



INSPIRING FUTURE  
GENERATIONS OF SINGERS

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## **Léa Nayak Wins California Schmidt Vocal Competition**

*Modified “virtual” competition model gives high school singers the opportunity to still win cash awards and potential scholarships*

**(Berkeley, CA) May 2, 2020** – On May 2, 2020 the Schmidt Vocal Competition, in conjunction with its California cohort host, The University of California, Berkeley announced winners of its modified virtual singing competition for sophomore, junior, and senior high school singers. This year’s first prize winner was Léa Nayak, from San Francisco, CA who was awarded \$2,500 for her performance of "Ah, Love But a Day!" by Amy Beach.

Additional winners were: Hans Grunwald, Second Place; Lily Bogas, Third Place; Saman de Silva, Habin Kim, Isabella Lopez, Yekaterina Lynch, Krystal Mao, Darby Schmidt, Leland Smith, Finalist; Mia Hamilton, Krystal Mao, Eleanor Monroe, Solomon Onyukwu, Encouragement Award; Saman de Silva, Most Promising Sophomore.

Due to the closing of college and university campuses and the stay-at-home orders in place across the country, Schmidt Vocal Arts quickly pivoted in March to create a modified “virtual submission” model for its Spring 2020 Schmidt Vocal Competitions. Several signature elements traditionally associated with the Schmidt Vocal Competition were not possible in the virtual model – such as in-person, on-stage live performances, master classes led by renown members of the Schmidt Vocal Artist Network between the two rounds of competition, and connecting with fellow competitors throughout the day. However, competitors in the virtual cohort were able to showcase their talent as well as come together to hear from judges and celebrate the winners in a Facebook LIVE awards ceremony.

“We are so proud of Léa Nayak and the many other talented singers who participated in this year’s virtual Schmidt Vocal Competition,” said Linda McAlister, Executive Director of Schmidt Vocal Arts. “Many of our competitors work hard all year to compete in this prestigious competition. We wanted to ensure they still had the chance to compete, earn cash awards, and become eligible for scholarship opportunities. In times of uncertainty, experiences like this are more important than ever.”

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“Winning the Schmidt Vocal Competition has reaffirmed my conviction to create art even in these challenging circumstances,” remarks Lea Nayak. “Through this experience I’ve been introduced to a vast network of aspiring and active professional musicians, who have made me feel part of something bigger than myself. I’m very grateful to the Schmidt Vocal Arts community for believing in my potential and helping me to achieve my dreams.”

Schmidt Vocal Competition plans to return to its live, in-person competition model on the campus of The University of California, Berkeley next Spring. For more information, visit [www.schmidtvocalarts.org](http://www.schmidtvocalarts.org).

### **About Schmidt Vocal Competition**

The Schmidt Vocal Competition has impacted the lives of thousands of young students over the past two decades, offering awards, scholarships, and educational experiences for more than 150 students annually. The Schmidt Vocal Competition is held annually in 17 locations throughout the U.S. in partnership with regional colleges and universities and is open to sophomore, junior, and senior high school singers. Competitors perform in front of a live audience in two rounds and participate in educational master classes with some of today’s most renowned professionals between the preliminary and finalist rounds.

Schmidt Competition participants have gone on to gain entrance into the world’s finest music schools and include winners of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the George London Competition, the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Competition, Classical Singer, and the National Opera Association Award. The Schmidt Vocal Competition is funded by the William E. Schmidt Foundation, which encourages aspiring young singers to pursue their passion in vocal arts and provides support and inspiration to future generations of singers.

**About Léa Nayak** – Soprano Léa Nayak is graduating from the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts’ Vocal Department, where she performs in their chamber choir and opera scenes program. She is also a member of the Bay Area Vocal Academy, and studies with Rhoslyn Jones. She regularly participates in both local and national competitions. She was awarded the Dorothy Barnhouse Scholarship in the 2018 NATS Competition, first place in the Pacific Musical Society - female singers division, as well as the YoungArts Honorable Mention Award two years in a row. Next year, she will be majoring in Voice at University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music.

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