

MU PHI EPSILON

Palos Verdes/South Bay Alumni Chapter
Spring 2024 Scholarship Awards

Chester Roi Perez-Bingham, 1st Place \$1,500.00 Patron Scholarship



Chester Roi Perez-Bingham is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music. At CSU Long Beach, they studied under Aram Barsamian and joined the Bob Cole Chamber Choir in 2021 under Dr. Jonathan Talberg. They have since performed as a tenor soloist in multiple performances such as Handel's Messiah (2022) in Newport Beach as the tenor soloist and the Bob Cole Chamber Choir Italy | Slovenia Tour (2023). Chester also performs regularly with local opera company, Opera Italia LLC. Recent engagements include Il Gatto & Lucignolo in Pinocchio (Valli), Duca Bertrando in L'inganno felice (Rossini) as an understudy, and their most recent upcoming role of Ernesto in Don Pasquale (Donizetti) 2024. Chester plans to pursue a master degree in Vocal Performance after graduating with their bachelor degree in music and is honored and grateful to receive a scholarship that will help them pursue that goal.

Shania Carden, 2nd Place \$1,000.00 Ruth Cuccia Memorial Scholarship



Shania Carden is a 25-year-old soprano based in Southern California. Her recent engagements include singing the role of Madame Rosa in Donizetti's Il campanello and Pinocchio in Natalia Valli's Pinocchio with Opera Italia Los Angeles. She will be traveling to Philadelphia this summer to perform the role of Zerlina in Mozart's Don Giovanni. Shania is also an avid chorister. Some highlights include singing at Maestro at the Movies at the Hollywood Bowl under Gustavo Dudamel and premiering Jake Runestad's The Lighthouse Keeper with the Bob Cole Chamber Choir. She received her Bachelor degree from Cal State Fullerton in 2021 and her master of music in voice performance at Cal State Long Beach in 2024. She studies voice under Dr. Katharin Rundus. Shania is honored to receive a scholarship from the Palos Verde/South Bay Alumni Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon towards her education.

Isaiah Williams, 3rd Place \$750.00 Darlene Vlasek Memorial Scholarship



Isaiah Williams is a singer and Applied Music Student at El Camino College. Originally from Carson, CA, he found his way to El Camino after leaving the University of Pennsylvania to better align his studies with his passions for music and art. Now at ECC, he has committed to studying a wide variety of repertoire, spending some time in the jazz program before beginning his current studies of classical and Broadway voice with Professor Erin Wood. He also spends his free time nurturing many other musical interests in the realm of popular music from R&B to Rock to Latin. He is deeply passionate about music and aims to use all the knowledge he is cultivating as an influence on his own original songs and compositions. He dreams of sharing his passion with the world as a recording and Performance artist. In the meantime, you can find him singing tenor in El Camino's chorale or baritone in its vocal jazz ensemble. He also lends his voice to the gospel group Genesis: The Balm, and to the band he started with classmates called DIIICE.

Alexander Nunley, \$500.00 Mary Feyk Memorial Scholarship



Alexander Nunley is a classical clarinetist and composer from Torrance, California. He currently studies music at El Camino College where he performs as a member of the Symphony Orchestra and Applied Music Program. As a student at South Torrance High School, Alexander played in the Wind Ensemble, Advanced Jazz Band, and the award-winning Spartan Marching Band, both as a clarinetist and drum major. For the past two semesters, Alexander has been the President of El Camino’s Society of Music, which is a club that brings together musicians to collaborate and perform for each other. Alexander has written numerous compositions and arrangements, including a dramatic rhapsody for orchestra and choir entitled “Leviathan,” new soundtracks for A Trip to the Moon (1902) and Dracula (1931), as well as a concerto for the Native American flute. He was recently accepted at California State

University, Northridge as a Commercial Media Composition major and hopes to make a career as a professional film score composer. Outside of instrumental music, Alexander enjoys video editing, stop motion animation, singing, and acting.

Jeremy Sarmiento, \$500.00 David Witherspoon Memorial Scholarship



Jeremy Sarmiento is a dedicated music student at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) and is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education with a vocal emphasis. In high school, he discovered his love for music through piano studies and choral participation. Jeremy's commitment to excellence is shown through his participation in numerous recitals at CSUDH where he has studied under Dr. Kevin St. Clair and Dr. Lynn Atkins. Beyond musical studies, Jeremy is an engaged member of the CSUDH community where he fosters meaningful connections with peers and faculty. His enthusiasm for music and genuine interactions make him a valued presence on campus. Jeremy is currently the president of the Gamma Sigma collegiate chapter of Mu

Phi Epsilon and has been serving the board for over two years. Through unwavering dedication and a passion for music, Jeremy Sarmiento plans to make a lasting impact as he cultivates his musical talents and pursues his aspirations.

Aurora Cordero-Melo, \$300.00 Scholarship in honor of Pearl Kim



Aurora “Ace” Cordero-Melo is a pianist and second-year music education student at California State University, Dominguez Hills. They studied for twelve years with the Suzuki Institute under Jo Shannon and have spent their life surrounded by music. They have spent seven years involved in numerous choirs and theatrical productions, their most recent role being Ellie Blake, the lead character in “Freaky Friday: The Musical.” Ace is grateful to their family and Mu Phi Epsilon - particularly Gamma Sigma Chapter officers Jeremy Sarmiento, Alexis Berrier, and Itzel Perez for encouraging them throughout their musical journey.

Airi Ozawa, Violin \$300.00 Patron Scholarship



Airi Ozawa is currently attending El Camino College as a music major where she is assistant concert mistress and recently played a Mozart concerto with the orchestra. Airi has been accepted to California State University Long Beach for fall 2024. She has 17 years of experience playing the violin; starting at the age of four. Throughout the years, she had many teachers. She is currently studying under Way Wong and has been in his care for approximately six years. He has helped her significantly when it comes to playing the violin, mainly focused on technique, and starting to work on adding emotion to the music. She has had the pleasure of performing with many orchestras outside of El Camino College such as “nTyme” and “PVRO” (Palos Verdes Regional Symphony Orchestra). Airi was in 3rd grade when she joined nTyme, (North Torrance Youth Musicians Ensemble) and has

continuously played with them until her senior year of high school.

Cole Moore, \$300.00 Patron Scholarship



Cole Moore is a 20-year-old voice major at El Camino College. He began his journey in music at age nine with the saxophone and there was no coming back from his musical obsession once he heard David Bowie’s *Space Oddity* for the first time. He performed in musical theatre during middle and high school and has had the pleasure of performing roles such as Robert Martin in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Lumière in *Beauty and the Beast*, Lord Evelyn Oakleigh in *Anything Goes*, and Raphael Poulain/Dominique Bretodeau in *Amélie*. Currently, Cole is in the El Camino Chorale and Vocal Jazz Ensemble. He enjoys singing a wide range of genres from spirituals to death metal to jazz and listening to the simple sound of the rain falling onto an umbrella while walking on a trail. Cole believes that the “A”

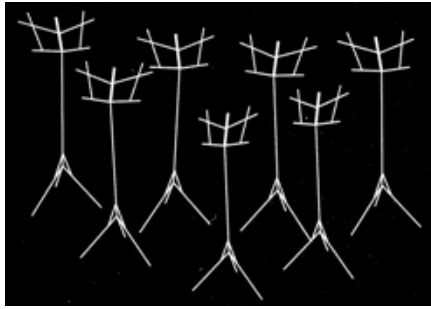
should be included in “STEAM” because while STEM provides the “how” to our lives, the arts answer the question “why?”

Abishai Smith, \$300.00 Patron Scholarship



Abishai Smith is a vocalist & multi-instrumentalist studying music at El Camino College since Spring 2022. Having begun his music career in his first year of high school at East Tennessee State University's University School in 2015, he's been performing and writing music ever since thanks in part to music being his autistic special interest, utilizing his love and passion for music as an art form both for doing performance work for others such as performing with University School's choir throughout their high school tenure, performing with East Tennessee's All-East choir performances in his freshman, sophomore, and junior years of high school, performing with Tennessee's All-State choir performance in his junior year of high school, performing with El Camino's Concert Choir since Spring 2023 and writing his music, both by himself and with

other musicians. Currently, he's a member of El Camino's Chorale & Concert Choir choirs and pursues vocal lessons under classically trained mezzo-soprano Erin Wood. At the same time, he continues to write music both under his name and under various aliases, such as the industrial alias Mizpah and the Christian music alias Eden.



*Thanks to Patricia Maki, Janet Bunker, and Darryl Tanikawa who judged,
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