



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

JACK SWANSON WINS 2026 JAN SHREM AND MARIA MANETTI SHREM EMERGING STARS COMPETITION



Jack Swanson (photo: Lily Lancaster); Jack Swanson as Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, with Hongni Wu as Rosina (photos: Cory Weaver)

American tenor recognized through popular vote for his Company debut as Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 12, 2026) — San Francisco Opera announces Jack Swanson as the winner of the 2025–26 Season Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Competition. The American tenor made his house debut as Count Almaviva in this summer's presentation of Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*).

The 2026 Emerging Star of the Year was determined by a popular vote conducted online at sfopera.com from June 30 to August 5, 2026. Now in its eighth year, winners of the Emerging Stars Competition receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

"I am incredibly humbled and grateful to San Francisco Opera and to Maria Manetti Shrem for their extraordinary generosity and support," said Jack Swanson. "This past summer marked my first time in San Francisco, and the city has already claimed a special place in my heart. From the audiences

to the artistry to the people who make this company what it is, everything about my time there was exceptional. I cannot wait for my next opportunity to return to the Golden Gate City."

Minnesota native Jack Swanson is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after young tenors in the opera world. His distinctive high lyric voice is known for singing the acrobatic arias of Rossini and the legato melodies of Donizetti. Swanson's upcoming engagements include Opéra National de Paris and Teatro alla Scala (Count Almaviva/*The Barber of Seville*), Teatro di San Carlo (Don Ramiro/*La Cenerentola*), Gran Teatre del Liceu (Tito/*La Clemenza di Tito* and Tamino/*The Magic Flute*), the New York Philharmonic and his Carnegie Hall recital debut.

Maria Manetti Shrem said: "I am thrilled that tenor Jack Swanson is the 2026 recipient of the Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Award. I am delighted that San Francisco Opera continues to recognize exceptional young talent and provide meaningful opportunities through initiatives such as this competition, which allows audiences to champion the next generation of operatic performers. As a philanthropist, it is a joy to support these gifted singers as they pursue their dreams and share their artistry with audiences around the world. Jack captivated audiences as Count Almaviva in San Francisco Opera's recent production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. He captured the unmistakable lightness, warmth and exuberance that make Rossini's music a celebration of the Italian soul. I am delighted that he will reprise this celebrated role at the Opéra National de Paris this September and October. I wish Jack every success and look forward to following his journey and celebrating his many accomplishments in the years ahead."

Jack Swanson was one of fourteen artists appearing in San Francisco Opera's 2025–26 Season with support from the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund and nominated for the competition. The 2026 nominees also included sopranos Brittany Renee (Sister Rose/*Dead Man Walking*) and Mei Gui Zhang (Guanyin/*The Monkey King*); mezzo-sopranos Maria Kataeva (Rosina/*The Barber of Seville*) and Hongni Wu (Crab General and Venus Star/*The Monkey King* and Rosina/*The Barber of Seville*); tenors Konu Kim (Jade Emperor/*The Monkey King*), Levy Sekgapane (Count Almaviva/*The Barber of Seville*), Kang Wang (Monkey King/*The Monkey King*) and Yongzhao Yu (Duke of Mantua/*Rigoletto*); baritones Justin Austin (Figaro/*The Barber of Seville*), Joo Won Kang (Dragon King Ao Guang and Lord Erlang/*The Monkey King*) and Jusung Gabriel Park (Master Subhuti/Buddha in *The Monkey King*); and basses Peixin Chen (Sparafucile/*Rigoletto* and Supreme Sage Laojun/*The Monkey King*) and Riccardo Fassi (Don Basilio/*The Barber of Seville*).

The Emerging Star of the Year award is made possible by the Emerging Stars Fund, established through a multi-year, multimillion-dollar gift from Company benefactors Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. Their gift provides crucial support for San Francisco Opera to celebrate rising artists and engage the opera community. Past recipients of the Emerging Star of the Year award include

sopranos Andriana Chuchman, Karen Chia-ling Ho and Yaritza Véliz, countertenor Carlo Vistoli, tenors Arturo Chacón-Cruz and Atalla Ayan, and baritone Lucas Meachem.

MARIA MANETTI SHREM AND JAN SHREM



Maria Manetti Shrem rose to prominence through her remarkable achievements in the fashion industry, notably with Gucci and Fendi. Her late husband, Jan Shrem, enjoyed an internationally successful career in publishing before founding Clos Pegase Winery—hailed as “America's first monument to art and wine.”

In the 2010s, Maria and Jan united their philanthropic efforts to champion education, the performing and visual arts, and medical causes. Since 1985, they have been respectively devoted supporters of San Francisco Opera, later establishing four major funds to nurture opera artists. Among these, the Emerging Stars Fund has played a pivotal role in bringing some of opera's most promising talents to the stage.

In December 2022, Maria received The Spirit of the Opera award for her devotion to San Francisco Opera, her exceptional commitment to advancing the Company's success and her sustained support of the art form. She is the 2023 UC Davis Medal recipient, honored for her profound arts legacy and her passion for fostering exploration and education. In April 2024, Maria made history by donating eight endowments to create an Arts District at the UC Davis College of Letters and Science—the most significant gift in the college's history—ensuring that the arts and humanities are protected in perpetuity and benefiting more than 30,000 students annually, along with top faculty, emerging talents and world-renowned artists. She is also the 2025 recipient of San Francisco Opera Guild's Crescendo Award and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

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Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

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