



OPEN CALL TALENT PROJECT 2025

PRESENTING SPONSORS

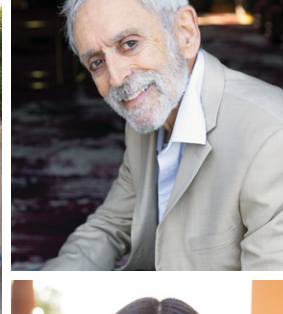
THE COMMANDER ALLEN DONOR ADVISED FUND | CITY OF PALM DESERT



Let your
LIGHT
shine



FRIDAY, MAY 2 7 PM SATURDAY, MAY 3 2 PM & 7 PM



Sponsorship support of Open Call helps underwrite the arts education programs and community engagement projects produced by McCallum Theatre. Each year, these dynamic initiatives serve close to 40,000 students, teachers and other community members.

OPEN CALL SPONSORS

PRESENTING

**The Commander Allen Donor Advised Fund
City of Palm Desert**

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Thank you to our generous sponsors!

JUDGES

ABI CARTER

RAY LIMON

DR. CHARLES T. MENGHINI

AMY NAKAMURA

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

WELCOME TO OPEN CALL!

We are honored to have you join us for this exciting event, where creativity, talent, and community come together. Get ready for a truly unique show featuring 90 exceptional community members, aged 10 to 79. This is our largest cast in years, with many newcomers and a few familiar faces returning to our stage. We are thrilled to share the journey of Open Call with each one of them.



Paul Cracchiolo and this year's finalists on stage at the first rehearsal in March. Paul has served as Open Call Musical Director since 1999 and his dedication and artistry have deeply impacted our local artists and community.

Community projects like Open Call offer a platform for all ages to showcase their talents, build confidence, connect with others, and grow as artists. These events strengthen community bonds by bringing people together to support and celebrate achievements. By participating, you contribute to a vibrant community that values artistic expression and collective growth and your involvement creates a positive impact that resonates far beyond the stage. Thank you!

Our finalists first met in March and came together for three dynamic rehearsals at McCallum, where they learned this year's finale song and choreography, *Let Your Light Shine*. They reunited on April 27 and have diligently polished their individual acts during this week's intensive rehearsals. Each performer has dug deep to bring their best to light throughout this process.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our amazing artistic collaborators, dedicated production team, the incredible McCallum staff and volunteers who support this unique project in countless ways, and our esteemed panel of judges who so generously give of their time and expertise. Our goal is always to create a meaningful experience for our finalists while delivering a show that captivates, entertains, and inspires our audience. At the end of the show, I hope you share your honest feedback by completing our online survey.*

Don't forget to cast your vote for your favorite act! The highly regarded Audience Favorite Award will be given out on Saturday evening to the act with the highest number of audience votes. You can participate by sending a text message on your mobile phone at the end of each performance. If you're new to this voting method, I encourage you to be adventurous and give it a try. The more audience participation, the better!

As the curtain rises, we express our deep gratitude to our generous sponsors and supportive community for making this incredible journey possible.

ENJOY THE SHOW!

Kajsa Thuresson-Frary

VP - Education, Open Call Artistic Director

***AUDIENCE SURVEY**





Proud to advance
the McCallum Theatre's transformative
education programs, inspiring Valley children
and celebrating local artists –
uniting to elevate and enrich the community.

The Commander Allen Donor Advised Fund

PRESENTING SPONSOR

Congratulations!

From the City of Palm Desert

The City of Palm Desert congratulates
the 2025 Open Call Finalists!
Thank you for bringing incredible talent,
heart, and soul to the McCallum Stage
and the Coachella Valley!



PALM DESERT

PalmDesert.gov

*Supporting Open Call is our way
of uplifting the incredible
creativity in our community.*

*We're honored to help give
local performers the stage they deserve
to move us, inspire us, and unite us
through the power of the arts.*

George & Nancy Maas

DIAMOND CIRCLE SPONSOR

**WE ARE THRILLED TO
BOOST THE CREATIVITY
OF OUR COMMUNITY AND
PROUDLY SUPPORT THE ARTS!**

Drs. Rainer & Carolyn Izu Bergmann

RUBY CIRCLE SPONSOR



**McCallum Theatre
and Open Call Artists**

**Thank you for all the terrific
entertainment you provide
our community!**

Jeanie & Fritz Wolff

EMERALD CIRCLE SPONSOR

**We are thrilled to honor
the exceptional local talent
showcased in Open Call Talent Project
while also backing the
remarkable education initiatives
of the McCallum Theatre.**

DOUG & PEG SCHMALZ

EMERALD CIRCLE SPONSOR

By supporting Open Call,
I'm proud to help provide
a platform for local performers
to shine and inspire,
bringing our community together
in the celebration of the arts!

JAN SALTA

EMERALD CIRCLE SPONSOR

Where community
meets creativity –
proudly supporting the arts!

CHUCK & KARLYN BOPPELL

EMERALD CIRCLE SPONSOR

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL OPEN CALL FINALISTS.
YOUR TALENT,
ENERGY AND COMMITMENT
INSPIRE US ALL.

Hal & Diane Gershowitz

EMERALD CIRCLE SPONSOR

27 YEARS OF OPEN CALL

74 PERFORMANCES

\$234,450 IN AWARDS

1,818 FINALISTS

74,350
AUDIENCE MEMBERS

THANK YOU!

OPEN CALL 2025

TALENT PROJECT

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kajsa Thuresson-Frary

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Paul Cracchiolo

CHOREOGRAPHERS/DIRECTORS

Amanda Kay White
and Jennifer Backhaus

PRODUCTION/STAGE MANAGER

Joanna Fookes

SCENIC DESIGN

Russell Holmes

SOUND DESIGN

James D. Anderson

LIGHTING DESIGN

Austin Womack

MAKE-UP & HAIR

Lynda Shaeps

VIDEO PRODUCTION

VanSant Studios

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tara Howard Photography

PROGRAM DESIGN

Mark Duebner Design



AUDIENCE SURVEY

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS!

1999

Blood Sisters, vocalists
(Allison Jones & Tricia Ridgeway)

2000

Beyond The Beat, dancers
(Cecilia Shahandeh & Jamie Bayard)

2001

Michael Tyree, vocalist

2002

Jamie Bayard & Lacey Schwimmer, dancers

2003

Allison Jones, vocalist

2004

Carrie St. Louis, vocalist

2005

Beyond The Beat, dancers
(Cecilia Shahandeh & Caesare Orlando)

2006

Simon Wiskowski, saxophonist

2007

Nico Bergmann, pianist

2008

Noah Yaghoubian, pianist

2009

Max Wang, pianist

2010

Julie Rosser, vocalist

2011

Rob Watkins, ventriloquist

2012

Gerald Colucci, vocalist

2013 (tie)

April Murphy, vocalist
Emma Reinhart, saxophonist

2014

Gerald Colucci, vocalist

2015

Brianna Finnell, vocalist

2016

Kaitlyn Farley, vocalist

2017

Javier Triviso, vocalist

2018

Cecelia Rose Stewart, vocalist

2019

Saigo Iniguez, vocalist

2022

Alisha Horan-Bates, vocalist

2023

Sylvia Quintana, vocalist

2024

Richard Caldera, pianist

Let your
LIGHT
Shine

2025 AUDITION PANEL

June Benson

Cardriner Bowden

Kathy Bumgarner

Gail DeZon

Laurie DeBellis

Sharon DiHaworth

John Ferrare

Susan Gelman

Russell Grant

Mike Hadley

Kay Hanson

JoAnn Horwitz

Valentina Lamdin

Dale Landon

Karen Lempert

Terri Neuman

Debbie Parry

Barbara Platt

Suellen Richmond

Lynda Shaeps

Julie Spira

Carlyn Stonehill

CJ Westrick-Bomar



SUMMER BREEZE *I SAW HER STANDING THERE*

By Paul McCartney and John Lennon

CHOREOGRAPHY Damon Brown

Abby Abiang, Brooke Allanbeck, Truman Arteche, Alden Claire Bello, Lauren Carranza, Kayla Chaidez, Sofia Cid-Smith, Sophia DeSilva, Keira Farmer, Shae Faulkner, Ethan Giraldo-Poley, Lillyan Hernandez, Oscar Hernandez, Madisen Karr, Sophia Lagos, Isabelle Martinez, Callista Warner, Buford Wiley



ROGER SNOFSKY *BEGIN THE BEGUINE*

By Cole Porter



RAY GONZALES *NOT FOR THE LIFE OF ME*

By Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan



RAZZMATAPZ *HANG TIGHT HONEY*

CHOREOGRAPHY Keely Ledebur and Kelly Mott

MUSIC *Hang Tight Honey* by Lainey Wilson, *Call It Country* by Travis Denning
Sylvia Avey, Keely Ledebur, Kelly Mott



CHARLIE HUMPHREY *WONDERING*

By Josh Cumbee



GRUPO FOLKLORICO TONANTZIN *JALISCO, EL LLANO GRANDE*

CHOREOGRAPHY Rosalia Castillo

MUSIC *El llano Grande* by D.A.R. and Andres Juarez Herrera
Karen Badilla, Yessica Fonseca, Mia Gonzalez, Mariajose Munoz, Mayra Munoz, Verenice Parra, Ximena Parra, Nathalia Rodriguez, Alina Torres



KIMBERLY COFER & JERRY MARTIN

HE ALWAYS COMES BACK

By Kimberly Cofer & Jerry Martin



DANIELA HASTINGS

FROM THE START

By Laufey



PAIGE WILLIAMS

MY DAYS

By Ingrid Michaelson and Joy Woods



RICHARD CALDERA & JOSH WITTE

CLAIR DE LUNE

By Claude Debussy



COACHELLA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL EXLP DANCE TEAM

CONGA NIGHTS

CHOREOGRAPHY Layla Bautista, Carmen Lopez, Juliana Martinez, Serra Rojas

MUSIC *Conga Mix* by Enrique Garcia and Gloria Estefan

Kimberly Aguilera-Andrade, Jay Arreola, Layla Bautista, Avery Contreras, Christopher Contreras, Nevina Espinoza, Kain Gil, Fernando Hernandez, Nicole Linares, Isabella López, Carmen Lopez-Ventura, Giada Maggioni, Esperanza Miranda, Prisila Navarro, Delaila Nuñez, Michelle Ramirez, Stephanie Rodriguez, Dayanara Saabedra, Anabel Sanchez, Clarissa Sanchez, Kianna Vargas, Luz Velasquez



AUDIENCE SURVEY

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO



PALM SWINGS ***DIGA DIGA DOO***

By Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh
Truman Arteche, Brandon Baez, Zack Blandon-Smalaj, Casey Burke,
Drake Leuschner, Malakai Lujan, Nathan May, Christian Nicholas,
Brandon Rivera, Brady Swank, AJ Wilder



SIERRA PETRILLA ***NAUGHTY***

By Tim Minchin



SHANTI WILDER ***QUEEN OF THE NIGHT***

By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Emanuel Schikaneder



AARON RUBIO ***CONCERTO IN G MAJOR***

By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT Paul Cracchiolo



SWARA D'SOUZA ***SWAR***

CHOREOGRAPHY Anthony Vega and Swara D'Souza
MUSIC Swar by Tara Mae and Ritesh D'Souza



ELIZABETH ARCHULETA RIVERA ***SHE USED TO BE MINE***

By Sara Bareilles
PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT Paul Cracchiolo



JON E. MARIANOWITS
ALL MY TOMORROWS

By Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn



AZTEC ARTS DANCE COMPANY
I AM LOST

CHOREOGRAPHY Hannah Woods

MUSIC *In This Shirt* by The Irrepressibles

Emmy Alegre, Emma Carranza, Julia Leal, Chloe Mayton, Elissa Miller,
 Shannel Ramos, Chloee Tullio, Lindy Wood, Hannah Woods



SHANE LAVENDER
TOMORROW

By Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin

PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT Paul Cracchiolo

Remarks by Kajsa Thuresson-Frary, Open Call Artistic Director
AUDIENCE VOTING

Let your
LIGHT
 Shine

FINALE – OPEN CALL FINALISTS

CHOREOGRAPHY/DIRECTION Amanda Kay White & Jennifer Backhaus

MUSICAL DIRECTION Paul Cracchiolo

LYRICS Kajsa Thuresson-Frary

MUSIC Kajsa Thuresson-Frary & Paul Cracchiolo

ARRANGEMENTS & ORCHESTRATIONS Paul Cracchiolo

PHOTOGRAPHY Tara Howard

CHOREOGRAPHY/REHEARSAL ASSISTANTS Chihiro Sano & Mo Goodfellow

AWARDS PRESENTATION | SATURDAY 7PM

Announced by Yvonne C. Bell, Chief Executive Officer

TALENT ACHIEVEMENT | \$750

Presented by Garry C. Kief, Chairman, McCallum Board of Trustees

AUDIENCE FAVORITE | \$2,500

Presented by Jan Harnik, Mayor, City of Palm Desert

SECOND PLACE | \$2,500

Presented by Brian Lewis, The Commander Allen Donor Advised Fund

GRAND PRIZE | \$5,000

Presented by Abi Carter, 2024 *American Idol* Winner

JUDGES

With her unparalleled vocal abilities and virtuosic piano skills, **ABI CARTER** is a standout among the next generation of artists. Growing up, Abi was a multi-year finalist and award-winner in McCallum's Open Call Talent Project. She then cut her teeth as a young teen busking on the streets of the Coachella Valley, breaking into the public eye in 2024 with her soulful, emotion-dripping performances on *American Idol*. Earning praise from superstars such as Billie Eilish and Katy Perry, Carter won *American Idol* in what was rumored to be a landslide vote. She's since headlined Acrisure Arena, where she played to a packed room of thousands of fans. Abi's latest tour included performances at various venues across the United States, and she performed at Stagecoach 2025. She recently released her debut album, *ghosts in the backyard*, which explores themes of growing up, fading relationships, and bittersweet memories. A powerful singer and songwriter, her music can be succinctly defined as a gorgeous blend of dynamic, dramatic vocals and ethereal, cinematic pop.

RAY LIMON is currently the Artistic Director for Desert Theatricals at the Rancho Mirage Amphitheater. He is a nine-time Desert Star Award winner for direction and choreography including the 2024 Outstanding Director and Choreographer Award for *Oklahoma*. Ray Limon has directed over 300 productions across the country including *South Pacific* starring John Raitt, *Christmas with Carol Channing* at the Agua Caliente Casino in Rancho Mirage, and the MenAlive concert featuring Liza Minnelli at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. He has staged countless shows and special events for Disneyland and Walt Disney World, including Walt Disney World's 4th of July Spectacular, the internationally televised Super Bowl XXI halftime show, and the opening to the Tournament of Roses Parade. Ray has been awarded the 2017 Los Angeles Robby Award for Best Choreography, the 2013 and 2016 San Diego Bravo Awards for Outstanding Director and Choreographer. He was awarded six Stage Scene LA Awards, two Los Angeles Robby Awards, three Inland Valley Theatre League Awards and two London Arms Pub and Playhouse Awards and is a four-time San Diego Drama Critic Circle award nominee. As a performer Ray has appeared in film and television including *Columbo*, *Exorcist II-The Heretic* and *Staying Alive* starring John Travolta.

DR. CHARLES T. MENGHINI is President Emeritus of VanderCook College of Music in Chicago. Menghini served as Professor of Music and Director of Bands from 1994 – 2017. Prior to his appointment at VanderCook, he spent 18 years as a high school band director in Missouri and Kansas where his bands earned national acclaim, performing in the Tournament of Roses Parade and the Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Menghini currently has his own podcast: *Band Talk with Charlie Menghini and Friends* available on Apple podcast, is co-author of the *Essential Elements Band Method* published by Hal Leonard and serves as an Educational Member of the Music Achievement Council for NAMM. Menghini is active as a speaker, clinician and conductor around the nation. He frequently presents at state and national music education conferences, works with teachers and school districts in a variety of forums and continues to write for professional magazines and journals.

AMY NAKAMURA received her training from Joffrey Ballet in New York City, her BA in Dance from California State University, Fullerton and an MFA in Dance from University of California, Irvine, where she was awarded the prestigious Leo Freedman Foundation Fellowship. She is also a certified pilates instructor from the Pilates Center of Orange County. Her choreography has been presented at many exciting venues including *Star Search*, the American College Dance Festival Gala, and has received numerous awards at national festivals including two Grand Prize awards at McCallum Theatre's Palm Desert Choreography Festival. She has taught at Chapman University, University of California Irvine, Orange Coast College, Santa Ana College, Orange County School of the Arts, Orange County Performing Arts Academy, and West Coast School of the Arts. She has been a professor of dance for over 20 years at Mt. San Antonio College where she has served as Dance Department Chairperson and Dance Director.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The combined audience vote from all three performances will serve as the fifth judge at the final performance.



AUDIENCE SURVEY



McCALLUM THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

73000 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260

For ticket information, phone (760) 340-ARTS (2787)

McCallumTheatre.org

The McCallum Theatre's mission is to entertain, educate and enrich the Coachella Valley community through world-class performances, critically-acclaimed education experiences and serving as the desert's premier performing arts center.

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BACK STAGE RECEPTION

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MANAGER - EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

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Claudia Bucher, Linda Kizzia,
Karen Rae Kraut, Calvin Larson,
Holly O'Farrell, April Rhodes,
Sue Roginski, Kudra Wagner

Shea New
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR - PALM DESERT
CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

FINANCE

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STAFF ACCOUNTANT

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The McCallum Theatre is proud to use JBL professional sound systems,
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Let your LIGHT Shine

The McCallum Theatre's mission is to entertain, educate and enrich the Coachella Valley community through world-class performances, critically-acclaimed education experiences and serving as the desert's premier performing arts center.

Visit McCallumTheatre.org or call (760) 776-6195 for more information.

OPEN CALL

TALENT
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