



THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OF HIGH SCHOOL

# A CAPPELLA

FINALS

April 25, 2025



#ICHSA

THE TOWN HALL



# 2025 International Championship of High School A Cappella Finals

## **Tonight's Competitors:** *(in performance order)*

**VOCAL POINT** | ICHSA Great Lakes Champion  
*Lockport Township High School, Lockport, Ill.*

**THE ACABELLAS** | ICHSA Mid-Atlantic Champion  
*Ridgewood High School, Ridgewood, N.J.*

**NOTEORIOUS** | ICHSA Northeast Champion  
*North Reading High School, North Reading, Mass.*

**THE RAM JAMS** | ICHSA Wild Card  
*Ramsey High School, Ramsey, N.J.*

**INFINITI** | ICHSA Wild Card  
*Rockwall-Heath High School, Rockwall, Texas*

**UNSTRUMENTAL** | ICHSA West Champion  
*Calabasas High School, Calabasas, Calif.*

**SHADES OF BLUE** | ICHSA Midwest Champion  
*Hilliard Bradley High School, Hilliard, Ohio*

**SONIC EDGE** | ICHSA South Champion  
*CCCEPA at Pebblebrook High School, Mableton, Ga.*

**WALK THE LINE** | ICHSA Southwest Champion  
*Rockwall High School, Rockwall, Texas*

### **Our Judges**

KARI FRANCIS

DIANA GALEANO

JUSTIN JOHN MONIZ

ABBEY JANES

LEE STOVALL

### **Our Host**

LILY LESTER

### **Special Guest Performance**

ASHER BLANK and MATT GOLDSTEIN



**Friday, April 25, 2025**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2025 International Championship of High School A Cappella Finals! As Varsity Vocals wraps its 29th season presenting the best student groups on stage and in the studio, our enthusiasm for the art of a cappella is greater than ever. Our tournaments have grown from a handful of events to the massive showcases they are today, featuring more than 700 groups and over 11,000 singers at more than 85 events across North America and the United Kingdom.

Our tournament inspired the hit movie “Pitch Perfect,” based on the nonfiction book documenting the true story of rival groups competing in our very own ICCA. The “Pitch Perfect” franchise remains the highest-grossing musical series of all time. Fourteen years after the film’s release, our stages are full of singers who grew up watching “Pitch Perfect” and dreamed of participating in the real thing.

And now, our real-life tournament and competitors are getting a moment in the spotlight. I am excited to announce that “JUST SING,” a feature documentary following the University of Southern California SoCal VoCals through the 2023 ICCA season, has been selected for the Tribeca Film Festival. The film was produced by Academy Award-nominated production company Ventureland (“Beckham,” “WHAM!”) and GRAMMY-winning Mercury Studios (“American Symphony,” “If These Walls Could Sing”) in association with wiip (“Mare of Easttown,” “The Summer I Turned Pretty”). I was fortunate enough to serve as a producer as well, and I can best describe the film as a love letter to student a cappella. You are going to love it.

“JUST SING” will have its world premiere in the Tribeca Film Festival’s Spotlight+ section, including a special performance from The VoCals, on June 6 here in New York. Tickets will be available to the general public, and we hope to see many of you there as we share our special corner of the world with a wider audience.

Despite the incredible growth and mainstream popularity we've enjoyed, our focus remains on the promotion and development of the talent that crosses our stage. We believe competition fosters growth, as groups work together toward a specific goal and cultivate lifelong skills and relationships. We provide insightful feedback from our highly qualified judges, but more importantly, our singers get to connect with a larger audience from across the country, learning from their peers and finding inspiration in other groups.

The most gratifying part of the Varsity Vocals experience remains the remarkable camaraderie and generosity of spirit our performers share with one another. The a cappella community is an inclusive, welcoming place to collaborate, to grow, and to celebrate self-expression. We are humbled to set the stage for so much magic.

It is a true privilege to present tonight’s Finals, representing the very best there is in student a cappella. Thank you for your continued support and enjoy the show!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Newman".

Amanda Newman  
Executive Director

We invite you to follow us @varsityvocals on Instagram and Facebook.  
Join the conversation using **#ICHSA**

  @varsityvocals



# Tonight's Competitors

## **VOCAL POINT – Great Lakes Champion | @vocalpointacappella**

Vocal Point is a treble group from Lockport Township High School. They have competed at both the Quarterfinal and Semifinal levels of ICHSA and placed at the ICHSA Great Lakes Semifinal in Milwaukee. Vocal Point has also competed in the ICHSA Wild Card competition.

## **THE ACABELLAS – Mid-Atlantic Champion | @rhs\_acabellas**

The Ridgewood High School Acabellas is an all-female a cappella group made up of passionate and independent musicians from the school's choir, band, and orchestra programs. They were founded in 2011 and annually compete in the ICHSA. They perform at school functions, including sporting events, assemblies, and notably Valentine's Day when they serenade students with singing grams. They enjoy performing songs by women from all eras. You can support them at their school a cappella concerts and check out their live performances on Spotify.

## **NOTEORIOUS – Northeast Champion | @nrhs\_noteorious**

Founded in 2009, NOTEorious is the competitive all-voiced a cappella group at North Reading High School. Each year, NOTEorious challenges themselves to arrange their own music (often through trial and error and a lot of improv), move and dance in unexpected ways, flash mob, and, of course, eat copious amounts of ice-cream. For the last two summers, NOTEorious has performed at the Xfinity Center with Foreigner. Last winter, NOTEorious placed in the top three groups at NE Voices, placed second in the 2024 ICHSA Northeast Semifinals, and performed at Boston Sings (BOSS), where they were honored to be recognized for Outstanding Arrangement and Outstanding Choreography. They love a cappella's ability to cultivate togetherness, as well as meeting and celebrating other groups.

## **THE RAM JAMS – Wild Card | @theramjams**

The Ram Jams is the principal competitive a cappella group within the Ramsey High School Chorus Program. The group represents the top auditioned students from within the chorus program and performs works from a wide variety of genres, including contemporary a cappella, classical choral repertoire, and new works. The ensemble was established in 2016 and is a yearly competitor in ICHSA, where they have earned the titles of Mid-Atlantic Champion and Runner-Up many times over the years. Outside of competition, The Ram Jams have been invited to perform in many concerts and festivals, including invitations to ACDA Eastern conference, and as the first-ever student group featured at the NJMEA Gala concert. The Ram Jams' recordings have been featured on BOHSA albums and they recently released their second album, *Unchained*, which is available on all digital platforms!

## **INFINITI – Wild Card | @heathinfiniti**

Infiniti is the mixed a cappella ensemble from Rockwall-Heath High School, directed by Lauren Smith and Patrick Vu. They began performing contemporary a cappella in 2018, competing in both ICHSA and Acatex. In 2022 and 2024, they earned a trip to the ICHSA Finals in New York, placing second in 2024. They have released music on all streaming platforms and have been featured on the BOHSA and *Voices Only* compilation albums.



### **UNSTRUMENTAL – West Champion | @unstrumental**

From the award-winning Calabasas High School Music Program, Unstrumental is a mixed-voice a cappella ensemble known for its powerhouse vocals and dynamic stage performances. Founded 24 years ago, the group is made up of dedicated singers who strive to develop their voices and performance skills, all while forming a tight-knit ensemble of musicians who truly love and support one another. Committed to artistic growth, Unstrumental works hard to hone their craft through every captivating performance.

### **SHADES OF BLUE – Midwest Champion | @shadesofblueacappella**

Shades of Blue, from Hilliard Bradley High School, is the 2023 ICHSA Champion. In 2023, they were the only contemporary a cappella group selected to perform at the American Choral Directors Association National Conference in Cincinnati. They performed at the National A Cappella Convention (NACC) in 2022 and 2024. Shades of Blue's studio recordings have been chosen for *BOHSA* and *Voices Only* placements. They have also earned many CARA nominations, notably winning Best High School Song for “Gold” in 2023 and taking Runner-Up for Best High School Album in 2024 for their debut album, *Brighter Days*.

### **SONIC EDGE – South Champion | @sonicedgeacappella**

Sonic Edge is the award-winning contemporary a cappella group from the Cobb County Center of Excellence In The Performing Arts at Pebblebrook High School. This 17-member group sings a variety of music, from pop to musical theatre. They are proud to hold the title of 2024 ICHSA Champions.

### **WALK THE LINE – Southwest Champion | @rhswalktheline**

Walk the Line was founded in 2015. They attended ICHSA Finals in 2017, 2022, and 2024, winning 2nd place in 2022 and 4th place in 2024. They have recorded and released three albums, each earning track placements on Varsity Vocals' *BOHSA* albums, and three *Voices Only* compilations. After seven previous nominations, they won a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award (CARA) in 2022 for Best High School EP and again in 2024 for Best High School Song. They are excited to share the stage with great friends from many schools, and love performing live more than anything else!

## **Our Judges**

**DR. KARI FRANCIS** is an American choral musician whose work explores the resonant spaces between improvisation, ritual, and canonical styles. She can be heard singing with the professional choir Choral Chameleon and beatboxing on Season 3 of NBC's “The Sing-Off” with Kinfolk 9 and on GRAMMY-winner Cory Smythe's album *Accelerate Every Voice*. Her approach to teaching and concertizing centers living and historically underrepresented voices as part of equitable, creative, and learner-centered pedagogies, while her composing merges elements of psalmody, vocal jazz, renaissance polyphony, and contemporary a cappella. She has written chapters for books published by GIA Music and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and clinician. Kari is the Director of Choral Activities at Bowdoin College and the choir director of The Walden School Young Musicians Program.



**DIANA ALEJANDRA GALEANO-BAZZEGHIN** is a proud alumna of Florida State University, where she earned her degree in choral music education and sang with the 2009 ICCA South Champions, The AcaBelles. Since her collegiate days, she has passionately dedicated herself to advancing music education and performance, thriving as a K-12 choral educator, director of FSU's summer music camps, member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and co-director of International Championship of A Cappella Open Wild Card Champion, Sound Off (2014-2024). Diana was also instrumental in launching and managing A Cappella Academy, serving as assistant camp director and beloved "camp mom" from 2014 to 2018. Although she's stepped away from the traditional classroom and a cappella stages, Diana continues to share her love of music. She currently performs with a vocal trio in the Pioneer Valley, leads vocal workshops and masterclasses across Massachusetts, and hones her skills as an improviser. When not immersed in music, she enjoys traveling the globe with her husband and doting on her cats.

**DR. JUSTIN JOHN MONIZ** serves as Associate Director of Vocal Performance and Coordinator of Vocal Pedagogy at New York University's Steinhardt School, where he holds the rank of Associate Professor. He is a recipient of the Yamaha Corporation's Top 40 Music Educator Award and a Musical America Top Professional of the Year. At NYU, Justin leads the graduate vocal pedagogy program, teaches courses in pedagogic theory, practice, and applied voice, and directs the DownBeat Award-winning NYU Pop/Rock Ensemble. Justin also serves as Program Director of the NYU Summer Contemporary Vocal Workshop, Executive Director of Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and as a member of the Vocal Arts Faculty at Manhattan School of Music where he teaches vocal wellness and physiology. His clients have performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, on national tours, in regional theaters and opera houses, and on national television. A leading expert on contemporary vocal pedagogy and vocal wellness, Justin is regularly engaged as a guest clinician and consultant for organizations including the National Association of Teachers of Singing, National Opera Association, The Royal Conservatory of Music, New England Conservatory, Boston University, Berklee College of Music, and Barry's Bootcamp. As a voice teacher, researcher, and NASM-certified personal trainer, he is particularly passionate about identifying the parallels between the worlds of voice science and sports medicine, especially concerning vocal load, efficiency, and sustainability. For the past decade, Justin has served as a judge for Varsity Vocals at various events across the nation. Find him on Instagram @jj\_moniz

**ABBEY JANES** sings with and arranges for internationally acclaimed a cappella group, Duwendé. An eight-time CARA winner and three-time A Cappella Video Awards (AVA) winner, Duwendé has performed at the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta, the United Nations Ambassadors Ball, and a World AIDS Day Event at the Royal Theatre Carré in Amsterdam. In addition to television appearances on NBC and Fox, Duwendé has been a featured performer at several Sundance Film Festivals. Abbey enjoys being involved in scholastic a cappella conferences and competitions as a clinician and judge. As a music major at Franklin and Marshall College, Abbey sang with and music-directed a mixed-voice group, The Poor Richards. Like so many here tonight, she credits those years with her college group for some of her best learning experiences, memories, and lifelong relationships!



**LEE STOVALL** teaches vocal music at Rufus King International High School and directs Nova, an a cappella group predominantly composed of music therapy students at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wis. His life passions are to use vocal music to spread joy to his students and their communities, as well as to break down societal barriers such as segregation and toxic masculinity. A founding member of the collegiate a cappella group Fundamentally Sound, Lee has been interested in promoting contemporary a cappella education since college and has coached and arranged for local and international groups ever since. Previous work and accolades include arranging for “Broadway Goes A Cappella 3,” which played at Feinstein’s 54 Below in New York to rave reviews, and earning recognition from the ICCA, the ICHSA, and the CARAs for his work with groups from high school to professional levels. Lee is a board member for multiple local and state music associations and has sung in numerous professional ensembles. He currently sings with the early music-focused Aperi Animam.

## **Tonight’s Guest Performers**

**ASHER BLANK** (@asherbl\_nk, a.k.a. Will Cabaniss, he/him) is a composer and designer of vocal and electronic music. His work ranges from intricate vocal chamber music and textural a cappella arranging to expansive recording projects and heart-centered songs. Inspired by music-makers like Steve Reich, Bobby McFerrin, and Caroline Shaw, his compositions pull from a diverse collection of vocal music traditions. His most recent projects include “The Blooming of Something Freed From Itself,” an hour-long written-improvised vocal piece with Matt Goldstein, and the score for “Home Improvement,” an experimental film by Milwaukee filmmaker Marquise Mays with Thomas Cabaniss. Asher lives and works in Los Angeles, leading One-Day Choir experiences with Gaia Music Collective and collaborating with singers and ensembles around the country. He is an alumnus of University of Chicago’s Voices in Your Head and the internationally acclaimed Young People’s Chorus of New York City, and has taught at A Cappella Academy.

**MATT GOLDSTEIN** (@heartofgoldstein, he/him) is a New York-based music facilitator, vocal arranger, educator, improviser, and singer-songwriter. After making waves in the a cappella scene as music director of The Vassar Devils and Hyannis Sound, he founded Gaia Music Collective, a music community that seeks to create kind, accessible spaces for musical play and expression. Through his work with Gaia, Matt has led and written choir arrangements for artists such as Jojo, Imogen Heap, Leslie Odom Jr., Mahalia, Jessica Vosk, and the Broadway cast of “Hadestown.” He was a featured educator at numerous vocal music conventions and won CARAs in 2020 for Best Professional Arrangement (both Scholastic and Non-Scholastic). In addition to serving as Gaia’s Artistic Director and Lead Facilitator, Matt performs as an improviser and singer-songwriter, directs at A Cappella Academy, leads Rock Voices Brooklyn (a community pop-rock choir), and teaches collaborative vocal improv intensives through his private teaching studio, Flow Labs.



# Our Host

**LILY LESTER** is a New York-based stand-up comedian, singer, and actor. She is a regular at New York Comedy Club, Stamford Comedy Club, and Atlantic City Comedy Club. This year, she was a featured performer in the New York Comedy Festival and the Knockouts Women's Comedy Festival. Most importantly, she was a member of the 2019 ICCA Champions, The NYU N'Harmonics, and no other credits really matter to her.

## Varsity Vocals Staff

Amanda Newman  
*Executive Director*

Elise Hackl-Blumstein  
*ICHSA Director*  
*PA/MA Program Coordinator*

David Rabizadeh  
*ICCA Director*

Emily Sucher  
*Director of Publications*

Lucy Jacobs  
*Senior Producer, ICCA & ICHSA West*

Lindsay Howerton-Hastings  
*Senior Producer, ICCA South*

Arvin Zabalerio  
*Senior Producer, ICCA Central*

Gemma Davies  
*Producer, ICCA United Kingdom*

Emily Benjamin  
*Producer, ICCA Northeast*

Adam McNeil  
*Producer, ICHSA Great Lakes*

Valentyna Simon  
*Producer, ICHSA West*

Ben Garza  
*Producer, ICHSA Southwest*

Bryce McCracken  
*Associate Producer, ICCA Central*

Angelina Corbin  
*Associate Producer, ICCA & ICHSA South*

Bri Decerio  
*Associate Producer*

Sara Yood  
*Senior Producer, ICCA & ICHSA Finals*

Emily Flanders  
*Director of Adjudication*  
*Senior Producer, ICCA Great Lakes*

Andrew Poole  
*Director of Digital Media*

Charlotte Taylor  
*Marketing & Social Strategy*

Holli Kitching  
*Senior Producer, ICCA Mid-Atlantic*

Leah Alrutz  
*Senior Producer, ICCA Midwest*

Alaina Wegner  
*Producer, ICCA Southwest*

Christopher Witham  
*Producer, ICCA United Kingdom*

Jillian Kimberlin  
*Senior Producer, ICHSA Mid-Atlantic*

Christopher Hoffman  
*Producer, ICHSA Northeast*

Jake Yoakum  
*Producer, ICHSA West*

Nicole Palmetto  
*Associate Producer, ICCA Northeast*

Tyandria Jaaber  
*Associate Producer, ICCA Mid-Atlantic*

Rebecca Williamson  
*Associate Producer, ICCA South*

Andie Poole  
*Consultant, ICHSA Director Emeritus*

**Varsity Vocals would like to thank:** The Town Hall staff; Bellwether Public Relations; Ben Bram and Lili Fuller for creating our closing number; our photographer Ian Shiff; Greg St. Germain, Warren Trent and RDX Productions; Northman Productions; our judges, hosts, volunteers, partners, competitors, and producers; and you, the audience, for supporting Varsity Vocals programming and these students.



## About Tonight's Show

The performance order was determined by random draw a few weeks ago and is listed in this program. Tonight's performers will be evaluated on elements of their vocal and visual performance, which carry numerical weight. The highest and lowest score from the individual judges will be dropped for each group. Our judges may recognize exceptional performances with special awards as they see fit.

Because each group only has 10 minutes to perform, we ask you to keep your applause to an enthusiastic minimum between songs. Please feel welcome to applaud as much as you want after each group has finished its set. There will be a 15-minute intermission. After the final group has performed our guest performers, Asher Blank and Matt Goldstein, will entertain you while the scores are tabulated.

Video cameras, phones, and non-flash photography for personal use are permitted during the concert, so long as you do not disrupt our performers or other patrons. Our talented professional photographer, Ian Shiff, will be making high-resolution images available for purchase in a few weeks. A link to purchase his photos will be released on our social media. Due to licensing restrictions, we do not provide a video or audio recording of this performance.

## About Varsity Vocals

Since 1996, we have encouraged students worldwide to sing a cappella throughout their lives. Our programs include the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA), and the International Championship of High School A Cappella (ICHSA). We also produce the annual *Best of College A Cappella (BOCA)* and *Best of High School A Cappella (BOHSA)* compilation albums. Our a cappella competitions give top-notch a cappella groups the opportunity to showcase their talents for an international audience and to take home valuable feedback from our qualified judges. This year, competing groups will appear in venues all around the world, offering their energetic musical performances for your enjoyment.





# BRING THE HARMONY HOME



**BOCA: Best of College A Cappella**  
**BOHSA: Best of High School A Cappella**  
Available now on Spotify and Apple Music!  
**[varsityvocals.com/albums](https://varsityvocals.com/albums)**

