

PRESS RELEASE

NEUE STIMMEN 2026: 41 young opera singers from 18 countries enter the final round

Forty-one young opera singers from 18 countries have arrived in Gütersloh for the final round of NEUE STIMMEN 2026. They were selected from 1,126 applicants from 69 countries worldwide. Leading up to the final on October 9, the young singers will compete for prestigious prizes while gaining valuable insights, contacts, and perspectives for their future careers. Founder and NEUE STIMMEN President Liz Mohn welcomes the singers to Gütersloh.

Gütersloh, October 4, 2026. The final round of the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition brings together 41 young singers from 18 countries in Gütersloh. They were selected for the competition week from among 1,126 applicants representing 69 countries. From October 5 to 9, the spotlight will be on their voices and artistic development. At the same time, the final round gives them an opportunity to present themselves to the international opera world, gain experience, and forge contacts that can help them on their future career paths.

“For almost four decades, we have not only given young singers a stage but have also supported them as they build international careers. Music connects people across countries, cultures, and generations – this is precisely what NEUE STIMMEN has stood for since its founding. I very much look forward to seeing these young people on stage,” says Liz Mohn, President of the competition and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation.

International opera experts support the next generation

In the first rounds of the competition, the singers will perform before the nine-member jury, now chaired by Alexander Neef, Director of the Opéra national de Paris. Those selected will advance to the semifinal on Wednesday, October 7, at 7 p.m. at the Stadthalle Gütersloh. The highlight of the week will be the final concert with the Duisburg Philharmonic, conducted by Vitali Alekseenok, on Friday, October 9, at 7 p.m., when the winners of NEUE STIMMEN 2026 will be announced. Alongside jury chairman Alexander Neef, the jury comprises Samuel Gelber, Xenia Hofmann, Boris Ignatov, Sophie de Lint, Bernd Loebe, Christoph Seufferle, Neil Shicoff, and Evamaria Wieser. As leading professionals and decision-makers in the international opera world, they bring a range of perspectives to the competition and support the next generation of singers as they embark on their careers.

From competition to career: NEUE STIMMEN provides long-term support for young talent

The final round is about more than selecting the prizewinners. Under the umbrella of NEUE STIMMEN “Creating Careers,” the Liz Mohn Foundation combines the competition with programs designed to support young singers far beyond their performances on stage. During the competition week, feedback and advisory sessions provide them with valuable input for

their artistic and professional development. The “Creating Careers” program shows just how lasting the impact of these connections can be. The program is being further expanded for the 2026 competition, including the addition of one-on-one mentoring. Australian soprano Nicole Car, who won first prize in 2013, will be among those mentoring young singers from this year’s competition.

NEUE STIMMEN live in Gütersloh and around the world

The semifinal concert with piano accompaniment on Wednesday, October 7, and the final concert with the Duisburg Philharmonic on Friday, October 9, both begin at 7 p.m. at the Stadthalle Gütersloh. Tickets are available from Gütersloh Marketing (tel. +49 5241 211 360) and the usual advance ticket outlets. The public is also invited to attend the dress rehearsal in the Stadthalle’s main auditorium on Friday, October 9, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. No advance registration is required.

Those unable to attend in person can watch the final live online on the international opera platform OperaVision (operavision.eu). A recording of the final will also be available to watch afterward. The Liz Mohn Foundation will also publish the individual arias from the semifinal and final on its YouTube channel (@lizmohnstiftung). The NEUE STIMMEN Instagram channel (@neuestimmen) will also offer glimpses of the young singers and behind-the-scenes action throughout the competition.

Additional information

Founded by Liz Mohn in 1987, NEUE STIMMEN (neue-stimmen.de) is one of the most prestigious international competitions for young opera singers. The Liz Mohn Foundation established NEUE STIMMEN to discover young opera talent from around the world, foster their development, and provide sustained support as they build their careers. NEUE STIMMEN “Creating Careers” brings together the competition, concerts, workshops, mentoring, and other development and networking opportunities. Numerous internationally acclaimed artists, including Christiane Karg, Nathalie Stutzmann, Marina Rebeka, Michael Volle, René Pape, Franco Fagioli, Nadine Sierra, Nicole Car, Pene Pati, and Elsa Dreisig, received valuable early-career support from NEUE STIMMEN.

Press materials, pictures, and background information:

All press releases, pictures, and “Facts & Figures” on this year’s competition are available at liz-mohn-stiftung.de/medienbibliothek. Please filter for “NEUE STIMMEN Wettbewerb.”

Further information about the competition, including the schedule for the final round, the singers, jury members, and other contributors, is available at neue-stimmen.de.

Caption: Liz Mohn, President of the competition and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation, welcomes the NEUE STIMMEN 2026 final-round participants to Gütersloh

Photo credit: Besim Mazhiqi

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The Liz Mohn Foundation is an independent foundation under private law in accordance with Section 1 of the Foundation Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. It is headquartered in Gütersloh and overseen by the Detmold District Government.

Chair of the Board of Trustees: Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart

Executive Board: Liz Mohn (Chair), Matthias Meis

Managing Directors: Dr. Jörg Habich, Nadine Lindemann

About the Liz Mohn Foundation:

The nonprofit Liz Mohn Foundation focuses its work on leadership, culture, and young people. Liz Mohn and the Stiftung are particularly committed to building bridges of understanding across languages and borders, bringing people from different nations and cultures, professions and positions, and generations into dialogue.

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