

# Matthew Whitaker, Teen Piano Prodigy, Headlines 3rd Annual National Blind Idol Semi-Finals in Raleigh, North Carolina.

*The Spotlight is on Raleigh Renaissance North Hills, site of the 2017 Blind Idol Semi-Finals.*

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, May 20, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Insightful Visionaries](#), founded by Carolyn Marshall Covington and RLCB are hosting the 2017 Blind Idol Singing Competition, at the Raleigh Renaissance Hotel, on Saturday, June 3, 2017. The show offers a real sense of community spirit that organizers hope will raise awareness of the blind and visually-impaired community and encourage people to support the research with resources that can help so many. The National Blind Idol competition is open to Blind and legally blind contestants. Fifteen semi-finalists have been selected to perform for the live competition in Raleigh. Three Judges will vote to determine the 5 finalists who will compete in the Blind Idol Finals founded by the IFB Solutions on August 12, in Winston-Salem.

Carolyn carefully sought out McMillian Entertainment and Consulting company to orchestrate this stellar performance. Jaisun McMillian has assumed the role of mentor to the contestants. "I am inspired by their determination and obvious passion for music and performing". As a veteran of the industry, she is a professional vocalist, playwright, and published author. "I am fortunate to work with a technical team of seasoned professionals in the person of Victor Stone, photographer and videographer, and Mike Brown, Sound and Lighting.

The judges panel includes Richard Dunnagan, Musician, Financial Advisor, and volunteer reader at TRRS (Triangle Radio Reading Service), Tre' Taylor, vocalist and broadcast professional on 95.3 FM of Columbia S.C., and Kristy Lee, M.S., C.G.C., a Certified Genetic Counselor and Research Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Chapter President of The Foundation Fighting Blindness. Moderating the competition are Mr. James Benton, Community Employment Specialist for Raleigh District Office of NC Division of Service for the Blind and a board member, TRRS. Mr. Benton shares the podium with Mr. George Douglas, host, writer, producer of "Renaissance Fare" at WCPE-FM, the classical station and producer of the popular program, "A Minute for God". Mr. Douglas is the President of TRRS.

Our special guest for the evening, [Matthew Whitaker](#), is a national recording artist and a teen piano prodigy who just happens to be blind. His first album, "Outta the Box", released last month, is charting



nationally, like a bullet. For the last two years, Matthew has been the organist at New Hope Baptist Church in Hackensack New Jersey. He's toured Europe, the Middle East and Asia. He heads his own publishing company with ASCAP — Matthew Whitaker LLC — and enjoys endorsement deals with Hammond and Yamaha. Matthew is already being widely compared to Stevie Wonder. In December 2016 when he was a winner on the Showtime at the Apollo TV program, the host, Steve Harvey, proclaimed him Matthew “Stevie Wonder” Whitaker! "He was also a recent guest on the Ellen Show (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1kC9-zleOQ>).

Among the high-powered lineup of guest performers is Shane Dittmar, 2015 Blind Idol Winner, music educator and composer. A native of Raleigh, NC, Shane is currently studying music education at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. The 2016 winner, 21 year-old vocalist and actress Charity Hampton of Rural Hall, NC., will also be featured on the show. The 15 contestants travel to Raleigh with one purpose in mind, to win a shot at the Grand Prize. They hail from Las Vegas, Delaware, Ohio, Utah, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

The festive evening includes a Charity Reception from 4p.m. - 6p.m. with casino games and live entertainment, under the expert direction of Rhonda Smith Hicks, of Amazing Grace Event Management. Showtime is 6p.m. - 8p.m. All contestants in the semi-finals will be awarded a certificate of participation, and the five semi-finalists will receive a trophy for their achievement. The five finalists will advance to Winston-Salem for the live Blind Idol Finale competition on August 12, 2017, hosted by IFB Solutions. The Blind Idol Finale winner will receive a Grand Prize package of \$1,000 cash, eight hours of recording time at a recording studio in Winston-Salem, N.C., and a professional headshot. The total prize package is valued at \$3,000.

Insightful Visionaries was founded by Carolyn Marshall Covington, a 40-year veteran of the Beauty & Entertainment Industry, who has become visually impaired herself. The mission of this federally authorized non-profit is to facilitate the independence of the blind and visually impaired community. The organization provides equal employment opportunities, transportation assistance, training, counseling, beauty, personal grooming, and hygiene services to help build self-confidence. “We present events, activities, workshops, and resources to assist the blind and visually impaired community to maintain an independent lifestyle and participation in the mainstream community. In this case, we provide an opportunity to showcase their singing talents. We need sponsors and funding to continue providing these much needed services,” says Carolyn Marshall Covington. For sponsorship or to donate visit: <http://www.insightfulvisionaries.com>

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