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Schmidt Vocal Arts Announces Winners of its Tennessee Regional Competition, Held November 15



(L-R) William Norton (3rd), Abigail Scheer (1st), Madeline Hansen (2nd)

Three Prizewinners Advance to National Competition in May

[Covington, KY, November 17, 2025]—[Schmidt Vocal Arts](https://www.schmidtarts.com) (SVA), a national organization for pre-professional classical singers, is pleased to announce the winners of its 2025-26 Tennessee Regional Competition, held at Vanderbilt University in Nashville on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

First Place
Second Place
Third Place

Abigail Scheer, Paducah, KY
Madeline Hansen, Suwanee, GA
William Norton, Houston, TX

Nineteen talented high school singers from eight states (AL, FL, GA, KY, NY, TN, TX, and VA) competed for cash prizes and the opportunity to advance to Schmidt Vocal Arts' National Competition in May 2026.

Saturday's jury—soprano Dr. Sonya Baker, Professor of Voice at James Madison University; soprano Hailey Clark, Assistant Professor of Voice at Vanderbilt University; and mezzo-soprano Mary Stucky, Professor Emerita at the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music—selected six singers for the final round, each of whom received a \$250 award for advancing.

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

FINALISTS

William Buettin	LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, New York, NY
Elsa Cayce	The Paideia School, Decatur, GA
Madeline Hansen	Lambert High School, Suwanee, GA
William Norton	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Houston, TX
Abigail Scheer	McCracken County High School, Paducah, KY
Sarah Vanlandingham	Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Houston, TX

ADDITIONAL PRIZES

Encouragement Award	Janeway Howard , Lexington, KY
Encouragement Award	Lily Perry , Louisville, KY
Encouragement Award	Camilla Zayas-Cruz , Deerfield Beach, FL
Most Promising Sophomore	Isabella Richter , McLean, VA

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.

Ten 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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