



Youth Development Foundation, Inc.
Promoting Culture & Education Through the Performing Arts

PHENOMENAL YOUNG WOMEN, FREDDIE JACKSON, CHAPTER 4 AND URBAN MYSTIC
HEADLINE 2006 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

New York, NY – July 10, 2006 – Broadcast pioneer Hal Jackson announces talent lineup for the 36th annual Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Program, which will be held at New York City's Symphony Space, Saturday, July 29, 2006 at 7 pm. Recording artists Freddie Jackson, Chapter 4 and Urban Mystic, will perform selections from their new albums during the talent competition, whose theme is *Phenomenal Women*.

Over 30 contestants between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age will compete for the coveted title of Miss Talented Teen International, presented by The Youth Development Foundation, Inc., and sponsored by ICBC Broadcast Holdings, Inc., the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board, Alken Tours, Ramapo College of New Jersey, BlackBrooklyn.net, and the Amsterdam News. The young ladies will win scholarships which will be used at the college or university of their choice. The aspiring teenage contestants will attend a variety of outings, which include a visit to City Hall, sightseeing excursions to many of New York City's cultural and historic landmarks as well as participate in self development workshops coordinated by professionals in various fields.

Although only one young lady will be crowned Miss Talented Teen International, the contestants invariably form a common bond with the other contestants who come from across the United States, Caribbean, Africa and Canada. During their eight-day stay in New York City, the contestants and their state or country directors will receive a bird's eye view of the inner workings of WBLS 107.5 FM (ICBC Broadcast Holdings, Inc.), the station of which Hal Jackson is Group Chairman. Their culinary palates will be satisfied as well when they get a taste of southern cuisine at Miss Maude's Spoonbread Too in Harlem, Caribbean cuisine at Maroons in lower Manhattan and fine dining in Central Park at Tavern on the Green.

Current winner Esonica Veira, a 17-year-old from the U.S. Virgin Islands, has had an extraordinary experience since winning the competition nearly a year ago in St. Maarten/St. Martin, Netherland Antilles. The dancer, whose interpretation of superstar Michael Jackson's music and dance moves thrilled the audience and judges, plans to relocate to California to pursue her career in the performing arts once she relinquishes her title. Since becoming the 2005 winner of the Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Program, she has won \$6,000.00 in scholarships and an opportunity to attend Debbie Allen's School of Dance in California. She traveled to London, where she spent a week with Hal and Debi Jackson, the executive producers of the program, toured the sights and attended renowned productions including *The Lion King*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Producers* and *Dancing in the Streets*.

"Being the Hal Jackson's Talented Teen International winner has also allowed me the opportunity to make numerous appearances in my community and other islands. I have traveled and performed in St. Kitts, Tortola, Antigua and the British Virgin Islands. I have learned from this entire experience that dedication and hard work can bring positive results."

Veira, the first delegate from St. Thomas to win the crown of Miss Talented Teen International, has been featured in local, regional and stateside newspapers, as well as magazines and teen websites, made frequent appearances on radio stations and has participated in various parades, carnival and festivals. As the reigning queen, she will take center stage in several production numbers which will dazzle the audience during this year's competition, and reprise her winning talent number. Tickets are available for the preliminary night, Friday, July 28, 2006 at the Roosevelt Hotel at Madison Avenue & 45 Street in New York City, and for the International Finals on Saturday, July 29, at Symphony Space located at 95th Street and Broadway. For more information visit www.talentedteens.org, call Debi Jackson at 212-592-0413 or contact Cynthia Horner at cynthiamhorner@gmail.com.