

PRESS RELEASE

NEUE STIMMEN 2026: Semifinalists announced

Sixteen young opera singers advance to the semifinal of the NEUE STIMMEN 2026 International Singing Competition.

Gütersloh, October 6, 2026. The semifinalists for NEUE STIMMEN 2026 have been selected: Following the auditions on Monday and Tuesday, the nine-member jury chaired by Alexander Neef, Director of the Opéra national de Paris, decided which 16 of the 41 young opera singers from 18 countries would advance to the next round of the competition. On Wednesday, October 7, the semifinalists will perform with piano accompaniment for the jury and audience at the Stadthalle Gütersloh, beginning at 7 p.m.:

- **Altynbek, Aigerim / Soprano, Kazakhstan**
- **Celik, Defne / Soprano, Germany**
- **Choi, Young / Bass, South Korea**
- **Cook, Max Alexander / Tenor, United States**
- **Dai, Ziyi / Soprano, China**
- **Durka, Marcel / Baritone, Germany**
- **Fischer, Neima / Soprano, Germany**
- **Liu, Yiming / Tenor, China**
- **Peng, Xuandi / Bass-Baritone, China**
- **Pkhaladze, Irakli / Bass-Baritone, Georgia**
- **Rojas, Rafael / Tenor, Mexico**
- **Sinanyan, Arpi / Soprano, Armenia**
- **Wang, Jiazhou / Baritone, China**
- **Wu, Liere / Soprano, China**
- **Yi, Younji / Soprano, South Korea**
- **Zhuo, Shiyu / Soprano, China**

"I am always impressed by the talent, passion, and courage these young people bring to pursuing their dream of an opera career. I warmly congratulate all the semifinalists and wish them every success – and, above all, much joy – on stage. The week continues for the other young singers, too, with opportunities to make valuable contacts, expand their networks, and gain important insights for the road ahead," says Liz Mohn, President of the competition and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation.

Public dress rehearsal, semifinal, and final to be held at Stadthalle Gütersloh

Sixteen young opera singers from around the world will take the stage at the Stadthalle Gütersloh for the semifinal with piano accompaniment on Wednesday, October 7, beginning at 7 p.m. The Junior Jury will once again take part and present its own award. Tickets cost €12, or €7.60 discounted. The final concert follows on Friday, October 9, at 7 p.m., when the finalists will perform with the Duisburg Philharmonic, conducted by Vitali Alekseenok. Tickets cost €39.50, or €23 discounted, and are available from Gütersloh Marketing (tel. +49 5241 211 360) and other advance ticket outlets. The public is also invited to attend the dress rehearsal for the final concert in the Stadthalle's main auditorium on Friday, October 9, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. No advance registration is required.

Follow NEUE STIMMEN online

Those unable to attend NEUE STIMMEN in person can follow the competition online. The semifinal will be available the following day on the Liz Mohn Foundation's YouTube channel (@lizmohnstiftung). The final on October 9 will be streamed live on the international opera platform OperaVision. A recording of the final will also be available afterward. Following the competition week, the Liz Mohn Foundation's YouTube channel will feature the individual arias from the semifinal and final (@lizmohnstiftung). The NEUE STIMMEN Instagram channel (@neuestimmen) will also offer glimpses of the young singers and behind-the-scenes action.

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, with Alexander Neef, Chairman of the NEUE STIMMEN jury, and the semifinalists of the 2026 competition

Photo credit: Besim Mazhiqi

Our expert: Ines Koring
Phone: +49 5241 2133-372
Email: koring@liz-mohn-stiftung.de

Press Enquiries:

Nadine Lindemann

Managing Director

Liz Mohn Foundation

Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256 | 33311 Gütersloh | Germany

Phone: +49 5241 2133-533

Email: lindemann@liz-mohn-stiftung.de | www.liz-mohn-stiftung.de

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