

Cynthia Woods Mitchell – Ima Hogg Young Artist Competition

At the Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival

2026 Edition

Table of Contents

About the Competition.....	2
<i>Prizes</i>	2
2026 Competition Requirements.....	2
2026 Competition Dates.....	3
History of the Competition.....	3
Past Winners	4

THE IMMANUEL AND HELEN OLSHAN TEXAS MUSIC FESTIVAL

2026 Cynthia Woods Mitchell - Ima Hogg Young Artist Competition

About the Competition

The Cynthia Woods Mitchell - Ima Hogg Competition is open to all Texas Music Festival Orchestra Fellows and Piano Institute pianists.

Prizes: **1st** (\$3,000), **2nd** (\$2,000), **3rd** (\$1,000), and **4th** (\$750) place prizes will be awarded as well as an **Audience Choice Prize** (\$500).

Subject to approval of the conductor and the availability of orchestral parts, the 1st place winner will perform with the **Festival Orchestra** under the baton of **Rebecca Miller in the Moores Opera House on June 27, 2026.**

The 1st place winner will also be invited to perform with the Houston Symphony in the 2026–2027 season.

The Texas Music Festival is grateful for its partnership with the Houston Symphony and to the underwriters of the prizes.

2026 Competition Requirements

- **Repertoire Requirements:**
 - Competitors may compete with one movement from a standard work for solo instrument(s) and orchestra (one movement of a concerto or one-movement works are acceptable. If a full concerto meets the time limit, it is also acceptable.)
 - **Total length not to exceed 20 minutes, including full orchestral tutti.**
 - Please contact the [TMF Office](#) if you have questions about the eligibility of any work for competition.
 - Orchestral parts and scores must be readily available.
- Work must be performed entirely from memory throughout the competition.

- Competitors must provide a piano score for the Preliminary Round. Piano score must be an orchestral reduction.
- **Mitchell-Hogg Competition Registration Fee:** \$50 (due on acceptance, non-refundable)

2026 Competition Dates

- **Preliminary Round:** Wednesday, June 3, 2026
 - PIANO: 2 p.m.
 - STRINGS: 7 p.m.
 - WINDS/BRASS/PERCUSSION: 7 p.m.
 - Competitors will only be allowed an 8-12 minute performance time.
- **Final Round: Sunday, June 7 at 2 p.m.**
 - Final Round is **open to the public**.
 - Competitors will be allowed the full time required to perform their piece or movement.

History of the Competition

The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Young Artist Competition was founded at the inception of the Texas Music Festival in 1990 by George and Cynthia Mitchell to provide a competition experience for members of the festival orchestra. Today, the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation continues this generous legacy and is honored to be collaborating with the Houston Symphony on the new Cynthia Woods Mitchell-Ima Hogg Young Artist Competition.

In 2023, [The University of Houston](#) and [Houston Symphony](#) merged the University of Houston's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Young Artist Competition and the Houston Symphony's Ima Hogg Competition. The winner of the competition will now have the opportunity to perform as a soloist with the Texas Music Festival Orchestra, and the Houston Symphony will extend an invitation for the winner to perform alongside the symphony in the following season.

The Mitchell-Hogg Competition is open to all Texas Music Festival Orchestra members and College Piano Institute participants, who are chosen through a competitive audition process. Up to eight finalists may be selected for the competition's open-to-the-public final round. First, second and third place prizes are awarded, as well as an Audience Choice prize.

“The Ima Hogg Competition has a nearly 50-year storied history, one that was only interrupted by the pandemic,” said John Mangum, former Houston Symphony CEO. “As we considered its future, it made complete sense to join forces with the prestigious Cynthia Woods Mitchell Young Artist Competition at the University of Houston’s Texas Music Festival. Both organizations are deeply committed to creating opportunities for young people to connect with music, so it seemed like a natural partnership. It’s very exciting to combine resources to create something for these emerging artists: a new competition that’s even greater than the sum of its parts.”

Past Winners

2025

- **First Prize:** Maya Lai, *harp* | Las Vegas, NV
 - *Generously underwritten by Lilly and Thurmon Andress in loving memory of Lilly's mother, Jean Whitbread Kucera*
- **Second Prize:** Nickolas Warwick, *violin* | Spring, Texas
 - *Generously underwritten by David R. Voll in loving memory of Dianna Gibbs Voll*
- **Third Prize:** Lorien Britt, *flute* | Fate, Texas
 - *Generously underwritten by Nancy McCormick*
- **Fourth Prize:** Yishan Xiao, *piano* | Hunan, China
 - *Generously underwritten by Joel Oppenheim*
- **Audience Choice:** Nickolas Warwick, *violin* | Spring, Texas
 - *Generously underwritten by Darlene Clark and Edwin Friedrichs to provide encouragement and recognition of ongoing commitment to excellence*
- **Finalists:** Matthew Calderon, *piano*; Wenlan Jackson, *violin*; Alistair Picken, *bassoon*; Vanae Schunk, *violin*; Emily Tong, *piano*

2024

- **First Prize:** Jonah Murphy, *flute* | Brooklyn, New York
 - *Generously underwritten by Lilly and Thurmon Andress in loving memory of Lilly's mother, Jean Whitbread Kucera*
- **Second Prize:** Han Sol Jeong, *piano* | Christchurch, New Zealand
 - *Generously underwritten by David R. Voll in loving memory of Dianna Gibbs Voll*
- **Third Prize:** Takeru Niihara, *violin* | Hiroshima, Japan
 - *Generously underwritten by Nancy McCormick*
- **Fourth Prize:** Fiona Tsang, *cello* | San Jose, California
 - *Generously underwritten by Dr. Keith A. Butcher in memory of Katherine G. McGovern*
- **Audience Choice:** Izaiah Gonzalez, *marimba* | Harlingen, Texas
 - *Generously underwritten by Darlene Clark and Edwin Friedrichs to provide encouragement and recognition of ongoing commitment to excellence*

- **Finalists:** Andrew Bell, *bassoon*; Christian Harvey, *double bass*; Uicheol Uhm, *piano*

2023

- **First Place & Audience Choice Prize:** Xayvion Davidson, *bassoon* | Rossini: Bassoon Concerto
- **Second Place:** Lorien Britt, *flute* | Devienne: Flute Concerto No. 7
- **Third Place:** Momoko Uchida, *violin* | Vitali: Chaconne

2022

- **First Place:** Joshua Liu, *violin* | Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Major
- **Second Place & Audience Choice Prize:** William Ramos, *bassoon* | von Weber: Andante and Hungarian Rondo
- **Third Place:** Alex Carroll, *double bass* | Vanhal: Concerto for Double Bass

2019

- **First Place:** Brian Bires, *viola* | Forsyth: Viola Concerto in G minor, Mvt. I
- **Second Place:** Evan Schnurr, *clarinet* | Nielsen: Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57, Allegretto un poco
- **Second Place Tie & Audience Choice Prize:** Yue Yang, *violin* | Ravel: Tzigane
- **Finalists:** Mark Lauer, *bassoon* | Mozart: Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major, Mvt. I; Ayrton Pisco, *violin* | Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64, Mvt. III

2018

- **First Place:** Andres Vela, *double bass* | Vanhal: Double Bass Concerto in D Major, Mvt. I
- **Second Place & Audience Choice Prize:** Lucas Sanchez, *timpani* | Fischer: Symphony with Eight Obbligato Timpani
- **Third Place:** Sabrina Bounds, *flute* | Devienne: Flute Concerto No. 7 in E Minor, Mvt. I
- **Finalists:** Julianne Mulvey, *bassoon* | Mozart: Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major, Mvt. I; Karl Zhu, *violin* | Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219, Mvt. I

2017

- **First Place:** Matthew Lee, *violin*

2016

- **First Place:** Juan Esteban Martinez, *clarinet*

2015

- **First Place:** Yuan Tian, *violin*

2014

- **First Place:** Caitlin Mehrstens, *harp*

2013

- **First Place:** Jessica Findley, *bassoon*

2012

- **First Place:** Xiao Wang, *violin*

2011

- **First Place:** Lachezar Kostov, *cello*

2010

- **First Place:** Shuaili Du, *violin*

2009

- **First Place:** Yi-Chun Lin, *violin*

2008

- **First Place:** Kristin King, *clarinet*

2007

- **First Place:** Meredith Clark, *harp*

2006

- **First Place:** Amber Archibald, *viola*

2005

- **First Place:** Joanna Messer, *flute*