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## **Darien's Got Talent Finalists for 2016 Announced**

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The Darien Arts Center has named the 20 finalists from Darien and neighboring towns who will compete in Darien's Got Talent on June 25 at 7 p.m. at Darien High School.

Auditions for the fundraiser took place on May 21 and 22 in the DAC Weatherstone Studio, with almost 60 contestants, ages 10 and older, auditioning for the preliminary judges.

Auditioning acts included singers, dancers, musicians, bands, comics and theatrical performers. The chosen finalists will move on to compete for cash prizes in front of a live audience and a panel of accomplished entertainment professionals in the finals show.

*The finalists for Darien's Got Talent in the adult category are:*

- Tom Giles,
- Katherine Gunya,

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- Zach Heyde,
- Karen Joyce Miller,
- Riley Wells Thrush,
- a dance group consisting of Donyae Carter-Smith, Christopher Thigpen, Toni Yarrell, Alexis Askew, Najheera Miller, Cedric Thigpen, Domonique Carter-Stanley, Morgan Henry, Le'Ashia Langley, David Daniel, Davante Thomas, and Elisha Yarrel,
- a musical group of Laura Anglade and Grant Morro,
- a musical group of Paul Nelson and Jess Wilkes,
- and a singing group of Grady Allen, Carson Stewart, and Jordan Kalonydes.

*Finalists in the children's category are:*

- Isabella Bardos,
- Ella Bates,
- Lauren Blake,
- Taylor Felt,
- Clare Noelle King,
- Rica Monaghan,
- Ben Roland,
- Sommer Schmidt,
- Quinn Taylor, and
- a rock band consisting of Ben Teolis, Adeline Teolis, Rodrigo Galavis, and Diego Ferreira.

### **Judging the finals are**

—renowned jazz musician Joel A. Martin,

—Broadway writer and director Dan Goggin,

—former professional ballet dancer Ashlee Knapp Stewart,

—music industry producer John Doelp and

—producer of Kinky Boots, Jane Bergere.

Broadway and Hollywood director, producer and writer, BT McNicholl will act as Master of Ceremonies for Darien's Got Talent, and accomplished musician and composer Chris Coogan is musical director. Director Carole Claps returns to lead the production.

Baywater Properties, Dana Fead, Realtor, East Coast Irrigation, the Eenkema van Dijk family, Goodnow Investment Group, Darien Rowayton Bank and Andrew Stefanou Salon and Spa generously sponsor the DAC fundraiser.

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Tickets for Darien's Got Talent are \$35 for adults and \$20 for students at [darienarts.org](http://darienarts.org). VIP tickets are \$125 and include front row seating and entry to the post show party. Family sponsorships start at \$500 and include 5 or more VIP tickets and entry to the post show party.

Darien High School is located at 80 High School Lane. For more information, call (203) 655-8683. The DAC is a nonprofit organization, which offers educational programming in dance, visual arts, theatre and music, as well as special events and live theatre productions by DAC Stage. The Darien Arts Center is located at 2 Renshaw Road in Darien, behind the Town Hall.

Founded in 1975, the Darien Arts Center (DAC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing visual and performing arts programs and events for the community. The DAC offers educational programs in Dance, Visual Arts, Music & Theatre, & special events & live theatre performances by DAC Stage. Private donations, grants, tuition fees & ticket sales fund the DAC, which is located at 2

Renshaw Road, behind the Town Hall. For further information, call (203) 655-8683 or visit [darienarts.org](http://darienarts.org).