



## PRESS RELEASE

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### RUTH ECKERD HALL THE MARCIA P. HOFFMAN PERFORMING ARTS INSTITUTE AND CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY PRESENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS TO STUDENTS

**Bernadette Peters, George Benson, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg & Chris Botti  
make presentation to students**

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**June 19, 2009, Clearwater, FL** – The finals for the Ruth Eckerd Hall 2008-2009 Youth Scholarships were held earlier this season resulting in cash awards in the areas of Vocal and Instrumental. Finalist awards were also determined in the Ruth Eckerd Hall/Clearwater Jazz Holiday Youth Jazz Scholarship. The awards were presented by guest artists when they appeared at Ruth Eckerd Hall this season.

In the Vocal Division, first place went to Erinn Botz, a senior at River Ridge High School. Her award was presented to her by Tony Award®-winning performer Bernadette Peters. Second place went to Alexa Bouchard, a senior at Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School. Third place went to David Bawel, also a senior at PCCA at Gibbs High School.

In the Instrumental Division, the first place award went to Eric D'Alessandro, a senior at Tampa Catholic High School. His award was presented to him by violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. The second place award went to Elizabeth Kitts, a senior at Alonzo High School. Third place was awarded to Jessica Ottaviano, a senior from J.W. Mitchell High School.

The Jazz Division, sponsored by Clearwater Jazz Holiday, was represented by two very talented musicians who both scored first place awards. Alexa Bouchard, a jazz vocalist, was a senior at PCCA at Gibbs High School. Alexa's award was presented to her by Grammy® Award winner George Benson. Emily Fredrickson, a senior at Tarpon Springs High School was awarded for her skill as a jazz trombonist. Emily's award was presented to her by trumpeter Chris Botti.

Each first place finalist will receive a cash award of \$2,500 with second and third place finalists receiving awards of \$500 and \$200 respectively.

All finalists for the 2008-2009 Ruth Eckerd Hall and REH/Clearwater Jazz Holiday Youth Scholarships are students of the Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute at Ruth Eckerd Hall.

Photo 1: Erinn Botz & Bernadette Peters. Photo credit: Cathy Nold.

Photo 2: Eric D'Alessandro & Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. Photo credit: Ian Beck.

Photo 3: Alexa Bouchard & George Benson. Photo credit: Cathy Nold.

Photo 4: Emily Fredrickson & Chris Botti. Photo credit: Cathy Nold.

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