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**LOCAL STUDENT TAKES HOME SECOND PLACE IN NATIONAL FINALS
FOR THE 2016 AUGUST WILSON MONOLOGUE COMPETITION
Center Theatre Group's Regional Finalist Damaris Vizvett Shines in the
August Wilson Monologue Competition on Broadway in NYC**

Local high school student and CTG regional finalist Damaris Vizvett took second place in the national finals for the August Wilson Monologue Competition (AWMC) on Monday, May 2, 2016, at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway. Representing San Bernardino, Vizvett performed a monologue from Wilson's "Seven Guitars," which earned her a \$1,000 college scholarship and a \$750 cash prize.

Vizvett was one of three students to place in the Los Angeles regional finals hosted at CTG/Mark Taper Forum on February 29. She took home first place and was awarded an all-expenses-paid trip to New York for the AWMC national finals along with second place finalist Samuel Christian. Aryana Williams placed third in the Los Angeles competition.

The AWMC national finals featured 18 high school students from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Dallas and Greensboro, North Carolina. Each student performed a monologue from playwright August Wilson's 10-play Century Cycle, an epic dramatization of the African-American experience in the 20th century, in front of a panel of celebrity judges. The competition presented prizes to the top three performing students in the form of college scholarships and monetary awards.

CTG hosted the Los Angeles component of competition for the fifth year in a row, which started with a preliminary round featuring more than 150 students from Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura Counties. From this group, 12 students were chosen to participate in the regional finals held at the Mark Taper Forum in February. The top two performers were then selected to take part in the national finals in New York, and received master classes from CTG's teaching artists in preparation.

Regional funding for the August Wilson Monologue Competition is provided by the CTG Affiliates and the Wells Fargo Foundation. The AWMC also receives generous support from the William Randolph Hearst Education Endowment.

The August Wilson Monologue Competition is a national program presented by Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company and Jujamcyn Theaters and is hosted in

nine cities nationwide, including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Dallas and Greensboro, North Carolina. Each city runs its program differently, but the goal is the same: to introduce high school students to August Wilson's works and to help them find their own voices.

The inspiration for the AWMC was sparked in 2007 in Atlanta by Wilson's long-time collaborators Kenny Leon and Todd Kreidler of True Colors Theatre Company. Modeled after Pittsburgh Public Theater's annual Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest, the AWMC utilizes performance tools and text analysis to help students explore the interior lives of August Wilson's characters and study the social, economic and historical realities they inhabit.

CTG honors its long-standing relationship with August Wilson through its participation in the national monologue competition as well as through its continued production of Wilson's work. CTG has presented eight of Wilson's plays, including two world premiere productions. In August 2016, Wilson's "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" will be presented at the Mark Taper Forum.

More information on CTG's August Wilson Monologue Competition can be found at www.centertheatregroup.org/AugustWilson.

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May 4, 2016