

PRESS RELEASE

41 Young Opera Talents from 18 Countries Advance to the Final Round of NEUE STIMMEN

A strong field of singers and a high-caliber jury: NEUE STIMMEN 2026 is setting the stage for a new generation of opera singers. Former NEUE STIMMEN winner Nicole Car will serve as a jury member and mentor.

Gütersloh, August 12, 2026. The finalists for the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition have been confirmed: from a pool of more than 1,100 applications from 69 countries, 41 young singers from 18 countries have qualified. The average age of the finalists is 26. From October 5 to 9, the young talents will perform in Gütersloh before a newly assembled jury chaired by Alexander Neef and comprising artistic directors, casting directors, and renowned opera singers.

“For nearly four decades now, we have been giving young singers a stage and supporting them as they build international careers. Music brings people together across countries, cultures, and generations – and that is what NEUE STIMMEN has stood for from the very beginning. I very much look forward to seeing these young singers on stage,” says Liz Mohn, initiator of the competition and Chair of the Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation.

New jury unites experienced professionals and emerging opera leaders

This year, the competition will be chaired for the first time by Alexander Neef, Director of the Opéra national de Paris. The eleven-member jury led by Neef spans two generations of opera professionals. A new addition is the tenor Neil Shicoff, who for decades has been one of the defining voices in the Italian and French repertoire and is now a sought-after coach for young talent at major opera houses in Europe and the US. Also new to the jury is Australian soprano Nicole Car, first-prize winner at NEUE STIMMEN 2013, who today appears in leading roles at opera houses such as the Vienna State Opera, the Royal Opera House, the Opéra national de Paris, and the Metropolitan Opera. Car returns to Gütersloh not only as a jury member, but also as a mentor for the young singers. Her involvement exemplifies NEUE STIMMEN's commitment to discovering new talent as well as to supporting singers as their careers develop and fostering a lasting connection with the competition. A complete list of jury members can be found in the additional material below.

Live in Gütersloh and streamed worldwide

The semifinal concert (Wednesday, October 7) and the final concert (Friday, October 9) both begin at 7 p.m. at Stadthalle Gütersloh. Tickets are available from Gütersloh Marketing (Tel.: 05241/211 360) and other ticket outlets. Those unable to attend in person can watch the semifinal on YouTube and the final live on the international opera platform OperaVision. The

broadcasts reflect the Liz Mohn Foundation's commitment to making opera accessible to as wide a global audience as possible and giving young talent an international stage.

Further information

Since it was founded by Liz Mohn in 1987, NEUE STIMMEN (www.neue-stimmen.de/en) has ranked among the most prestigious international competitions for young opera singers. Guided by its "Creating Careers" philosophy, the Liz Mohn Foundation continues to support talented singers well beyond their participation in the competition – through masterclasses, coaching sessions, concerts, and personalized career development. Numerous artists who are now internationally celebrated, such as Christiane Karg, Nathalie Stutzmann, Marina Rebeka, Michael Volle, René Pape, Franco Fagioli, Nadine Sierra, Nicole Car, Pene Pati, and Elsa Dreisig, received valuable career support through NEUE STIMMEN.

Additional material:

- **List of finalists**, including name, voice type, year of birth, and country of origin.
- **NEUE STIMMEN Facts & Figures**: Key facts and figures at a glance
- **Images**:
 - Image 1: [All winners of NEUE STIMMEN 2024](#)
 - Image 2: [First-prize winners of NEUE STIMMEN 2024: Magdalena Lucjan from Poland and Alejandro Baliñas Vieites from Spain](#)
 - Image 3: [Founder and initiator of NEUE STIMMEN, Liz Mohn](#)
 - Image 4: [Alexander Neef, Chair of the NEUE STIMMEN jury](#)

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About the Liz Mohn Foundation:

The charitable Liz Mohn Foundation is active in the areas of leadership, culture, and youth. Liz Mohn and the Foundation are particularly committed to building bridges of understanding across languages and borders and fostering dialogue among people of different nations, cultures, professions, positions, and generations.

Further information: www.liz-mohn-stiftung.de