



Cooper-Bing Competition

Southern Theatre Columbus, Ohio

May 17, 2026, at 3PM

2026 Cooper-Bing Competition

The Cooper-Bing Competition is an internationally recognized vocal competition dedicated to celebrating and supporting emerging operatic talent. Its mission is to discover, recognize, and encourage the next generation of young artists as they take their place in the professional opera world.

Widely known as “*The Olympics of Opera*,” the competition fosters excellence, provides meaningful artistic opportunities, and serves as a gateway for rising singers to be seen and heard.

Each year, five outstanding finalists take the stage to compete for the grand prize of \$10,000. *The 2026 competition will be hosted by WOSU Classical 101’s Christopher Purdy as the Master of Ceremonies.*

Eligibility

The competition is open to professional and pre-professional singers who have completed, or are engaged in completing, a musical education suitable for the operatic stage.

- 1) All applicants must be between 21-35 years of age on May 17, 2026, and **available to travel to Columbus, Ohio** for the Cooper-Bing Competition Finals (May 17, 2026). The agenda begins at 10:30am on May 17, 2026.
- 2) Past applicants may submit new applications provided they meet the age requirement. Past finalists are not eligible to apply.
- 3) Current full-time employees of the Opera Columbus staff are ineligible to audition.

Application Fee

An application fee of \$25 must be submitted online through YAP Tracker as part of your application. Application fees are non-refundable.

Application

Each applicant must submit an application form online via YAP Tracker.

Supplemental Materials

Each applicant must submit the following supplemental materials via YAP Tracker:

- a photocopy of their government-issued ID (must show date of birth) or birth certificate
- a current performing resume
- a photograph (jpeg)
- three video files of three different arias (see “Artistic Requirements” below).

Detailed information regarding supplemental materials is included on page three. *All application materials, recordings, and fees become the property of Opera Columbus, and will not be returned to applicants.*

Artistic Requirements

Applicants must submit a high-quality video recording of **three contrasting arias from opera and/or operetta**. All selections must have accompaniment (piano or orchestra). **One recording must be in the English language. You will be disqualified if you do not submit an aria in English.** Recordings must be recent (less than one year old) and may include any combination of filmed performances, home recordings, or studio recordings. Video and audio must be clear and unedited.

Applicants may include no more than one aria translated from the original language, and only if it is a piece that is

commonly sung in translation.

For guidance on creating high-quality home or rehearsal studio recordings, please review [Opera America's Recording Gear Recommendations](#).

Finals

Five finalists will be selected to attend the Cooper-Bing Competition Finals on May 17, 2026. If selected for the Finals, artists will need to prepare three arias. These arias may be the original submission repertoire selections and/or new selections of repertoire. Each finalist will select their first aria, and the judges will select the second aria prior to the competition date. All finalists will be notified of the judges' aria selection in advance of the competition date.

A panel of opera and voice professionals will judge these recordings and select the five singers who will compete in the live competition.

Awards

First Place.....	\$10,000
Second Place.....	\$5,000
Third Place	\$2,500
Fourth Place.....	\$1,500
Fifth Place	\$1,000
Merle McInturff Audience Choice Award.....	\$300

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JANUARY 15, 2026 BY 11:59PM YOUR LOCAL TIME is the deadline for online application, payment and the supplemental materials.

INCOMPLETE OR LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please retain a copy of your application form for your records.

All applicants will be notified of their status by March 31, 2026.

The Cooper-Bing Competition Finals will be held on **MAY 17, 2026**, at the Southern Theatre in Columbus, OH. A panel of nationally recognized opera professionals will judge those invited to compete in the final round. **Finalists will be responsible for their own transportation to and from Columbus, Ohio and housing for the competition.** Agenda to begin at 10:30am on May 17, 2026.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

All supplemental materials are to include the following and should be uploaded via YAP Tracker:

- **Copy of government-issued ID or birth certificate**
Include a photocopy of either a government-issued ID, such as a driver's license or state ID card (must include date of birth), or your birth certificate. (Required for age verification.)
- **Photograph**
Include a professional headshot (jpeg format).
- **Performing resume**
A performing resume should include complete roles you have prepared, with whom it was performed, awards and grants, musical training and degrees, current and former voice teachers, and any other relevant professional experience. **Maximum two pages.**
- **Video Recordings**
Applicants must submit a high-quality video recording of **three contrasting arias from opera and/or operetta.**

One recording must be in the English language. You will be disqualified if you do not submit an aria in English. Applicants may include no more than one aria translated from the original language, and only if it is a piece that is commonly sung in translation. All selections must have accompaniment (piano or orchestra). Recordings must be recent (less than one year old) and may include any combination of filmed performances, home recordings, or studio recordings. Video and audio must be clear and unedited.

- All recordings are reviewed anonymously. Recording files **MUST NOT** include the applicant's name. Please use the file naming convention: "Aria Title – 2026".
- Audio-only recordings will not be accepted.
- Please do not include additional selections. Applications with more than the three (3) requested arias will not be considered.

Your payment and online application must be completed, and supplemental materials must be uploaded no later than January 19, 2026 by 11:59pm YOUR LOCAL TIME.

If you are unable to submit due to cost, Opera Columbus does have a limited amount of sponsorship opportunities available to cover the \$25 application fee. Contact dbennett@operacolumbus.org for more information.