



NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Marin School of the Arts/Novato High School Theatre Students Win Major Awards

(Novato, CA)...Marin School of the Arts at Novato High School had a huge night Monday, June 1, with theatre students winning major awards in San Francisco and San Jose. Senior Gabriel Cowger won the Beach Blanket Babylon \$10,000 college scholarship award in the final round of competition in the acting category. At the same time MSA's production of Young Frankenstein swept the Rita Moreno California High School Musical Honors in San Jose, winning both Best Overall Production, and individual acting awards.

Performing in San Francisco, Cowger and fellow student Megan Winnett were two of three acting finalists vying for the Steve Silver Foundation \$10,000 "Scholarship for the Arts," with six other Bay Area finalists competing in singing and dance. Both MSA finalists performed monologues at their personal best with the award ultimately going to Cowger.

Meanwhile, at San Jose's Center for the Performing Arts, MSA's production of Young Frankenstein, directed by Rodney Franz, choreographed by Devin Sullivan, with Musical Direction by Scott DeTurk, won the coveted Best Overall Production award at the Rita Moreno California High School Musical Honors - formerly called The California High School Musical Honors. MSA's outstanding cast was one of six competing before of a panel of nationally recognized judges including: choreographer and Broadway dancer Michael Balderama; director Michael Donovan; producer, director and choreographer Andy Ferrara; and Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award-winner, Rita Moreno. A video of MSA's YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN from its November run was also shown. Sponsored by Children's Musical Theater San Jose and Broadway San Jose, a Nederlander Presentation, the regional awards competition recognizes outstanding achievement in high school musical theatre outside of the Los Angeles area.

Among individual awards, MSA Junior Jordan Ford won Best Performance by a Supporting Actor, while Senior Sam O'Byrne and Sophomore Perry Borders won "Best Performance by an Actor" and "Best Performance by an Actress" categories. The entire MSA cast will join regional winners from around the nation at The National High School

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Musical Theatre Awards (NHSMTA)—also known as the Jimmy™ Awards—in New York City to perform Monday, June 29, on Broadway's Minskoff Theatre stage before industry experts and to compete for scholarship opportunities to New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts.

National High School Musical Theatre Awards participants will be in New York City June 24 through June 30 for group rehearsals, individual vocal and acting coaching by Broadway industry professionals, visits from special guests and discussions with working actors. They will enjoy a night out in Times Square for dinner and a Broadway show, and on the final day of the program, a session with a Broadway casting agency.

Judge Michael Donovan said he was impressed by the professionalism and timing of the MSA production. In accepting the award, Director Franz thanked his “dream cast and crew,” production team and MSA Theatre Boosters. He added, “Thanks to Mel Brooks for taking one of my favorite films and gilding the lily. Overall, this zany show has been a wonderful opportunity and we have enjoyed the journey. It's even more exciting to win this award this year, now that it is connected to Rita Moreno, a performer who has been, and continues to be, an inspiration to so many.”

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Photo caption: The cast of MSA's Young Frankenstein after winning Best Musical Production and individual acting awards.

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