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Charles Wolfer Wins Massachusetts Schmidt Vocal Competition

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

(Boston, MA) May 23, 2020 – On May 23, 2020 the Schmidt Vocal Competition, in conjunction with its Massachusetts cohort host, New England Conservatory announced winners of its modified virtual singing competition for sophomore, junior, and senior high school singers. This year’s first prize winner was Charles Wolfer, from Fairfax, VA who was awarded \$2,500 for his performance of "Sure on this shining night" by Samuel Barber.

Additional winners were: Jack O’Leary, Second Place; Tanvi Thatai, Third Place; Olivia Brennan, Amory Kirwin, Lexi Lanni, Luke Randazzo, Finalist; Molly Hare, Broadway Bound Award; Amelie Ettinger, Encouragement Award; Amory Kirwin, 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 Charles Wolfer 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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“It is so important for young musicians and performing artists to feel supported,” remarks Charles Wolfer. “The Schmidt Vocal Competition is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of young singers with their family and friends, and support their aspirations. I am truly grateful to have participated in this competition, and I am very happy to have won first place!”

Schmidt Vocal Competition plans to return to its live, in-person competition model on the campus of New England Conservatory next Spring. For more information, visit 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 Charles Wolfer

Charles Wolfer is a rising college Freshman, who will be attending Boston Conservatory at Berklee in the fall. He sang baritone with the Young Men’s Ensemble of the Children’s Chorus of Washington and his school’s A Capella chorus. In 2018, he was accepted into the Virginia Governor’s School for Visual and Performing Arts summer residential program at Radford University. Charles was a semifinalist in the Hal Leonard Vocal Competition as a sophomore and a finalist as a junior. He won first place in his category at the Virginia NATS student auditions and went on to win first in his category at the NATS Mid-Atlantic Regional auditions, where he also won the John Stoudenmire II Award for Outstanding High School Male Classical Singer for 2018/19, and 2019/20. In 2019, Charles participated in the WNO Opera Institute.

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