

CENTRESTAGE **E** **FINAL PERFORMANCE** **BRAMPTON**

**A CITY OF BRAMPTON PERFORMING ARTS
PROGRAM FOR YOUTH**

April 16, 2025

ARTS ADVENTURES
BRAMPTON ON STAGE

WELCOME TO CENTRE STAGE 2025



Jimish Thakkar, Director
Arts Education & Cultural
Programming Facilitator,
City of Brampton

As each participant takes their first step into the spotlight, I am reminded of the profound truth that “the beginning is the most important part of the work.” How we start shapes how we grow, learn, and ultimately fall in love with a craft. I have no doubt that this experience will lay the foundation for a lifelong passion and appreciation for the arts, inspiring each participant to continue shining both on and off the stage. I am truly inspired by the dedication and talent displayed by each young artist. Witnessing their growth and creativity has been an incredible journey, and I feel both proud and fortunate to have been a part of it here at Centre Stage and can’t wait to see all that they will achieve.

Jimish Thakkar, Director
Arts Education & Cultural Programming Facilitator, City of Brampton



Jett Dunkley
Arts & Culture Programs
Assistant, City of Brampton

Anything is possible. Just put the work in, be brave, and follow your dreams!

Jett Dunkley
Arts & Culture Programs Assistant, City of Brampton

CENTRE STAGE BRAMPTON

TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE

In alphabetical order

Amiee Sawyers & Jamelia Russell performing the song *You are the Reason* by Calum Scott, written by Calum Scott, Corey Sanders, and Jon Maguire

Angelica Blanding performing the song *Unbreak My Heart* by Toni Braxton, written by Diane Warren

Dontae Nathan performing a monologue called *Missing Homework*, written by Elyse H.

Elizabeth Ogunseye performing the song *My Way* by Frank Sinatra, written by Paul Anka

Holden Shepheard performing an original song called *A Part of Me*

Inara Simoneschi & Liam Pietras-Poblete performing the song *Alfie* by Dionne Warrick, written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David

Lena Paunic & Simon Nicolas performing the bench scene from *500 Days of Summer*, written by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber

Lucille Weeden performing an original song called *Just Don't Leave*

Mackenzie Ruby-Sanguigni performing the *Joker's Last Laugh* monologue from *Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker*, screenplay by Paul Dini

Owen Kirk performing Greg Heffley's *It's a Journal* monologue from *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Priyani Kumar performing a monologue from *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han

Saba Marmourizadeh performing the flute solo *Berceuse Op. 16* by Gabriel Fauré

Savanah Taveira-Sobers performing *Real Man*, written by beabadoobee

Zeina Althea Magcaling performing *When We Were Young*, written by Adele Adkins and Tobias Jesso Jr.

2024-2025 CENTRE STAGE PERFORMERS



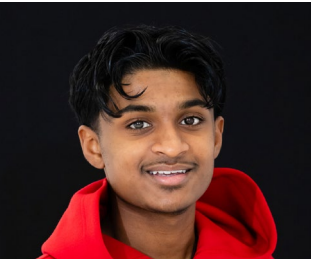
AMIEE SAWYERS

Aimee is a 17-year-old singer who has had a lifelong connection with music. She began singing in church, and has since performed at weddings, birthday parties, and funerals. She auditioned for *America's Got Talent* twice, and you may also recognize her from last year's Centre Stage performance. She is one-half of the duo "Black 'n' White" performing in Centre Stage this year!



ANGELICA BLANDING

Angelica is a 16-year-old student at Mayfield Secondary School with a strong background in performance. She has been featured in *The Toronto Star*, Lorraine Lawson Vocal Studios, and graduation and award ceremonies. She competes in ensemble competitions and has been invited to Nationals numerous times. Trained in piano at Aspire Academy of Music, Angelica also has diverse interests in cooking, crocheting, cosmetology, and fashion design, with music being her greatest passion.



DONTAE NATHAN

Dontae is an award-winning Sri Lankan actor based in Brampton. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Young Artist Academy Award (US), Joey Awards (Vancouver), and the Brampton Arts Citizenship Award. He most recently starred in ad campaigns for Amazon and has appeared in several TV shows, commercials, short films, and music videos in Canada and across the world. @the_dontae_official



ELIZABETH OGUNSEYE

Elizabeth is a 17-year-old artist with a passion for singing and acting. She uses her voice and words as a powerful means of self-expression, eager to share her unique perspective with the world.



HOLDEN SHEPHEARD

Holden is an artist who is ready for the next step in his career. He's here for his final year in Centre Stage and will be off to college for indie music in September, where he hopes to learn as much as possible. He aims to build his own brand and reach the people who will hear him.



INARA SIMONESCHI

Inara is a 14-year-old singer/songwriter and violinist, currently attending St. Roch School of the Arts. She has been involved in numerous performances over the years and has received training from the esteemed Zamar Music Academy. She has a passion for painting and sculpting and enjoys studying linguistics, theology, and geography. Inara is one to watch as she moves through her musical journey and growth as a vocalist.



JAMELIA RUSSELL

Jamelia is a 16-year-old vocalist who has been serenading audiences for as long as she can remember. She's open to whatever opportunity that may come her way, but loves R&B, soul, gospel, and musical theatre. You may recognize her from last year's Centre Stage show or at open mics around the city. Whenever she sings, it brings her peace, and she will forever hold music in her heart.



LENA PAUNIC

Centre Stage is Lena's first experience with acting, although she has been passionate about the arts from a young age. She is an avid writer whose works have been published in both English and French. Beyond the written word, she enjoys playing baseball and guitar. As Lena continues her education, she aspires to pursue a career in screenwriting while continuing to hone her acting skills. She is excited to bring her unique perspective and enthusiasm to the stage in many more performances to come.



LIAM PIETRAS-POBLETE

Liam is a 13-year-old pianist, singer, and performing arts enthusiast. He has been in countless music academy recitals and school performances since he was young. Liam finds passion in learning new choreographies and expressing himself through all forms of art. To Liam, art isn't just a hobby, but a necessity of life.



LUCILLE WEEDEN

Lucille is a 13-year-old singer/songwriter from Caledon. She loves filling her time with music, theatre, and art, and is a classically trained pianist. Lucille finds her creative outlet through songwriting and enjoys performing her music for audiences of all sizes.



MACKENZIE RUBY-SANGUIGNI

Mackenzie is a driven and dedicated performer, beginning what will be a long and prosperous career in performing arts. His previous shows include *Shrek the Musical Jr*, *Clue: On Stage - High School Edition*, and *The Dining Room*. He would like to thank his family, friends, teachers, and colleagues, who have all shown him nothing but love and support over the years. They are the reason he has the strength and confidence to go out on stage and perform each and every line, song, and dance.



OWEN KIRK

Owen is a rising star in the world of acting and modeling, having started his journey just over a year ago. In this short time, he's taken part in several acting workshops, including JRP virtual, Larissa Mair Casting Youth, and the City of Brampton's Audition Intensive. Owen's acting debut was as the Tin Man in his school's production of *The Wizard of Oz*, and he's looking forward to a long and successful career in the entertainment industry. Owen enjoys playing competitive soccer and spending time with family and friends.



PRIYANI KUMAR

Priyani is a performer who knew she was meant to be doing so from an early age. With a deep love for film, television, and theatre, she has taken on various roles in short films and honed her on-screen acting skills at LB Studios. Her theater journey began with *Aladdin*, and she is thrilled to return to the stage at Centre Stage. Beyond acting, Priyani is dedicated to keeping the arts alive at her school, actively contributing to its TV studio. She enjoys playing tennis under the scorching sun and studying Latin, hoping to help revive the ancient language. After high school, she looks forward to pursuing her acting career in California.



SABA MARMOURIZADEH

Saba is a 15-year-old classical flute player who has been playing for eight years. She loves to perform her art and has participated in over 50 performances. Saba also loves powerlifting and spends most of her day lifting at the gym. She believes all these performances wouldn't have been possible without the support of her family!



SAVANAH TAVEIRA-SOBERS

Savanah is a 13-year-old vocalist with a passion for the performing arts. She is a former member of the Brampton Music Theatre Youth Troupe and is an active member of the youth choir at her church. She has been accepted into a specialized vocals program in high school for Grade 9. Her credits include singing with the Mini Pop Kids and with the Brampton Concert Band. When she's not performing, she enjoys creating stories, plot lines, writing plays, and creating random pieces of music!



SIMON NICOLAS

Simon is an experienced performer with a passion for acting for TV and film. With training from the Leblanc School of Acting, LB Studios and more, Simon takes their craft to the next level with each opportunity. Most recently, Simon was cast in the Youth Wellness Ad Campaign by the Ontario Government and has had appearances in *The Dessert* on Crave TV and *Kaudo* (2020) which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (2021).



ZEINA ALTHEA MAGCALING

Zeina Althea is a singer and guitarist who has been performing since the age of three. Her musically inclined family has supported and guided her throughout her career. Zeina gained her strong and emotional stage presence from her experience competing provincially in the Philippines and in St. Roch's Regional Arts Program. Most recently, Zeina performed for the City of Brampton's Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Ontario Band Association Competition, where she won gold.

2024-2025 CENTRE STAGE LEADERS



DAMARE FRANK

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

From Scarborough coming to Brampton, 18-year-old Damare is currently in high school at Chinguacousy Secondary School. He is currently representing Chinguacousy BSA, Chinguacousy Community Shield, and Drama Club.



FRANCHESKA LIBAO

STAGE MANAGER

Francheska Libao (she/her) is a Filipino stage manager based in the GTA. She is a graduate of Humber College's Theatre Production Program. Select credits include *CANCELLED!* (Toronto Fringe), *Harabogee and Me* (Shakespeare in Action), *Come from Away: The Concert* (Marquis Entertainment), *Erased* (Theatre Passe Muraille), *Something Rotten*, *Mean Girls*, and *Newsies* (Bravo Academy). Thank you to her family for supporting her love for theatre.



JETT DUNKLEY

ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAMS ASSISTANT, CITY OF BRAMPTON

Jett is a multi-talented music artist known for crafting immersive soundscapes that blend hip-hop, lo-fi, and jazz with subtle electronic influences. A self-sufficient creator, he writes, produces, and performs his own music, seamlessly combining intricate beats, soulful melodies, and introspective lyrics. His dynamic artistry bridges the gap between smooth, chilled vibes and raw, heartfelt storytelling, while intertwining his love for videogames, art, and anime.



JIMISH THAKKAR, DIRECTOR

ARTS EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING FACILITATOR, CITY OF BRAMPTON

Jimish Thakkar is an actor, director, and drama educator, currently leading The Hive Performing Arts, a Brampton-based not-for-profit dedicated to producing community-engaged, inclusive theatre that reflects the diversity of contemporary cultures. With over two decades of performing arts experience as an actor, director and arts educator, Jimish has helmed a multitude of theater productions while also dabbling in television, stand-up comedy, short films, and radio commercials.

ABOUT CENTRE STAGE

VISION

Centre Stage exists to nurture young Brampton artists through professional development workshops and an annual showcase presentation.

By creating space, resources, and opportunities for student artists in Brampton, Centre Stage nurtures our city's artistic community—now and into the future.

TRAINING

Beginning in December 2024, performers have been working with professional artists to further develop their artistic techniques and understanding. Much appreciation to our audition panel and instructors who shared their valuable insights and experiences with participants.

2024-2025 CENTRE STAGE INSTRUCTORS



ALEXIA VASSOS

ACTOR, WRITER

Alexia Vassos (she/her) is an actor, writer, and consultant. An alumna from the Theatre and Drama Studies joint program (U of T and Sheridan College), she holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honours and an Advanced Diploma in Acting. She has appeared on stage and screen in a variety of theatre productions, commercial campaigns (Amazon, PetSmart, and McDonald's) and TV/film ventures (*Under the Christmas Tree*, *Pink Is In*). Alexia combines her love of the arts with her passion for disability advocacy, moderating events (Canadian Film Centre, ReelAbilities Film Festival) and facilitating workshops (Thatz Showbiz) that feature disabled artists and focus on accessibility within the industry. Alexia is in the process of creating a solo show centred around growing up disabled in a family that overshadows and a world that under-serves.



DARSHANA THAKKAR

BUSINESS OF THE ARTS

Founder and Producer of The Hive Performing Arts, Darshana balances science and art as a skilled Clinical Research professional. Her role as a producer at The Hive allows her to seamlessly bring captivating productions to life on stage. With expertise in overseeing every aspect of a production, she adeptly balances and coordinates the business and financial elements, including casting. Having successfully produced around 35 community-engaged theatrical productions, Darshana's unwavering passion resonates through her meticulous approach to all facets of staging a production. From start to finish, she wholeheartedly embraces the challenge of crafting unforgettable theatrical experiences.



EMILY SEARLE

MUSICAL THEATRE

Emily Searle graduated from Italia Conti School in England with a First-Class Honours degree in Musical Theatre in 2021. Since moving to Canada, she has performed in Brampton Music Theatre's productions of *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy), *Rent* (Feature Vocal/Dance Core), and Brampton's 50th Birthday Showcase (Soloist/Dance Core). Through her training, she built up an extensive skillset in singing, dancing, and acting as well as industry knowledge. She specialises in ballet, jazz, musical theatre dance, contemporary musical theatre singing, and acting through song. She has worked professionally in England, appearing in plays and musicals across the southwest. Emily started teaching ballet, jazz, and tap at age 16 and has been teaching in some capacity ever since. Currently, she is a teacher and choreographer for BMT's Youth Troupe.



JILLIA CATO

DANCE

Afro-Indo-Caribbean artist Jillia Cato, from Trinidad and Tobago, excels in Caribbean performing arts and is deeply connected to her Caribbean heritage. She thrives as the Assistant Artistic Director with KasheDance and is actively engaged with the Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario. As a performer, choreographer, and stage manager, she celebrates diverse cultures through movement and creativity. A proud valedictorian of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, her journey includes a vibrant history of performing internationally with renowned soca artists and contributing to numerous productions. She is dedicated to fostering artistic expression and community engagement through dance and the arts!



KEVIN A. ORMBSY

DANCE

Artistic Director of KasheDance, and Co-Director / Curator of Programming and Engagement at Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO), Kevin centres culturally responsive advocacy, strategy, art, space / place making and communities in his work. He is the Theatre Centre's Patrick Connor Award recipient (2023), a nominee (2023) and finalist (2021) for the Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, and recipient of Canada Council for the Arts' Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award (2014). He is on the Boards of Dance Collection Danse, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts, and was Board Chair for Nia Centre for the Arts and has taught at Centennial College's Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts- UWI (Mona), UWisc-Madison, Northwestern University, and the UT-Austin.



MARCEL STEWART

DIRECTORIAL

Marcel Stewart is the Artistic Director of bcurrent Performing Arts and the Director of Artistic Outreach for SpiderWebShow Performance. Together with Adrienne Wong and Michael Wheeler, he curates FOLDA, an annual festival of live digital art in Kingston, Ontario. For three years, Marcel was the Outreach Director at Suitcase in Point, co-founding the Nest Artist Residency and Electric Innovations. When Marcel is not creating theatre, he is an arts educator who has facilitated programming for community youth groups, professional actors, and students in university, high school, and elementary. He has taught classes at the National Theatre School of Canada, Brock University, and Sheridan College.



NICOLE CHAMBERS

BUSINESS OF THE ARTS

Nicole Chambers is a Brampton-based singer-songwriter known for her soulful voice and heartfelt lyrics. She has a passion for music that began at an early age, and she has a background in jazz vocals from Mohawk College. Nicole has released four projects, each showcasing her unique blend of contemporary R&B with influences from soul and jazz. *Voice Of Virgo* introduced audiences to her distinct sound and emotional depth, earning her critical acclaim. Nicole landed a feature on the CBC show *Sort Of* (Season One). Following this success, she released *Love Had Other Plans*. Her latest project, *Love Had Other Plans Part Two*, showcases her artistic evolution and experimentation with new sounds, demonstrating her versatility as an artist.



PAM LEVI

SONGWRITING & VOCALS

Pam Levi is a First Nations singer/songwriter from Elsipogtog First Nation, now based in Brampton. She has recorded three albums: two on the topic of First Nations politics, and a Christmas album. She has collaborated with many artists and spends lots of her time in her family's recording studio as an audio engineer and recording artist for other artists. She has participated in musical productions and tours, which led to a spot on *The Candy Show* on APTN. She has performed alongside the Barra McNeils, Jesse Cox, Hubert Francis, and many others. She has hosted songwriters' circles with David Myles, Naomi Shobha, Lucie Idlout, and Dave West. Pam shares her love of writing with her whole musical family and looks at music as self-therapy—because for her, music is medicine.



SUMMER SAIEGH MIHAIL

STAGE READINESS

Mrs. Summer Saiegh Mihail, a seasoned judge and passionate performing arts advocate, brings a wealth of diverse performance experience spanning over a decade to global audiences. Trained in vocal and acting under esteemed, renowned experts in the performing arts, Mrs. Summer has graced diverse musical productions, directed, written, and contributed to prestigious performing arts companies in Ontario. She also engages audiences as a passionate and compelling conference speaker, championing the transformative power of the arts. As an Ontario Certified Teacher with a Master of Education Degree, Mrs. Summer is committed to the universal power of education. Mrs. Summer has been the proud Director of SPARKLE Performing Arts Studio. @SummerSaiegh

AUDITION PANELISTS



Dancer & musician **Omega Mighty**, rapper & community leader **Spitty**, and City of Brampton's **Taylor Shannon & Reé Morgan** (Cultural Services)

SPECIAL THANKS

Since its inception as a Youth Awards Gala Performance in 2006 and evolution into a training program in 2019, Centre Stage has been generously supported by Brampton On Stage's wonderful donors. Without their support for arts education and access for youth in our community, this program would not be possible.

Many thanks to Mayor Brown and Council for their enthusiastic support of Brampton's youth and arts and culture initiatives.

Sincere appreciation to the entire Cultural Services team for supporting Centre Stage, including the Brampton On Stage technical team who make us look and sound amazing, and to our incredible instructors who shared their wisdom and passion.

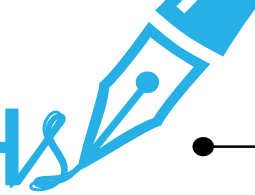
COMING UP NEXT IN CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Pass the Mic – May 1 (Cyril Clark Brampton)

Arts Inside workshops – May 21 and June 18 (The Rose Studio)

Check out all programs at brampton.ca/culture

AUTOGRAPH



**BRAMPTON
ON
STAGE**