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Future Stars

(Special to the News/Mike Jurus)
 Ali, Liz and Jillian with
 Flossy Keesely



BOYS SCOOP PRIZES AT 5TH ANNUAL TALENT COMPETITION

By Rebecca Coleman

SOCIETY EDITOR

Boys at the 5th Annual Future Stars talent competition held last Sunday in the Boca Raton High School auditorium won four out of the six prizes. The competition attracted a record number of initial entries (200), along with a record attendance (650).
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Cover Story

Future Stars

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AJ Sciarretta and Neil Saffer



Alex Cottone



Connor McCabe

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Boys at the 5th Annual Future Stars talent competition held last Sunday in the Boca Raton High School auditorium won four out of the six prizes. The competition attracted a record number of initial entries (200), along with a record attendance (650).

The Future Stars talent competition, presented by the Rotary Club of Boca Raton HSCB Bank and Miami Systems, Inc., showcases the singing and dancing talents of middle and high students from Palm Beach and Broward Counties. Masters of Ceremony, Dr. Dennis Frisch and Neil Saffer, introduced 30 finalists who performed

live in front of the audience and five judges.

This year's winners were: Connor McCabe; High School Vocal, Thomas Porat, Middle School Vocal, Alex Cottone, Dance Solo; and Ali, Liz and Jillian, Dance Group. The Director's Choice Award for Vocal went to 13-year-old AJ Sciarretta, making his first public performance with "Shenadoah." The Director's Choice Award for Dance went to "The Fusion Dance Force" a 40-strong group of middle schoolers for a lively performance of the Cha Cha.

The first, second, and third-place winners received trophies, along with cash awards. New for this year, each first-place vocalist will receive a free recording studio time to produce a CD of the winning song. Each first place dance group or soloist will have the winning performance professionally videotaped. Boca Raton philanthropist, Flossy Keesely and singer Doug Crossley conceived these new awards. All 30 finalists received a participation trophy.

The audience included Mayor Susan Whelchel, City Council member Susan Haynie and hundreds of finalist's families and friends who were vocal in their support throughout the show.

The judges were: Ballerina Anna Pellechinka, vocal instructor Vicki White; theatrical teacher Sharon Chudnow; theatrical producer Jami Vass and dance teacher, Janet Mathie.

During judging, the audience was entertained by two 2007 Future Stars finalists, dancer, Shana Saffer (Dreyfoos School of the Arts) and singer Jessie Hoffman (Boca Raton HS).

Broadway musicals appeared to be the source of inspiration for most of the vocal finalists.

High School Vocal winner, Connor McCabe's rendition of "Empty Chairs" from "Les Misérables" was good enough to put him in first place. Thomas Porat, Middle School Vocal winner chose "I Wanna Go Home" from "Big." One of the most moving performances came from

high school vocal finalist, Mario Pavon. His portrayal of the Beast singing "If I Can't Have Her" from "Beauty and the Beast" was an audience favorite. Contrast that with St Andrews student Kendra Fulmer, who took to the stage in a white chiffon gown to sing "Wishing You Were Here Again" from "Phantom of the Opera."

The dance performances were equally varied. Dance Solo winner, Alex Cottone, had a beautifully fluid style for a male dancer. Ali, Liz and Jillian, Dance Group winners, were a trio in every sense of the word. They wore matching black sequined mini dresses and long straight hair—they took presentation as seriously as the choreography. But it was some of the youngest performers, "Fusion Dance Force," whose bright orange costumes, big smiles and high-energy performance of the Cha Cha, perfectly captured the spirit of the competition, said several observers.