



*The Great American  
Songbook Foundation*  
*Michael Feinstein, Founder*

AT THE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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## **Michael Feinstein Introduces 2016 Songbook Academy® Winner, Brighton Thomas, at Feinstein's/54 Below**

*New York, NY:* [Michael Feinstein](#) will introduce teen vocalist Brighton Thomas as part of his holiday engagement at [Feinstein's/54 Below](#) Supper Club, December 15-30. Thomas is the winner of the 2016 Songbook Academy®, a program sponsored by the Great American Songbook Foundation.

“The Songbook Academy® is a transformative experience for the young people who attend,” said Michael Feinstein, founder of the program and the organization called the Great American Songbook Foundation. “It is inspiring to see so many young people take the music of the Great American Songbook out into the world and spread it in a way that is extraordinary.”

Thomas, a 17-year-old from Burbank, California, sang two American standards at the July Academy: "It Had to be You," and "Happy Days Are Here Again." As first place winner, Thomas will serve as the Songbook Youth Ambassador for one year and will have opportunities to perform throughout the year. She recently performed at the Great American Songbook Hall of Fame Gala in celebration of inductee Dionne Warwick.

Thomas was one of forty high school vocalists at the week-long Songbook Academy®, held in the Indiana city of Carmel. The annual event is sponsored by the Great American Songbook Foundation and is the only U.S. competition dedicated solely to the music from Broadway, Hollywood musicals and the Tin Pan Alley era of the early to mid-twentieth century.

This holiday performance will mark the kick-off for the 2016 Songbook Academy®. The application is now available online at [www.TheSongbook.org](http://www.TheSongbook.org) until March 25, 2017. High school students grades 9-12 have the opportunity to participate. Forty students will be invited to the Songbook Foundation's headquarters in Carmel, IN, July 15-22, 2017, to participate in a seven-day academy on interpreting and performing the music of the Great American Songbook. Five-time Grammy nominee, Michael Feinstein, and other top music industry and theatre

professionals will conduct workshops and master classes throughout the week. Recent guest Mentors have included TONY nominees [Laura Osnes](#) and Jarrod Spector. GRAMMY winner Janis Siegel joined Michael Feinstein as a guest Mentor for the 2016 Academy. The final competition performance will be held in the 1,600 seat Palladium Concert Hall at the Center for the Performing Arts.

## **ABOUT THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK FOUNDATION**

Five-time Grammy nominee Michael Feinstein founded the Great American Songbook Foundation in 2007 with a mission to inspire and educate by celebrating the Great American Songbook. The Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel, Ind., is the home of the Songbook Foundation. Jeff McDermott serves as the President/CEO of the organization. The work of the Foundation includes:

- The Songbook Academy®
- Library, Archives, and Gallery Exhibits
- Great American Songbook Hall of Fame
- Educational and outreach programs
- PERFECT *Harmony*, music therapy based program for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia

To learn more, visit: [www.TheSongbook.org](http://www.TheSongbook.org)

### **Media links**

Watch highlight reel of Songbook Academy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuaFDQc3ZnM>

Watch Brighton Thomas perform at The Songbook Academy®:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4T1G7TZlhaw>

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