



## Harriston Singer Wins Community Talent Search

*Emily MacRobbie Is Voted The First-Place Winner by Audiences*

Friday, April 8, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Drumroll please! **Emily MacRobbie** of Harriston is the first-place winner of Drayton Entertainment’s *Great Community Talent Search*. MacRobbie captured the audience’s attention with her rendition of the Bob Dylan classic “Make You Feel My Love,” singing the Adele arrangement. **Simon Zenker** of Elmira landed in second place with his incredible juggling skills, and **Malia Dilana Afonso** of Leamington came in third place with her powerful performance of “Never Enough” from *The Greatest Showman*

“It feels so awesome to be chosen by the audience as the winner! Thank you to everyone who voted,” said MacRobbie when Artistic Director **Alex Mustakas** called to let her know she had taken the top honours. “I was just grateful for the opportunity to perform. I had no expectations. What a wonderful experience!”

Non-professionals from around the province clamoured to enter *The Great Community Talent Search* last fall, and only nine finalists were selected to be showcased in the not-for-profit theatre company’s digital series *Backstage Pass*, which ran on Sunday nights from January 30 to April 3. Each finalist was given the opportunity to have their act professionally filmed on stage at the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge. Then, the finalists were featured one by one in nine episodes of the *Backstage Pass* series culminating in a recap of all the performances during the 10th episode finale. Audiences voted for the winner after the series ended.

The Top 9 Finalists included **Malia Dilana Afonso** of Leamington, **Emily MacRobbie** of Harriston, **Faridhusen Mansuri** of Guelph, **Emma Reynolds** of Penetanguishene, **Adam Rigby and Cayleigh Lennox** of Dundas, **Rezonation Quartet** of Kitchener-Waterloo, **Abigail Shatford** of Pelham, **Daniella Vega-Hickey** of Cambridge, and **Simon Zenker** of Elmira.

“We are proud of the way this contest turned the spotlight on some incredible non-professional talent in Ontario,” said **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “It’s been great to see the variety of talent from singing and dancing to juggling and more. Plus, the

geographic reach of the search spanned across the province from Penetanguishene to Leamington, Pelham to Dundas, and beyond.”

As the first place winner, Emily MacRobbie will receive a Golden Ticket Package, which includes tickets to shows at all five Drayton Entertainment locations in 2022, plus dinner and accommodation for an overnight stay in the area surrounding each venue. As the second and third place winners, Simon Zenker will receive a gift certificate for 4 tickets to any Drayton Entertainment production, and Malia Dilana Afonso will receive a gift certificate for 2 tickets to any Drayton Entertainment production.

*The Great Community Talent Search* was open to non-professional people of any age who reside in the province of Ontario.

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### **About Drayton Entertainment**

Drayton Entertainment is an award-winning, not-for-profit charitable organization (12591 1313 RR0001) operating seven live theatrical venues in five unique Ontario locations – the original Drayton Festival Theatre in Drayton, Huron Country Playhouse (Mainstage and South Huron Stage) in Grand Bend, King’s Wharf Theatre in Penetanguishene, St. Jacobs Country Playhouse and Schoolhouse Theatre in St. Jacobs, and the Hamilton Family Theatre in Cambridge.

With over 400 artist contracts issued annually, Drayton Entertainment is one of the largest employers of professional artists in the country – across all artistic disciplines. The organization’s sustainable theatre model has emerged as a powerful force for culture and tourism in Ontario and has been recognized by the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario as well as the Ontario Innovation Excellence Awards.