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Schmidt Vocal Arts Announces Winners of its Louisiana Regional Competition, Held December 6



(L-R) Clara Maya White (3rd), Rad Jennings (1st), Malia Suggs (2nd)

Three Prizewinners Advance to National Competition in May

[Covington, KY, December 9, 2025]—[Schmidt Vocal Arts](https://www.schmidt.org) (SVA), a national organization for pre-professional classical singers, is pleased to announce the winners of its first 2025-26 Louisiana Regional Competition, held at Loyola University in New Orleans on Saturday, December 6, 2025.

First Place
Second Place
Third Place

Rad Jennings, New Orleans, LA
Malia Suggs, Gretna, LA
Clara Maya White, Sugar Land, TX

Seventeen talented high school singers from Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas competed for cash prizes and the opportunity to advance to Schmidt Vocal Arts' National Competition in May 2026.

Saturday's jury—soprano LaToya Lain, faculty member at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; soprano Linda McAlister, Executive Director for Schmidt Vocal Arts; and Allen Perriello, Director of Artistic Administration at Des Moines Metro Opera—selected seven singers for the final round, each of whom received a \$250 award for advancing.

Three singers were selected for participation in a master class prior to the final round of competition, and four singers received cash prizes of \$100 for awards of Encouragement and Most Promising Sophomore.

FINALISTS

Toby Alfonso	Brother Martin High School, St. Bernard, LA
James Andrews	The Willow School, New Orleans, LA
Susana Cuartas	New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Gretna, LA
Dianna Gergley	Conroe High School, Montgomery, TX
Rad Jennings	Benjamin Franklin High School, New Orleans, LA
Malia Suggs	New Orleans Center for Creative Arts & Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, Gretna, LA
Clara Maya White	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Sugar Land, TX

ADDITIONAL PRIZES

Encouragement Award	James Andrews , The Willow School, New Orleans, LA
Encouragement Award	Glorianne Bundick , Destrehan High School, Destrehan, LA
Encouragement Award	Reese Butler , Bayside Academy, Daphne, AL
Most Promising Sophomore	Rad Jennings , Benjamin Franklin High School, New Orleans, LA

The three top prizewinners now advance to the National Competition in May 2026, and received awards of \$2,500, \$2,000, and \$1,500. They are now also eligible to apply for college scholarships from Schmidt Vocal Arts, which awards more than \$500,000 each year to its applicants to support their higher education.

Eight more [regional competitions](#), as well as one online, for high school students take place across the country throughout the 2025-26 season prior to the National



Competition in May 2026 at Sarasota Opera.

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, this year awarding a total of \$650,000 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. 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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