



Monk Institute Announces 11 Semifinalists for Jazz Vocals Competition

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10/12/2015 9:00 AM

Eleven semifinalists have been chosen for the [Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition](#), to be held on Nov. 14 and 15 in Los Angeles. The winner will receive a \$25,000 music scholarship, a recording contract with the Concord Music Group and the prestige that comes with the title, which can greatly boost the trajectory of a career.

The competitors represent a range of backgrounds, with some hailing from Europe (Sirintip Phasuk, of Stockholm, and Walter Ricci, of Naples, Italy); Australia (Liam Burrows, from Sydney); and South Africa (Vuyolwethu Sotashe, from Butterworth). There are three semifinalists from Virginia (Lena Seikaly, Veronica Swift and Danielle Wertz); one from Greenville, N.C. (Christie Dashiell); one from Dallas (Jazzmeia Horn); and one apiece from Los Angeles (Katie Thiroux) and New York City (Lucy Yeghiazaryan).

Each semifinalist will perform a 15-minute set with a house rhythm section in front of a judging panel and an audience. This year's judges include the esteemed singers Freddy Cole, Al Jarreau, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Patti Austin and Luciana Souza. (Tickets to the semifinals, on Nov. 14 at Schoenberg Hall on the campus of the University of California Los Angeles, are distributed free, on a first-come basis.)

Three finalists will compete on Nov. 15 at the Dolby Theater, followed by a gala concert honoring the producer Quincy Jones with the Monk Institute's 2015 Herbie Hancock Humanitarian Award.

Along with Mr. Hancock, the institute's chairman, the hosts for the concert will include the "Family Guy" creator and filmmaker (and sometime big-band crooner) Seth MacFarlane and the former NBA

star (and full-time jazz fan) Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Several of the competition's judges will perform, as will the saxophonist Wayne Shorter, the guitarist and singer George Benson, the trumpeter Arturo Sandoval and the flutist Hubert Laws, among others.

The Monk Competition, which changes its instrumental focus from year to year, remains an integral part of the machinery for emerging talent in the jazz mainstream. The last time it spotlighted singers, in 2010, its top three finalists were Cécile McLorin Salvant, Charenée Wade and Cyrille Aimée, each of whom has since led a successful solo career. (Ms. Salvant, who finished in first place, has been [a breakout star](#).)