

For Immediate Release

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THE DALLAS OPERA ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL VOCAL COMPETITION

DALLAS, March 6, 2026—The Dallas Opera (TDO) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2025/2026 Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition, following their live performances tonight at the Winspear Opera House. The event was hosted by DON CARLO star, bass-baritone Christian Van Horn.

First Place: Tzvi Bat Asherah, BASS-BARITONE

Aria: "Ves tabar spit" from *Aleko*

Second Place: Nathan Bowles, TENOR

Aria: "Durch die Wälder" from *Der Freischütz*

Third Place: Anna Thompson, SOPRANO

Aria: "Glück das mir verblieb" from *Die tote Stadt*

Jonathan Pell People's Choice Award (determined by audience vote): Tzvi Bat Asherah, BASS-BARITONE

Aria: "Ves tabar spit" from *Aleko*

The 2026 National Vocal Competition took place earlier this evening, **Friday, March 6, 2026**, at the Winspear Opera House, with performances by 10 finalists.

A distinguished panel of judges, chaired by TDO's Artistic Consultant, **David Lomelí**, selected the winners. The panel included The Dallas Opera Kern Wildenthal General Director and CEO **Ian Derrer**, San Francisco Opera Artistic Managing Director **Gregory Henkel**, Warner Classics & Erato Chairman Emeritus **Alain Lanceron**, and Wolf Trap Opera Vice President **Lee Anne Myslewski**.

The competition's 10 finalists are bass-baritone **Tzvi Bat Asherah**, tenor **Nathan Bowles**, mezzo-soprano **Meg Brilleslyper**, soprano **Lauryn Davis**, mezzo-soprano **Deanna Ray Eberhart**, soprano **Sophia Hunt**, mezzo-soprano **Kayla Nanto** (winner of last year's Lone Star Competition), soprano **Luna Seongeun Park**, soprano **Anna Thompson**, and baritone **Yihe Wang**.

Each finalist sang one aria accompanied by **The Dallas Opera Orchestra** in one of the few vocal competitions in the country that feature a full orchestra. TDO's Mrs. Eugene McDermott Music Director **Emmanuel Villaume** conducted. Repertoire included works by Verdi, Massenet, Donizetti, Wagner, Mozart, and more.

Finalists in the 34th Vocal Competition were selected from 381 applicants. The competition was open to US residents or residents of one of the US Territories. Kayla Nanto automatically advanced to this final round after the mezzo-soprano won first place at TDO's 2025 Lone Star Vocal Competition.

All winners receive cash prizes of \$1,000 for the People's Choice Award, donated by Neil Oxford, in memory of Francine Burrows Werbin; \$2,500 for third place; \$5,000 for second place; and \$10,000 for first place.

ABOUT THE WINNERS

Tzvi Bat Asherah, BASS-BARITONE

From: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Career highlights: Bass-baritone Tzvi Bat Asherah is currently finishing his Master of Music from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he studies with Robin Rice. He received his Bachelor of Music from University of New Mexico in May 2024. Asherah sang in the 2025 Butler Opera International Competition and was awarded third place in the finals. This spring, Asherah will perform Ford in Rice's production of Verdi's *Falstaff*. Following that, he appears with Ars Lyrica Houston as Plutone in the company's rendition of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. This summer, he returns to Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Artist program, where he will perform Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*. Recently he sang the title role of Mendelssohn's Elijah in concert, was the English Ambassador in John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and performed Donner in Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Other roles he has performed include Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Papageno in *The Magic Flute*.

Nathan Bowles, TENOR

From: Minot, North Dakota

Career highlights: A LA Opera Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program alum, Nathan Bowles is emerging as one of his generation's most promising young tenors. This season, Bowles makes his role debut as Canio (*Pagliacci*) with Pacific Opera Project and appears in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Minot Symphony Orchestra. In his second LA Opera season, he performs the First Armored Man (*The Magic Flute*), Dr. Caius (*Falstaff*), and Parpignol (*La bohème*), and he joins the Los Angeles Symphony at Walt Disney Concert Hall for a gala honoring Korea's Independence. Recent appearances include Don José (*La tragédie de Carmen*) with Tulsa Opera; Borsa (*Rigoletto*) and Benvolio (*Romeo and Juliet*) with LA Opera; Dandini (*The Billy Goats Gruff*) and Miguel (*Pépito*) with The Dallas Opera Education Outreach Programs; and Animal Tamer/Waiter (*Der Rosenkavalier*) with Santa Fe Opera. Bowles is a 2025 Operalia finalist, a 2024 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition national finalist, and a 2024 Richard F. Gold Career Grant recipient.

Anna Thompson, SOPRANO

From: Rochester, Michigan

Career highlights: Anna Thompson is a current Resident Artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts. She holds a Master of Music from Rice University and a Bachelor of Music from the Eastman School of Music. Recent roles include Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Countess Madeleine (*Capriccio*), Alcina (*Alcina*), Marie Antoinette (*The Ghosts of Versailles*), and Suor Angelica (*Suor Angelica*). She has also recently covered Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), Female Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), and Mary Johnson (*Fellow Travelers*). She recently made her Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra performing Bristow's "Niagara" Symphony, and she debuted at the Bard Music Festival performing *Mariken de Nimègue*. Thompson was named a 2026 national semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition and a 2025 Sullivan Foundation Award winner. She is an alumna of Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Artist program and the Gerdine Young Artist Program at Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Next summer, she joins the Merola Opera Program.

Event Sponsors:

- **National Vocal Competition Presenting Sponsor:** Belinda and Lance Hancock
- **Vocal Competition Judges Luncheon Sponsors:** Holly and Tom Mayer, Anonymous, Neil Douglas Oxford
- **Jonathan Pell People's Choice Award Sponsor:** Neil Douglas Oxford in memory of Francine Burrows Werbin
- **Other Sponsors:** Jane Wetzel

About the Vocal Competition:

Founded in 1957, the non-profit The Dallas Opera Guild/Bravo! first established a formal program to support young singers in 1987, originally known as The Career Development Grant for Singers. That program evolved into The Dallas Opera Vocal Competition. In 2020, the event was divided into Texas-based and national contests, which occur in alternating years. Today, the National Vocal Competition's classically-trained US-based singers compete every other year for industry recognition, career encouragement, and the chance to perform on a world-class stage with The Dallas Opera Orchestra, as well as significant cash awards—all before a live audience and a panel of judges representing some of the most prestigious opera companies in North America and the international opera community. Learn more [here](#).

About The Dallas Opera:

One of the leading opera companies in the country, The Dallas Opera has an extraordinary legacy of world-class productions and thrilling premieres featuring the greatest operatic artists of our time. Inaugurated in 1957 with a concert featuring the incomparable Maria Callas, TDO is known for the notable US debuts and appearances of a host of legendary artists including Plácido Domingo, Dame Joan Sutherland, Jon Vickers, Franco Zeffirelli, and Sir David McVicar. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives including the Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors, free and low-cost digital streaming, public simulcasts, acclaimed art song recitals featuring poetry set to music, the National Vocal Competition, special concerts, and outstanding family and award-winning education programs. TDO's home is the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House in the Dallas Arts District. As one of the largest performing arts

employers in North Texas, TDO is proudly committed to diversity, both onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region. For more details, [visit dallasopera.org](http://dallasopera.org).

SEASON SPONSOR

The VanSickle Family Foundation in memory of Edith and Elmer VanSickle

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