



Contact Information  
Opera Grand Rapids  
Emilee Syrewicze  
(616) 451-2741  
[esyrewicze@operagr.org](mailto:esyrewicze@operagr.org)

Release Date: March 9, 2020

### **COLLEGE VOCALISTS TO COMPETE IN GRAND RAPIDS FOR ONE OF OPERA'S TOP PRIZES**

*Opera Grand Rapids is pleased to announce the finalists in its National Collegiate Vocal Competition, which offers one of the largest collegiate vocal prizes in the Nation*

**Grand Rapids, MI, 3/9/2020** - For fifteen years, Opera Grand Rapids (OGR), Michigan's oldest and longest-running professional opera company, has hosted a collegiate vocal consortium, giving experiential benefits and hosting a competition for collegiate members. In this, the company's fifty-second season, OGR expanded the competition to a National level and collected applicants from ten states.

Until this season, OGR's Collegiate Vocal Competition — held every spring and offering a top prize of \$1,000 — has been limited to a competition amongst its five consortium schools. This year, OGR decided to take the competition national and offer a \$10,000 first prize, \$5,000 second prize, \$2,500 third prize, and a "Friends of the Opera" award of \$1,000 that will be chosen by the audience during the competition finals March 28 at the Betty Van Andel Opera Center. In addition to the financial incentive to compete, finalists will also be considered for roles in upcoming OGR productions, giving young singers experience and stronger resumes as they enter their careers.

"We want West Michigan to become synonymous with vocal arts. Whether that is because of our company's exemplary productions or the talent we are bringing to Grand Rapids from all over the world, elite collegiate vocalists are part of that equation" said OGR Executive Director, Emilee Syrewicze. She continued, "Opera Grand Rapids is considered one of the top mid-size opera companies in North

America and fostering a competition of this magnitude will further solidify West Michigan as a center for the performing arts in the next generation of artists.”

Applicants to OGR’s competition must apply prior to February 1 each year. The first round of adjudication is by an anonymous panel of judges assembled throughout North America. Once the finalists are selected, they are invited to The Betty Van Andel Opera Center in Grand Rapids to compete. Competitors perform a single aria at the final concert and are adjudicated by a panel of three guest judges.

The public is invited to watch the finals March 28 at 7:00 pm at The Betty Van Andel Opera Center. Tickets are available at the Opera Grand Rapids box office (616) 451-2741 or through [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

### **The 2020 Collegiate Vocal Competition Finalists**



Justine Alexander, Soprano  
Michigan State University



Shannon Crowley, Soprano  
Michigan State University



Lily Belle Czartorski, Mezzo-Soprano  
Oakland University



Deepa Johnny, Mezzo-Soprano  
Indiana University



Alexander Kapp, Baritone  
University of Cincinnati College-  
Conservatory of Music



Ben Reisinger, Baritone  
Michigan State University



Hayden Smith, Tenor  
Temple University



Gillian Tackett, Soprano  
Oakland University



Riley Wells, Countertenor  
Grand Valley State University



David Young, Tenor  
DePauw University