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## **Schmidt Vocal Arts Announces Winners of its Utah and New Jersey Regional Competitions, Held February 28 and March 1**



*(L photo) Anneli Abbott (1<sup>st</sup>), Daisy Maravilla (2<sup>nd</sup>) Austyn Tarrant (3<sup>rd</sup>) - UTAH  
(R photo) Eva Stein, (2<sup>nd</sup>), Alexander Pyun (1<sup>st</sup>), Cailey Jones (3<sup>rd</sup>) – NEW JERSEY*

*Six Prizewinners Advance to National Competition in May*

**[Covington, KY, March 3, 2026]**—[Schmidt Vocal Arts](https://www.schmidt.org) (SVA), a national organization for pre-professional classical singers, is pleased to announce the winners of its 2025-26 Utah and New Jersey Regional Competitions, held at the University of Utah and Montclair State University, on Saturday, February 28 and Sunday March 1, 2026, respectively.

### **UTAH REGIONAL**

First Place  
Second Place  
Third Place

**Anneli Abbott**, Highland, UT  
**Daisy Maravilla**, Cottonwood Heights, UT  
**Austyn Tarrant**, Magna, UT

Twenty-nine talented high school singers from Utah, California, and Florida competed for cash prizes and the opportunity to advance to Schmidt Vocal Arts' National Competition in May 2026.

Saturday's jury—soprano Deanna Breiwick; mezzo-soprano Jamie Van Eyck, Associate Professor of Voice and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at Baylor University; and soprano Julie Wright-Costa, Professor of Voice at the University of Utah—selected ten 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 five cash prizes of \$100 were awarded for Encouragement, Most Promising Sophomore, and Broadway Bound.

### **FINALISTS**

<b>Anneli Abbott</b>	Skyridge High School, Highland, UT
<b>Holden Braegger</b>	Box Elder High School, Willard, UT
<b>Sophia Kaushik</b>	Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton, Redwood City, CA
<b>Alexander Lee</b>	La Jolla High School, San Diego, CA
<b>Daisy Maravilla</b>	American Preparatory Academy, Cottonwood Heights, UT
<b>Nikos Mizantzidis</b>	Highland High School, Salt Lake City, UT
<b>Olivia Song</b>	Orange County School of the Arts, Irvine, CA
<b>Sydney Sublette</b>	Orange County School of the Arts, Mission Viejo, CA
<b>Austyn Tarrant</b>	Taylorville High School, Magna, UT
<b>Leila Woodward</b>	Orange County School of the Arts, Newport Beach, CA

### **ADDITIONAL PRIZES**

Encouragement Award	<b>Samantha Cintron</b> , New World School of the Arts, Miami, FL
Encouragement Award	<b>Emi Richardson</b> , Green Canyon High School, Hyde Park, UT
Encouragement Award	<b>Leila Woodward</b> , Orange County School of the Arts, Newport Beach, CA
Most Promising Sophomore	<b>Olivia Song</b> , Orange County School of the Arts, Irvine, CA
Broadway Bound	<b>Adalie Youngberg</b> , American Fork High School, Highland, UT

### **NEW JERSEY REGIONAL**

First Place	<b>Alexander Pyun</b> , New York, NY
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Second Place  
Third Place

**Eva Stein**, New York, NY  
**Cailey Jones**, Baltimore, MD

Twenty-seven talented high school singers from New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, DC, competed at Montclair State University on Sunday, March 1, 2026.

Sunday's jury—soprano Marilyn Mims, Artist in Residence at Palm Beach Atlantic University; soprano Beth Roberts, Professor of Voice at Montclair State University; and baritone Reginald Smith, Jr—selected eight 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 five cash prizes of \$100 were awarded for Encouragement and Most Promising Sophomore.

### **FINALISTS**

<b>Anna Friedman</b>	Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan, Norwood, NJ
<b>Cailey Jones</b>	Baltimore School for the Arts, Baltimore, MD
<b>Phineas Kelly</b>	LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, Brooklyn, NY
<b>Gabe Ponichter</b>	The Dalton School, New York, NY
<b>Alexander Pyun</b>	LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, New York, NY
<b>Kendall Sorenson</b>	Byram Hills High School, Armonk, NY
<b>Eva Stein</b>	LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, New York, NY
<b>Marissa Vollweiler</b>	Plainview Old Bethpage John F Kennedy High School, Plainview, NY

### **ADDITIONAL PRIZES**

Encouragement Award	<b>Maya Joshi</b> , Cresskill High School, Cresskill, NJ
Encouragement Award	<b>Sofia Kelly</b> , Haldane High School, Cold Spring, NY
Encouragement Award	<b>Charlie Morales</b> , Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music, Bronx, NY
Encouragement Award	<b>Gabe Ponichter</b> , The Dalton School, New York, NY
Most Promising Sophomore	<b>Cailey Jones</b> , Baltimore School for the Arts, Baltimore, MD



The three top prizewinners from each regional 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.

Five 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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