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The George and Nora London Foundation Competition for Opera Singers Marks Its 54th Year in 2026, Presenting its Final Round on Friday, February 20, at Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center

The finals of the prestigious competition, a public event, will be livestreamed.



George and Nora London Foundation President John Hauser, third from right, with 2025 George London Award winners (left to right) Evan Lazdowski, Magdalena Kužma, Alec Carlson, Shelén Hughes Camacho, and Joseph Parrish. Photo by Beth Bergman

The **George and Nora London Foundation Competition** for American and Canadian opera singers, one of the opera world's oldest and most prestigious competitions, will hold its 54th event in 2026, with a public final round at New York's Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center on Friday, February 20, at 4:00 pm. The finals will also be livestreamed free of charge on the foundation's [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#). The event will confer its **George London Award** of \$12,000 upon five singers, and Encouragement Awards of \$2,000 upon the remaining finalists.

After three days of semi-finals, a dozen of the best young opera singers from the U.S. and Canada will perform in the final round with pianist John Arida before a panel of judges and audience at Merkin Hall.

Each finalist performs one selection, and the winners are announced to the audience immediately after the judges' deliberations.

This year's judges are soprano Harolyn Blackwell; mezzo-soprano Susan Quittmeyer; tenor Dimitri Pittas; bass James Morris; Matthew Horner, Senior Vice President of IMG Artists and London Foundation board member; and Gayletha Nichols, soprano and former Executive Director of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, who will act as chair.

Since 1971, the foundation's annual competition has given more than 300 awards, and a total of more than \$2 million, to an outstanding roster of young American and Canadian opera singers who have gone on to international stardom – the list of past winners includes Joyce DiDonato, Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, Ryan Speedo Green, Catherine Malfitano, James Morris, Eric Owens, Matthew Polenzani, Sondra Radvanovsky, Neil Shicoff, Dawn Upshaw, and Willard White, to name just a few. As The New York Times noted, "this prestigious competition ... can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera."

The George and Nora London Foundation will present two winners of the 2025 George London Award in recital: **Shelén Hughes Camacho, soprano, and Joseph Parrish, baritone, on Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 7:30 pm** with Amir Farid, piano, at Merkin Hall. The singers will present a program focusing on the lesser-performed gems – arias, songs, and duets – of some of our most beloved composers.

George London and the George and Nora London Foundation for Singers

George London (1920-1985) was one of the greatest opera stars of the 20th century, who blazed a trail for American singers on the international stage and created some of the most indelible interpretations of prominent bass-baritone roles. In his later years, he devoted much of his time and energy to the support and nurturing of young singers, in partnership with his wife, Nora. See the full list of George London Award winners: <https://www.georgeandnoralondon.org/competition.html>

In addition to the annual competition, the George and Nora London Foundation also presents a recital series to give grantees exposure and experience, and, in many cases, a New York recital debut. The foundation also awards scholarships to promising high school students attending the pre-college program of The Juilliard School, a program now in its 12th year.

www.georgeandnoralondon.org

Friday, February 20, 2026, at 4:00 pm

Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center

THE GEORGE AND NORA LONDON FOUNDATION COMPETITION

Final Round and Awards Announcement

Tickets: \$55

Livestream, free of charge:

George and Nora London Foundation website

George and Nora London Foundation YouTube channel

January 12, 2026