



"It's about the words and music"

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **THIRD ANNUAL BETHESDA SONGWRITING CONTEST TO AWARD LOCAL SONGWRITER \$10,000**

*Contest will conclude with a live concert*

**August 16, 2016 (Bethesda, MD)** – The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District announces the third annual **Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards**. **The adjudicated competition is seeking the best, up-and-coming, local songwriters and will award one talented songwriter a Grand Prize of \$10,000.** The award also includes a young songwriter category for which an aspiring songwriter who is younger than 18 will have the chance to win \$2,500.

The contest, founded by Bethesda resident and President of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District, Cathy Bernard, is named in honor of Fred Ebb, Bernard's uncle and renowned American songwriter. Ebb was the creator of Broadway hits such as *Cabaret* and *Chicago* and iconic songs including *New York, New York*.

Full-time residents of Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia are eligible to apply. Applicants are invited to submit three original songs. Each song must have lyrics. All genres are accepted. Maximum song length is 4:30min.

The competition's first round judges, who include professional artists, booking agents and music academia, will choose the semifinalists. **A grand prize jury will then select the finalists who will each perform two of their original songs for a live audience on Friday, March 3, 2017, at the Bethesda Blues and Jazz Supper Club.** The award winners will be announced at the close of the performance.

The 2017 Grand Prize Jurors

- **Steve Bogard**, Nashville-based songwriter and former Nashville Songwriter's Association International Board President who has received two Grammy nominations for Best Country Song with Dierks Bentley, wrote nine number one country songs and hits for artists including George Strait, Rascal Flatts, Reba, Patty Loveless, Etta James and others.
- **Scarlet Keys**, songwriter and Professor in Berklee College of Music's Songwriting Department who has collaborated with artists including Chris Stapleton, Charlie Puth, Melissa Ferrick and Gretchen Wilson. She has had songs featured in movies and television as well as recordings by award-winning artists spanning genres from jazz, country, Americana, folk and pop.
- **Stacey Luftig**, musical theater lyricist and winner of the 2015 Fred Ebb Award for excellence in musical theater songwriting and the 2016 Kleban Prize for most promising theater lyricist of musicals. Her lyrics are featured in *My Heart Is the Drum*, *The Tooth Fairy Versus El Ratón Pérez*, *Understood Betsy* and *That's Life*.

Songwriters can apply online at [Bethesda.org](http://Bethesda.org). **Entries must be received by Friday, November 4, 2016.**

The Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards received 500 applications from regional songwriters over the last two years. The 2016 winners were Justin Jones of Arlington, VA who took home the \$10,000 Grand Prize and Maddy Clark of McLean, VA who won the \$2,500 Young Songwriter Prize. Owen Danoff of Washington, D.C. who won the Grand Prize in 2015, was most recently a top contestant on Season 10 of NBC's The Voice.

Tickets to attend the third annual concert will be available January 2017 at [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

Please visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org) or call 301/215-6660 for more information.

From award-winning theatre to independent films, downtown Bethesda's Arts & Entertainment District is filled with inspiring artists and art venues. The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District is managed by the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc., and is the producer of The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards, Bethesda Painting Awards, Bethesda Fine Arts Festival, Bethesda Film Fest and Play In A Day.

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