

PRESS RELEASE

Eight young opera singers advance to the NEUE STIMMEN 2026 final

Four women and four men have advanced to the final of the Liz Mohn Foundation's NEUE STIMMEN 2026 International Singing Competition. At the final concert on Friday, October 9, they will perform with the Duisburg Philharmonic, conducted by Vitali Alekseenok, at the Stadthalle Gütersloh. The concert will be streamed live on OperaVision.

Gütersloh, October 8, 2026. Eight young opera singers have advanced to the NEUE STIMMEN 2026 final. The jury chaired by Alexander Neef, Director of the Opéra national de Paris, selected the eight finalists from the 16 singers in the semifinal. On Friday, October 9, they will take the stage at the Stadthalle Gütersloh at 7 p.m. with the Duisburg Philharmonic, conducted by Vitali Alekseenok. The final concert will be streamed live on the international opera platform OperaVision. A recording of the final will also be available afterward. The Liz Mohn Foundation will also publish the individual arias from the semifinal and final on its YouTube channel (@lizmohnstiftung).

The following eight singers have been selected for the final:

- **Aigerim Altynbek / Soprano, Kazakhstan**
- **Ziyi Dai / Soprano, China**
- **Yiming Liu / Tenor, China**
- **Irakli Pkhaladze / Bass-Baritone, Georgia**
- **Rafael Rojas / Tenor, Mexico**
- **Arpi Sinanyan / Soprano, Armenia**
- **Jiazhou Wang / Baritone, China**
- **Liere Wu / Soprano, China**

"The final is a special moment for these young singers on their path to a professional career. A dream is coming true for them: They will take the stage with a major orchestra and perform for an international audience. I hope they enjoy this special moment, believe in themselves, and move people with their voices and personalities," says Liz Mohn, President of the competition and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation.

Junior Jury and other special awards recognize outstanding young talent

The Junior Jury once again brought its own perspective to the semifinal: Nine young people between the ages of 16 and 18 followed the day's competition and selected the singer who impressed them most. The 2026 Junior Jury Award, worth €1,000, goes to Jiazhou Wang, Baritone aus China. The NEUE STIMMEN Junior Jury was set up to get young people excited about opera while also ensuring that their perspective on the next generation of artists and the future of opera is represented.

The €5,000 Brian Dickie Young Talent Award goes to Klara Solén, mezzo-soprano from Sweden. The award supports and encourages very young singers who demonstrate exceptional artistic potential and helps them develop that potential further. It honors Brian Dickie,

the longtime director of NEUE STIMMEN's International Preliminary Auditions. The Patagonia Voice Award, which includes an appearance at Teatro del Lago in Chile, goes to Rafael Rojas, Tenor from Mexico. These special awards complement the cash prizes presented by the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition and give the young singers additional opportunities for their continued artistic development.

From 1,126 applicants to eight finalists

A total of 1,126 singers from 69 countries applied for NEUE STIMMEN 2026. Forty-one young opera singers from 18 countries reached the final round in Gütersloh, with 16 advancing to the semifinal. Now eight singers have reached the final. Based on their performances, the jury will select the top three female and male singers. They will receive cash prizes totaling €60,000. Additional special awards are worth a total of €7,000. Beyond the awards themselves, contacts with the international opera world are another important part of the competition week for the young singers, as are individual feedback sessions with jury members. Under the banner of NEUE STIMMEN "Creating Careers," these career development opportunities are being further strengthened, expanded to include one-on-one mentoring, and developed into a 15-month support program.

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 finalists of the 2026 competition

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