

PRESS RELEASE

Arpi Sinanyan and Jiazhou Wang win NEUE STIMMEN 2026

Arpi Sinanyan (23) from Armenia and Jiazhou Wang (22) from China have won the NEUE STIMMEN 2026 International Singing Competition. At the final concert in Gütersloh, they impressed the nine-member jury chaired by Alexander Neef.

Gütersloh, October 10, 2026. Arpi Sinanyan from Armenia and Jiazhou Wang from China are the winners of NEUE STIMMEN 2026. At 22, Wang is the youngest winner in the competition's history. They prevailed among the eight finalists who performed at Friday evening's final concert. Each receives €15,000 in prize money. The young singers have completed an intensive week of competition that gave them opportunities to perform before an audience, an internationally renowned jury of experts, and other leading figures from the opera world.

Alexander Neef, Chairman of the Jury and Director of the Opéra national de Paris, says: "The winners impressed us with their voices, stage presence, and individuality. This week, we encountered young singers with distinctive artistic identities and something to say. Opera needs strong individuals like these. A competition like NEUE STIMMEN can give them visibility, help them forge connections, and open up new prospects. What matters is that they find their own path and continue on it with confidence. I warmly congratulate the winners."

Six prizewinners and a total of €60,000 in prize money: That was the outcome of the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition final at the Stadthalle Gütersloh. Eight young singers performed with the Duisburg Philharmonic, conducted by Vitali Alekseenok, for the nine-member jury, an audience of opera professionals, and other guests. The top three female and male singers received awards. The final concert was streamed live on the international opera platform OperaVision. A recording of the final will also be available afterward. The individual arias from the final and semifinal will also be available on the Liz Mohn Foundation's YouTube channel (@lizmohnstiftung).

The winners of NEUE STIMMEN 2026

Singers – women:

- 1st prize, €15,000: Arpi Sinanyan / Soprano, Armenia
- 2nd prize, €10,000: Aigerim Altynbek / Soprano, Kazakhstan
- 3rd prize, €5,000: Liere Wu / Soprano, China

Singers – men:

- 1st prize, €15,000: Jiazhou Wang / Baritone, China
- 2nd prize, €10,000: Irakli Pkhaladze / Bass-Baritone, Georgia
- 3rd prize, €5,000: Rafael Rojas / Tenor, Mexico

Special awards

In addition to the main prizes, NEUE STIMMEN recognizes special achievements with additional awards. Rafael Rojas, a tenor from Mexico, will receive the Audience Award, worth 1,000 euros, as well as the Patagonia Voice Award. Further special awards were presented during the semifinal: The €5,000 Brian Dickie Young Talent Award went to Klara Solén,

mezzo-soprano from Sweden. Jiazhou Wang also received the Junior Jury Prize, worth 1,000 euros. These awards are part of NEUE STIMMEN "Creating Careers," which supports young singers beyond the competition itself.

NEUE STIMMEN President Liz Mohn congratulates the prizewinners

Liz Mohn presented the prizes together with Jury Chairman Alexander Neef. The President of the competition and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation said: "I warmly congratulate the winners on their success. I am also delighted by the impressive development all the singers have shown over the course of this week. The competition is an important step for them on the path to a national or international career. I hope the experiences and encounters they have had in Gütersloh stay with them as they continue to pursue their paths with courage, discipline, and great passion. We will continue to support them on this journey beyond the competition through our redesigned 'Creating Careers' program."

From 1,126 applicants to the prizewinners

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 of them advancing to the semifinal and eight to the final. In addition to their performances, the competition week offered them individual feedback sessions, encounters with leading figures from the international opera world, and opportunities to expand their networks. This support, provided under the banner of NEUE STIMMEN "Creating Careers," will continue beyond the competition and be further strengthened in the future: A 15-month support program will combine concerts, workshops, mentoring, and additional development and networking opportunities.

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.

Captions:

- 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 first-prize winners of the 2026 competition, Arpi Sinanyan and Jiazhou Wang.

- Liz Mohn, founder of NEUE STIMMEN and Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the Liz Mohn Foundation, and Alexander Neef, Chairman of the NEUE STIMMEN jury, with all the prizewinners 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