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Schmidt Vocal Arts Announces Full List of Participants for Fifth Annual National High School Competition

*Top Three Prizewinners from Each of 18 Regional Competitions, Plus
Four “Wild Cards,” Advance to Semifinals in Sarasota, Florida*



2025 Schmidt Vocal Arts National Competition Finalists; credit Rod Millington

[Covington, KY, May 14, 2026]—[Schmidt Vocal Arts](#) (SVA), the premier national organization supporting early-career classical singers, announces the full roster of qualifiers for its fifth annual National Vocal Competition for high school singers, presented in partnership with Sarasota Opera on May 30 and 31, 2026.

“From the moment the competition begins, audiences will experience the passion, dedication, and extraordinary talent these young singers bring to the stage,” said Linda McAlister, Executive Director of Schmidt Vocal Arts. “This year’s national competition will feature a record number of participants, and we are honored to provide a stage where these gifted performers can learn, grow, and celebrate their passion for vocal music.”

A total of 58 teen singers from across the country—the three top winners from each of the 18 regional competitions, plus four ‘wild card’ singers—have advanced to the semifinals, which take place at the Sarasota Opera House in Sarasota, FL, on May 30, 2026. Up to 16 finalists will compete on in the final round on May 31.

Semi-final adjudicators are Dr. Alison Acord, Professor of Voice at Miami University; Dr. Marc Callahan, Associate Professor and Director of Opera at Chapman University; mezzo-soprano Dr. Alexis Davis-Hazell at University of Alabama; tenor Anthony Dean Griffey Professor of Voice at Eastman School of Music; and Kathleen Kelly, Associate Professor of Vocal Coaching at Baylor University. The final round on May 31 will be judged by soprano Latonia Moore; mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, Co-Director of the Lehrer Vocal Institute at Music Academy of the West; and Christopher Cano, Director of the Washington National Opera’s Cafritz Young Artist Program.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the First (\$10,000), Second (\$7,500), and Third (\$5,000) place winners; all finalists will receive cash awards of \$1,000. Additionally, \$500 encouragement awards will be given at the discretion of the judges. Three semi-finalists will be selected to participate in a master class on May 31 with Dr. Alexis Davis-Hazell, Anthony Dean Griffey, and Kathleen Kelly before the final round.

SEMI-FINALISTS

Anneli	Abbott	Mezzo-soprano	Skyridge High School	Highland	UT
Isaac	Ahn	Tenor	Hackley School	Fort Lee	NJ
Cooper	Bott	Baritone	Williamsburg Jr.-Sr. High School	Marengo	IA
Armando	Cabrera-Ontiveros	Bass-baritone	Pearland High School	Pearland	TX
Isabel	Calvo	Soprano	Fullerton Union High School	Orange	CA
Eva	Capron	Soprano	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts	New York	NY
Tiffany	Carr	Soprano	Orange County School of the Arts	Rowland Heights	CA
Enrique	Castilleja	Baritone	Rowlett High School	Rowlett	TX



Zadia	Danon	Mezzo-soprano	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and the Performing Arts	Brooklyn	NY
Kennedy	Davenport	Soprano	Harrison School For The Arts	Lakeland	FL
Olivia	Dolton	Soprano	Liberty Hill High School	Liberty	MO
Isabella	D’Oriano	Soprano	Fort Dorchester High School	North Charleston	SC
Nik	Epstein	Baritone	University of North Carolina School of the Arts (High School Program)	Aberdeen	NC
Addyson	Finley	Soprano	Academy NorthWest	Battleground	WA
Quinn	Fotos	Mezzo-soprano	Steilacoom High School	Lakewood	WA
Vivian	Furtaw	Mezzo-soprano	Interlochen Arts Academy	Alpena	MI
Mallory	Goddard	Soprano	Martin County High School	Stuart	FL
Madeline	Hansen	Soprano	Lambert High School	Suwanee	GA
Roxie	Harris	Mezzo-soprano	Friendswood High School	Friendswood	TX
Jane	Hasty	Soprano	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	Burbank	CA
Rad	Jennings	Baritone	Benjamin Franklin High School	New Orleans	LA
Cailey	Jones	Soprano	Baltimore School for the Arts	Baltimore	MD
Jesse	Kliman	Baritone	DeMatha Catholic High School	Hyattsville	MD
Brooks	Liang	Baritone	Archbishop Mitty High School	Campbell	CA
Gabriel	Magallón	Baritone	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts	Houston	TX
Auralia	Manís	Soprano	University of North Carolina School of the Arts (High School Program)	Winston-Salem	NC
Daisy	Maravilla	Soprano	American Preparatory Academy	Cottonwood Heights	UT
Frank	Moreno	Bass-baritone	West Fork High School	Houston	TX
Eduardo	Martinez	Bass-baritone	J. Frank Dobie High School	Houston	TX
Isabella	Morgan	Soprano	Staley High School	Kansas City	MO
Mia	Mortman	Soprano	McLean High School	McLean	VA
Raymond	Muenzer	Tenor	Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy	Loveland	OH
William	Norton	Tenor	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts	Houston	TX
Claire	Park	Soprano	The Winsor School	Newtown	MA

William	Perkins	Tenor	Detroit School of Arts	Detroit	MI
Gabe	Ponichter	Tenor	The Dalton School	New York	NY
Thomas	Prince	Tenor	Detroit School of Arts	Detroit	MI
Alexander	Pyun	Baritone	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts	New York	NY
Samantha	Ralston	Soprano	DeKalb School of the Arts	Avondale Estates	GA
Taylor-Marie	Robinson	Soprano	Fine Arts Center	Greenville	SC
Erin-Grace	Rudd	Soprano	Magoffin County High School	Royalton	KY
Abigail	Scheer	Soprano	McCracken County High School	Paducah	KY
Casey	Schopflocher	Countertenor	Special Music School	New York	NY
Olivia	Scott	Mezzo-soprano	Homeschool	Buford	GA
Ruth Anne	Sowa	Soprano	Walnut Hill School for the Arts	Medford	MA
Eva	Stein	Soprano	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts	New York	NY
Olivia	Stevens	Soprano	Mount Sophia Academy	Newark	DE
Laura	Suarez	Soprano	New World School of the Arts	Miami	FL
Malia	Suggs	Soprano	New Orleans Center for Creative Arts & Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy	Gretna	LA
Lev Sakae	Taira	Baritone	Laurel Springs High School	La Canada	CA
Austyn	Tarrant	Soprano	Taylorville High School	Magna	UT
Ryhanna	Tarte	Soprano	West Boca Community High School	Boynton Beach	FL
Emmanuel	Tsao	Baritone	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts	New York	NY
Luz	Velazquez	Soprano	Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music	Bronx	NY
Lily	Wasoski	Soprano	Huntington High School	Huntington	NY
Zachary	Whelan	Tenor	Special Music School	New York	NY
Clara Maya	White	Soprano	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts	Sugar Land	TX
James	Williams	Bass-baritone	Shadow Creek High School	Pearland	TX

Semi-final and final rounds take place at the Sarasota Opera House and are open to the public. Tickets are available for May 30 for \$15.45 (Students: \$10) and May 31 for \$25.75 (Students: \$10) online at SarasotaOpera.org or by calling the Box Office at (941) 328-1300.

All Schmidt Vocal Arts programs are funded by the **William E. Schmidt Foundation**. Since debuting in 1997, the Schmidt Vocal Competitions have touched the lives of more than 6,500 developing singers, awarding more than \$5 million in cash prizes and scholarships in pursuit of Schmidt Vocal Arts' mission to foster a passion in young artists for classical singing and create opportunities to propel them on their journey toward a career in the arts.

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. In addition to its annual national competition, 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;
- Schmidt Vocal Scholarships, a program that provides need-based support for talented singers continuing their professional vocal education; and
- Schmidt Summer Study Grants, for alumni to attend summer vocal or opera programs

ABOUT WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT

William E. Schmidt was a decorated military pilot, successful businessman, and lifelong, generous supporter of the arts and charitable organizations in the communities where he lived. Born in Irvine, Kentucky in 1933, he came from a family that loved music and believed in the power of education. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from DePauw University, and his master's degree in business administration from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. After the death of his mother, and with the close counsel of his sister, Anna Lee Schmidt, Hamilton – a versatile singer who did postgraduate study at Indiana University and Germany's Heidelberg Conservatory of Music before teaching, conducting, and performing variously at Butler University, the Indianapolis Opera Company, and the Indiana Opera Theatre – he founded the Schmidt Vocal Competition, first held at the University of Indianapolis in 1997. With these contests, as well as with his meaningful support of other scholarship programs at numerous universities, schools, and community organizations, he provided a remarkable legacy of dedication to the arts and youth that his Foundation continues to build upon today. In his later life, Schmidt moved to Sarasota, Florida, where he became a substantial behind-the-scenes supporter of several key community projects, including the Sarasota Opera. He died in 2014 after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's Disease, but his love for and commitment to the arts and the community live on in his family, friends, and colleagues. The William E. Schmidt Foundation captures his entrepreneurial and hard-working spirit in the initiatives and projects it selects to fund – always grounded in innovation and led by those committed to a worthy mission.

ABOUT SARASOTA OPERA

Sarasota Opera is in its 67th season of bringing world-class opera to Florida's Gulf Coast and celebrating 100 years of the historic Sarasota Opera House. The company was launched in 1960 in the historic 320-seat Asolo Theater on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art. In 1984, the company moved into the former A.B. Edwards Theater — now the Sarasota Opera House. Since then, the company has gained an international reputation as one of the leading regional opera companies in the U.S. through initiatives such as the Masterworks Revival Series and the Verdi Cycle. The company's Sarasota Youth Opera is the most comprehensive youth opera program in the U.S. The Sarasota Opera House, which underwent a \$20 million renovation and rehabilitation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Since 1983, the company has been under the artistic leadership of Victor DeRenzi and the administrative leadership of General Director Richard Russell since 2012. In June 2026 Maestro DeRenzi will step down from the company and Mr. Russell will add Artistic Director to his responsibilities. Sarasota Opera is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts. Programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.

Sarasota Opera • 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL 34236 • (941) 366-8450 •
SarasotaOpera.org

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CALENDAR LISTINGS:

Saturday, May 30, 2026 at 9:45 a.m.

SCHMIDT VOCAL ARTS NATIONAL COMPETITION—Semi-Finals

Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL

Singers from across the country will compete for a spot in Sunday's Final Found. Semi-Final Adjudicators: Dr. Alison Acord, Professor of Voice at Miami University; Dr. Marc Callahan, Associate Professor and Director of Opera at Chapman University; mezzo-soprano Dr. Alexis Davis-Hazell at University of Alabama; tenor Anthony Dean Griffey Professor of Voice at Eastman School of Music; and Kathleen Kelly, Associate Professor of Vocal Coaching at Baylor University.

Tickets: \$15.45 (Students: \$10)

To purchase tickets: SarasotaOpera.org or (941) 328-1300

Sunday, May 31, 2026, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

SCHMIDT VOCAL ARTS COMPETITION—Master Class and Finals

Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL

10:30 a.m. Schmidt Vocal Arts Master Class – Three singers from the Semi-Final round will be selected to sing in a master class with Dr. Alexis Davis-Hazell, Anthony Dean Griffey, and Kathleen Kelly.

1 p.m. Final Round of Schmidt Vocal Competition – Up to 16 Finalists will perform on the Sarasota Opera stage and compete for cash awards, including \$10,000 for First Place, \$7,500 for Second Place, and \$5,000 for Third Place. The Final Round will be adjudicated by renowned judges soprano Latonia Moore; mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, Co-Director of the Lehrer Vocal Institute at Music Academy of the West; and Christopher Cano, Director of the Washington National Opera’s Cafritz Young Artist Program.

Announcement of the Winners and Awards Ceremony will follow the judges’ deliberation.

Tickets for all events that day: \$25.75 (Students: \$10)

To purchase tickets: SarasotaOpera.org or (941) 328-1300

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