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Contact Linda McAlister (513) 783-2583  
Linda@schmidtvocalarts.org

## Schmidt Vocal Arts and William E. Schmidt Foundation Welcome Additions to Board of Directors



*Christine Goerke, Janet Hamilton Petersen, and Chad Schmidt*

(February 2024)—The [William E. Schmidt Foundation](#) (WESF) is delighted to welcome three new members to its Board of Directors: **Christine Goerke**, **Janet Hamilton Petersen**, and **Chad Schmidt**. They will join existing board members Lisa Hamilton, Chester A. Schmidt III, Douglas Schmidt, and Mike Small.

The William E. Schmidt Foundation invests in programs that create stronger communities by promoting access for all to educational opportunities and enriching life experiences. Its cornerstone initiative, [Schmidt Vocal Arts](#) (SVA), engages more than 400 young singers each year, igniting their passion through access to premier vocal instruction and experiences, and fostering their talent in classical singing and vocal arts. SVA has recently experienced exponential growth with the addition of its National Competition for high school singers in 2022 and its burgeoning scholarship program which supports 50+ singers with financial need at the undergraduate level. The expanded board will continue to nurture and further develop these program initiatives.

**A** **Schmidt Vocal Arts**  
6 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 406  
Covington, KY 41011

**T** (513) 783-2583  
**E** [info@schmidtvocalarts.org](mailto:info@schmidtvocalarts.org)  
**W** [www.schmidtvocalarts.org](http://www.schmidtvocalarts.org)

Chester A. Schmidt III, WESF Board Chair commented:

“As the William E. Schmidt programs expand through Schmidt Vocal Arts, the Board of Directors welcome the addition of Christine Goerke, Janet Hamilton Petersen, and Chad Schmidt to its ranks. The three new directors will add depth and professional expertise in the areas of public relations, finance, and vocal arts to the current board.”

World renowned soprano, Christine Goerke, is the first professional musician and administrator to be a part of the WESF board, signaling the focus of the foundation to supporting talented youth through Schmidt Vocal Arts.

Christine Goerke remarked:

“It is my great honor to help support the incredible work of the William E. Schmidt Foundation and Schmidt Vocal Arts as a newly elected board member. As an artist, I have long admired the way that SVA continually encourages and uplifts the artistic creators of tomorrow. I joyfully look forward to being a part of that magic!”

Both Janet Hamilton Petersen and Chad Schmidt are a part of the William E. Schmidt extended family and have been familiar with the programs of WESF for many years. The Schmidt Vocal Competition first started with the help and encouragement of Anna Lee Hamilton, Bill Schmidt’s sister and grandmother to Janet. Anna Lee was a singer and teacher of great regard in Indianapolis and beyond.

Janet Hamilton Petersen noted:

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve on the board of WESF where youth, arts, and education intersect. I hope to continue the legacy that great uncle Bill and my grandmother started in 1997.”

## About Christine Goerke

Soprano Christine Goerke has appeared in many of the most prestigious opera houses of the world including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real in Madrid, and the Saito Kinen Festival. She has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now moving into dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles. Christine has also appeared with a number of leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Radio Vara, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms.

Christine’s recording of Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony* with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra won the 2003 Grammy Award for Best Classical Recording and Best Choral Performance. She was the recipient of the 2001 Richard Tucker Award, the 2015 Musical America Vocalist of the Year Award, the 2017 Opera News Award and, in 2022, she was named “Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” by the French Government. Christine is currently the Associate Artistic Director of Detroit Opera.

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## About Janet Hamilton Petersen

Janet Hamilton Petersen has spent her career in finance, and currently leads the finance and accounting teams at a privately held technology company. Born and raised in Indiana, Janet was first involved with Schmidt Vocal Competitions as a child, helping her grandmother, Anna Lee Hamilton, keep things organized backstage. She graduated from Indiana University Bloomington and lived and worked in Chicago and Chile. She now lives in the Dallas, TX area with her family.

## About Chad Schmidt

Chad Schmidt has spent the last 25 years in media, strategic communications planning, marketing, writing, corporate, internal and external communications, digital media, and advertising. As a partner with Sheridan Public Relations, he oversees the marketing and communications for a variety of national, regional, and local brands and companies, and oversees the operations of the Nashville, TN-based firm.

A Nashville native, Chad graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a degree in English literature with a special focus in advertising. He has served on the boards of a variety of local and national non-profit and civic organizations -- including with the Schmidt Foundation during its formative years -- and lives in Franklin, TN, with his wife, Pam, and their two daughters.

## About Schmidt Vocal Arts

Funded by the William E. Schmidt Foundation, Schmidt Vocal Arts is committed to fostering a passion for classical singing and to creating opportunities for young singers. Led by Executive Director Linda McAlister, Schmidt Vocal Arts boasts many accomplished alumni who have gone on to pursue music degrees and enjoy successful careers in the arts. The Schmidt Vocal Competitions – the oldest of the Foundation’s programs – have touched the lives of more than 5,000 developing high school and undergraduate singers, awarding a total of over \$2 million in cash awards and scholarships since its debut in 1997. Other Schmidt Vocal Arts programs include:

- Schmidt Vocal Institute, a two-week intensive summer residential program where singers learn from world-renowned artists, participate in workshops and master classes, and perform with other talented musicians;
- Schmidt Vocal Education, offering regional and online programs for singers and teachers to learn, challenge themselves, and participate in performance experiences; and
- Schmidt Vocal Scholarships, a program that provides need-based support for talented singers continuing their professional vocal education.

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