



National Society of Arts and Letters
Supporting young talent in the performing, visual, and literary arts since 1944

T W E N T Y T W E N T Y - S E V E N

The Shirley Rabb Winston

Scholarship Competition in Classical Voice



F I R S T P L A C E • A G E S 1 9 - 2 2

Ella Vaughn

\$17,000 in scholarship prizes

Official Rules & How to Apply • Apply online by February 1, 2027

The 2026 First Place Winners

Ella Vaughn

Soprano • Ages 19–22 Division • Ohio River Valley Chapter



Soprano Ella Vaughn is a soprano at Oberlin Conservatory, where she studies under Katherine Jolly. She recently sang the role of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory to great success. In spring 2026, she appeared as Elaine in Oberlin's production of *Later the Same Evening*, and in summer 2026 she sang in the chorus of Cincinnati Opera's productions of *Carmen* and *Lalovavi*. At Oberlin, Vaughn has performed the title role in *Cendrillon*, earning praise from Cleveland Classical for her "clear voice and elegant impression." She also sang Katie Ellen in Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' *Omar*, opposite Giddens, in the work's collegiate premiere. Ella has had an incredible experience as a participant this season in the Shared Voices program with the Denyce Graves Foundation. Vaughn is the 1st Place winner of Opera Ebony's 2025 Benjamin Matthews Vocal Competition and the 2nd Place winner of the 2025 Vanderlaan Prize. In 2024, she was a winner of the Schmidt Vocal Arts Undergraduate Competition, and in 2023, she won 1st place in the Schmidt Vocal Arts National High School Competition. Ella grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she developed her love and passion for the arts.

Katherine Berdovskiy

Mezzo-soprano • Ages 16–18 Division



Mezzo-soprano Katherine Berdovskiy is a 16-year-old junior from California who fell in love with singing and performing at the age of six when she joined the Davis Musical Theater Company. This introduced her to the stage and amazing performers who inspired her. In 2017, Katherine started taking vocal and music theory lessons from Bernaddette Mondok Keller, a classically trained soprano. Under her guidance and with the help of her classical piano teacher Narmina Sultanova, Katherine received training in classical, opera and musical theater styles, and won multiple awards in local and international vocal competitions. Katherine loves to perform and volunteer at many local musical events. Fluent in English and Russian, Katherine loves singing in Italian, Spanish, Latin, German, and Belarusian. Her dream is to become an opera singer.

Congratulations to both of our 2026 first-place recipients.

THE 2027 COMPETITION

\$17,000 in scholarship prizes, awarded in two divisions

Open to singers ages 16–22 • Apply online by February 1, 2027

In Honor of Shirley Rabb Winston

The National Society of Arts and Letters awards an annual scholarship in honor of the late Shirley Rabb Winston, a distinguished mezzo-soprano who enjoyed a long and successful operatic career. The scholarship is open to singers ages 16 to 22 who demonstrate exceptional talent and strong potential for future success.

Funds are intended to support private study, college tuition, or other opportunities that contribute to the advancement of the recipient's future career, but may not be used for housing, travel, or personal expenses. Awards are paid directly to the recipient's chosen institution, teacher, or program, and must be used within 15 months of notification.

OPEN TO

Singers ages 16–22

DIVISIONS

16–18 · 19–22

AWARD WINDOW

15 months

Who May Apply

- 01** Be at least 16 years old, and not older than 22, on March 1, 2027. Your division is set by your age on that date: 16–18 or 19–22.
- 02** Be a United States citizen, by birth or naturalized, and provide proof: a U.S. passport, U.S. birth certificate, Certificate of Citizenship, Certificate of Naturalization, or Consular Report of Birth Abroad.
- 03** A prior first-place winner may not enter the age group they won again. A 16–18 first-place winner may enter 19–22. Any other prize does not affect eligibility.

How Finalists Are Chosen

- 01** Your chapter's judges hear every audition. Applicants are judged in two age groups, 16–18 and 19–22.
- 02** Two singers from each chapter go forward to the national round.
- 03** Finalists' auditions go to the national judges in March. Results are posted and announced in April 2027. All finalists are provided written feedback.

Your Three Selections

- 01 Three solo selections from opera, operetta, art song, or oratorio, in three different languages, one of them English. Contrasting in style and mood, and sung from memory: singing from sheet music is not allowed.
- 02 Total performance time may not exceed 12 minutes.
- 03 Recorded within the last 12 months, and not a previously submitted recording.
- 04 Not edited, audio not enhanced, and you must be clearly visible.
- 05 For each video, introduce yourself by name, the title of your piece, the show it is from (if applicable), and the composer. We understand an introduction may be difficult or impossible in some situations, such as a previous performance; we ask you to include one whenever possible.
- 06 Upload each selection as its own YouTube video: three videos, three links.
- 07 Set each video to Public or Unlisted, never Private; a private video cannot be opened by the judges. Keep your videos viewable until after the awards are announced. Scholarship recipients, please keep them viewable for the following year.
- 08 After you submit, paste the line below into each video's description, and add NSAL Winston Voice 2027 to the title if you can. It helps NSAL gather Winston performances into its playlists, and helps audiences who follow the competition discover your performance.

PASTE INTO EACH VIDEO DESCRIPTION

For consideration in the 2027 NSAL Winston Voice Scholarship Competition.

And, if you can, add NSAL Winston Voice 2027 to the title.

AT A GLANCE

Three Selections · Three Languages · Twelve Minutes

One in English · From Memory · Solo · Recorded Within the Past Year · Public or Unlisted, Never Private

Online, in About Five Minutes

Apply online at adjudicarts.com/winston-voice, also linked from the Winston Voice Scholarship page at arts-nsalnatl.org. With everything ready it takes about five minutes; nothing is mailed or emailed.

No national application fee. New York Chapter applicants pay a \$15 chapter fee; the Chapter Chair sends payment instructions after you submit.

Have These Ready Before You Start

- 01** Three YouTube videos, each in a different language and recorded within the past year; English must be one of the languages.
- 02** A scan or photo of your proof of citizenship: passport, birth certificate, Certificate of Citizenship or Naturalization, or Consular Report of Birth Abroad.
- 03** An original, high-resolution headshot. Do not submit a screenshot or an image copied from a text message, social-media post, or website.
- 04** A bio of up to 200 words. It may be read aloud at ceremonies, printed in programs, or displayed in online materials.
- 05** A few sentences on your commitment to singing, your study plans, and how you would use the award.
- 06** Your voice type, contact details, and school; if you are under 18, a parent or guardian to sign with you.

Questions, and Help

Contact your chapter chair, listed on the next page, or the National Chair. A paper application exists for applicants whose accessibility needs prevent applying online; arrange it with either of them.

Key Dates for the 2027 Cycle

February 1, 2027	All fully completed applications must be received by this date.
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March 2027	Each chapter announces its two finalists.
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March 2027	Finalists' auditions are heard by the national judges.
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April 2027	Results announced. All finalists are provided written feedback.
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Who to Ask in Your Region

You apply through the chapter nearest your school or home. If your state has no chapter, choose No Chapter and the Winston Team will place you. Contact your chapter chair with any question about the competition.

CHAPTER	CONTACT	EMAIL
Alabama	Les Fillmer	les.fillmer@earthlink.net
Arizona	Jeremy Aye	jeremyaye@me.com
Arkansas	Sherry Henderson	slhhsinger@yahoo.com
Florida	Wendy White	wendywhitelight@hotmail.com
Hawaii	Bro. Gary Morris, S.M.	gmorris@chaminade.edu
Illinois	Dr. Lara Brooks	larasemetko@gmail.com
Indiana	Andy Lunsford	EmailAndyToday@gmail.com
Iowa	Tara Brandt	tbrandt@tarabrandt.com
Kentucky	Sarah Moore	seomoore@yahoo.com
New Jersey (NJ, Delaware & New England)	Judy Martorelli	smartorielly@verizon.net
New York	Margaret Johnson	mjohnson12339@gmail.com
Ohio River Valley — Ohio & West Virginia	Jayne Whitlow	jaynewv@hotmail.com
Pennsylvania	Judy Fratto	judyfratto@gmail.com
St. Louis	Jeanne Zarucchi	zarucchi@umsl.edu
Washington DC (DC, Maryland & Virginia)	Kate Vetter Cain	katevettercain@gmail.com
No Chapter	Andy Lunsford	EmailAndyToday@gmail.com

Only If You Cannot Apply Online

The online form is the standard application. These pages are for applicants who, because of an accessibility need, are unable to apply online. Please arrange an alternative submission in advance with the Chapter Chair or National Chair. Complete and sign all pages of this application, then email them to the Chapter Chair or National Chair with all required supporting materials: proof of U.S. citizenship, a full-size headshot photo, a biography, and links to three YouTube videos. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian must complete and sign the required sections.

SPONSORING CHAPTER

About You

FULL NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE & ZIP

BEST PHONE

VOICE TYPE

AGE ON 3/1/27

AGE GROUP: 16-18 / 19-22

GENDER (OPTIONAL)

EMAIL

U.S. CITIZENSHIP STATUS

- ☐ U.S. citizen by birth
- ☐ Naturalized U.S. citizen

PROOF ATTACHED (TICK ONE)

- ☐ U.S. passport
- ☐ U.S. birth certificate
- ☐ Certificate of Citizenship
- ☐ Certificate of Naturalization
- ☐ Consular Report of Birth Abroad

Study, Plans & Repertoire

Parent or Guardian if Under 18, Otherwise Alternate Contact

NAME

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

EMAIL AND PHONE

School

HIGH SCHOOL / COLLEGE / NEITHER

SCHOOL NAME, CITY & STATE

IF IN COLLEGE

What is your major?

CAREER

Describe your future career plans and your commitment to a vocal career.

SCHOLARSHIP USE

What are your plans if you receive a Winston Voice Scholarship? (Summer workshops, music programs, college tuition — the scholarship does not cover housing, travel, or personal expenses.)

Bio

Up to 200 words. Your bio may be read aloud at ceremonies, printed in programs, or displayed in online materials. Type it in below or attach it with your submission, together with your headshot and proof of citizenship.

Repertoire & Attachments

Selection 1

TITLE

COMPOSER • POET (OPTIONAL) • SHOW (IF APPLICABLE)

LANGUAGE • FORM (ARIA, OPERETTA, ART SONG, OR ORATORIO)

YOUTUBE LINK

Selection 2

TITLE

COMPOSER • POET (OPTIONAL) • SHOW (IF APPLICABLE)

LANGUAGE • FORM (ARIA, OPERETTA, ART SONG, OR ORATORIO)

YOUTUBE LINK

Selection 3

TITLE

COMPOSER • POET (OPTIONAL) • SHOW (IF APPLICABLE)

LANGUAGE • FORM (ARIA, OPERETTA, ART SONG, OR ORATORIO)

YOUTUBE LINK

Permissions & Consent

By participating in the Winston Classical Voice Scholarship Competition, I hereby grant permission to the National Society of Arts and Letters (NSAL), its chapters, representatives, and affiliates, to use media content associated with my participation, under the following terms.

01 Submitted Materials

I understand that any videos, photos, or recordings I submit as part of my scholarship application or competition process may be used by NSAL for purposes that include, but are not limited to: publicity, promotion, educational content, fundraising, and archival documentation. These materials may appear in print, online, and/or broadcast media. Videos I submit may be made publicly viewable on YouTube and in NSAL playlists and channels, and may remain viewable after the competition.

02 Event Photography and Videography

I acknowledge that NSAL or its representatives may take photographs, video, or audio recordings during any events, workshops, lessons, or performances related to the competition. These recordings may be used in whole or in part for promotional and archival purposes. NSAL reserves the right to determine which media are captured, retained, or published.

03 Optional and Incidental Use

NSAL may, at its discretion, choose not to use submitted or captured media. Submission does not guarantee use. Additionally, group photos or event-wide video footage may include my likeness incidentally, even if I am not the primary subject.

04 Promotional and Educational Use

I grant NSAL the unrestricted right to use, reproduce, edit, publish, and distribute any media containing my likeness or performance for printed publications; websites, social media, and digital platforms; press releases, advertisements, and other media; and slide decks and educational presentations.

05 Waiver and Release

I release NSAL, its volunteers, affiliates, and media partners from any expectation of compensation or liability for the use of such media. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw media consent for future use by submitting a written request. However, previously published materials may remain in circulation.

06 Minors

If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign this release.

Completing Your Application

I have read the official rules. Everything I have submitted is true and correct. My date of birth is accurate, and I understand my age group is set by my age on March 1, 2027. I have not previously won first place in the age group I am entering. My three videos were recorded within the last 12 months, have not been submitted to a previous Winston competition, and are solo performances of an approved form; they have not been edited or audio-enhanced, and show me clearly. I grant the Media Release Agreement above, including that my videos, headshot and bio may be posted publicly on YouTube and in NSAL's channels and playlists.

PARTICIPANT NAME

DATE

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Under 18? The Parent or Guardian Signs Here

I am the parent or legal guardian named in this application. I consent to my child's participation and to the Media Release Agreement, including that the videos, headshot and bio they submit may be posted publicly on YouTube and in NSAL's channels and playlists. The information in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

PARENT / GUARDIAN NAME

DATE

PARENT / GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

Putting the Award to Work

Recipients may pursue the training or career opportunities of their choice: private lessons, language and diction coaching, role preparation, summer voice programs, or degree tuition. The CS Music directory lists some 300 classical opportunities, from summer festivals to Young Artist Programs. It is a starting point, not an exclusive list.

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

www.csmusic.net/organizations