 2016 Songbook Academy.
- Finalists perform in the 2016 Songbook Academy closing concert at the Palladium.