



Lamorinda Idol 2026

Program Description

April 16, 2026

Established in 2006, Lamorinda Idol is a singing competition open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade who either attend school or reside in Lamorinda (Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda). Singers may enter as soloists or in groups.

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CALENDAR – EVENTS

April 1-30, 2026	Online registration
May 14-16, 2026	In person auditions, held at OIS
June 1, 2026	Notification of audition results
June 13, 2026	Summer Social (swim/BBQ/karaoke) for finalists & families at Steve Harwood's home (93 Van Ripper, Orinda). An organizational meeting will also be held for parents.
June 26, 2026	Lafayette Plaza performance for finalists
July 4, 2026	Orinda July 4th parade participation for Lamorinda Idol 2025 winners
July 9, 2026	Orinda Community Park performance for finalists
July 29, 2026	Performance at the Moraga Commons for finalists
July 31, August 1-2, 2026	Lamorinda Idol finalists who are also OMPA finalists can sing the National Anthem at the OMPA Finals
August 6, 2026	Performance by 2025 winners prior to Moraga Commons Thursday night band performance
August 14, 2026	Finals rehearsal at Orinda Theatre
August 16, 2026	Finals at Orinda Theatre
September 5, 2026	Orinda Car Show performance for 2026 winners
September 20, 2026	Lafayette Art & Wine Festival performance for finalists

CALENDAR – WORKSHOPS / CURRICULUM

Note: Finalists can join 2 of the 5 offered one-on-one Zoom workshops to work on a song performance, in addition to joining as many in-person workshops as they wish (all held at 93 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda).

June 16, 2026 (Tues)	Zoom workshop
June 20, 2026 (Sat)	In-person/peer workshop #1
June 23, 2026 (Tues)	Zoom workshop
July 7, 2026 (Tues)	Zoom workshop
July 11, 2026 (Sat)	In-person/peer workshop #2
July 21, 2026 (Tues)	Zoom workshop
July 28, 2026 (Tues)	Zoom workshop
July 25, 2026 (Sat)	In-person/peer workshop #3
August 8, 2026 (Sat)	In-person/peer workshop #4

AUDITIONS

Performing Categories

Solo singers can compete in one of four grade-based categories: K-2nd grade; 3rd-5th grade; 6th-8th grade; and 9th-12th grade. Groups of two to ten singers can compete in one of three grade-based categories: K-5th grade; 6th-8th grade; and 9th-12th grade. The category will be based on the grade as of May 2026. For groups, the category will be based on the grade of the oldest member of the group.

Eligibility

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade living or attending school in Lamorinda as of May 2026 are eligible to audition. Singers from outside Lamorinda can participate in groups, provided at least one singer in the group lives or goes to school in Lamorinda.

Past solo winners of Lamorinda Idol are not eligible to compete in the same solo grade category again but may participate if they qualify for the next grade category or in a group category. Past group winners are eligible to compete in the same group category if at least 50% of the members of the new group are different. For example, a winning duet could replace one singer or could retain the original two singers and add two singers to form a quartet; a winning trio could replace two singers or retain two singers and add two singers to form a quartet; a winning quartet could replace two singers or two of the singers could compete as a duet. Each student is limited to two auditions: one as a soloist and one with a group.

Group Membership and Participation Opportunities

Finals participation requires that a group's membership be unchanged from the Auditions. The only exception is if a member of a group is ill at the time of the Finals. An individual can be a member of only one group.

Individual members of a group can participate in workshops. In summer performances, participation can be by the full group, a portion of the group, and an individual member of the group.

Audition Schedule

Auditions will take place May 14-16, 2026, at Orinda Intermediate School (80 Ivy Drive, Orinda).

Audition Date	Audition Times	Category
Thursday, May 14	5:00 – 7:30 PM	Soloists 9 – 12
	7:45 – 8:30 PM	Groups 9 – 12
Friday, May 15	5:00 – 7:45 PM	Soloists 6 – 8
	8:00 – 9:00 PM	Groups 6 – 8
Saturday, May 16	8:30 – 9:15 AM	Soloists K – 2
	9:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Soloists 3 – 5
	1:30 – 2:30 PM	Groups K – 5

Individuals who wish to audition that will be unavailable during audition times for their category may alternatively submit a video audition – the video must be submitted by Friday, May 1, 2026.

Audition Registration

Audition registration will be open April 1-30, 2026. To reserve an audition slot, singers should go to LamorindaArts.org to access the Audition Registration Form. Upon submission of the registration form, the registrant will be immediately linked to a payment site, where a \$15 audition fee can be paid to help with the costs of the Lamorinda Idol program. The audition fee must be paid prior to the audition date.

Following submission of the Audition Registration Form and the payment of the audition fee, registrants will receive a confirmation email that allows them to select an audition time via SignUpGenius. All members of a group must register and pay the registration fee; however, only one member of each group should select the audition time for the group. There are limited number of audition times and auditions will be available on a first come first served basis.

Audition Song Length

For the auditions, song length will be limited as follows:

Category	Song Length (Minutes)
Solo and Groups K – 8	3:00
Solo and Groups 9 – 12	4:00

For auditions, recorded music can be on an iPhone, a flash drive, or a CD. Music should not rely on an Internet connection. Backing tracks need not be tailored to the song length limit. Rather, the song will be halted at the time limit. If the number of auditioners exceeds the number of audition slots available, the maximum time limits for each category may be shortened.

Audition Judging

Finalists in each category will be determined by a panel of three audition judges who have music and performance backgrounds. The number selected in each category will be approximately as follows:

Category	Approximate Number of Finalists
Solo K – 2	2 – 4
Solo 3 – 5	10 – 12
Solo 6 – 8	10 – 12
Solo 9 – 12	10 – 12
Groups K – 5	3 – 4
Groups 6 – 8	3 – 4
Groups 9 – 12	3 – 4

Audition judges will be looking for vocal and performance ability and will rank candidates by a confidential process. The primary considerations in evaluating performances are the singers' ability to sing pitches accurately, use good vocal technique, express the song's emotions, use clear diction, and effectively tell the story of the song. Those singers that can do these skills well and make the song their own, singing from their heart, are those that tend to be selected. Due to time constraints at auditions, there will be no feedback given to auditioners following their audition. All those auditioning will be notified by email of the audition results by June 3, 2026.

SUMMER SUBMISSIONS & MUSIC SELECTION

After receiving notice of their selection, Finalists and their parents should do the following:

- Pay program participation fees.
- Sign up for Summer Social and community summer park performances via SignUpGenius.
- Sign up for summer one-on-one Zoom and in-person/peer workshops via SignUpGenius.
- Sign up for summer volunteer role(s) via SignUpGenius.
- Submit (i) song selection, (ii) music backing tracks for summer performances and Finals, and (iii) headshot for inclusion in the Playbill.

Song Title, Song Track and Photo Submission Dates

Submission Item	Due Date
Song title and music backing track for Lafayette Plaza, Orinda Park, and Moraga Commons performances	One week prior to performance date.
Finals song selection	July 1
Playbill headshot/photo	July 1
Finals song backing track	August 1

Music Selection & Song Length

For summer performances, songs will be limited to approximately 3 minutes. For the Finals, the maximum song duration in minutes is set by category as follows:

Category	Song Limit (Minutes)
Solo K – 2	3:00
Solo 3 – 5	3:00
Solo 6 – 8	3:00
Solo 9 – 12	3:30
Groups K – 5	3:00
Groups 6 – 8	3:00
Groups 9 – 12	3:30

Editing of Backing Tracks

For the summer performances and the Finals, editing of back-up music may be required to comply with song length constraints. Backing tracks should be in an mp3 format. Back-up music is often available in different keys, and it's important for singers to have their music in a key that fits well with their singing range. Equipment/software also exists that allows for changing the key, and then a file can be made in the new key.

Singers/parents may wish to develop their own song editing skills. iMovie and Filmora are two common video ones, and Garage Band, SoundLab, and Audacity are popular audio ones.

Editing is available for a fee from an individual to be identified at a later date.

Accompaniment

Singers may be accompanied by recorded music or they can accompany themselves, providing the instrument can be carried into the audition room. Singers who wish to use an instrument in the Finals must audition with the instrument. Solo a cappella songs will not be permitted. Groups may sing a cappella if they sing harmony. Back-up music may not include vocals.

CURRICULUM / WORKSHOPS

Lamorinda Idol's summer curriculum includes:

- One-on-one, Zoom workshops, 15 minutes long per singer, for K-12 finalists, to provide individual feedback.
- In-person, community/peer workshops, 45 minutes long for K-2 soloists, and 90 minutes long for 3-12 soloists and all groups, to teach and refine the elements of a great performance.

Finalists can join two Zoom workshops for their own song performance, in addition to joining as many in-person/peer "themed" workshops as they wish. Parents are welcome to audit the workshops.

Zoom workshops are led by Rena Wilson. Rena is Co-Founder of Performing Academy, a former "Snow White" in *Beach Blanket Babylon*, and is currently an actor living in southern CA. Rena is a highly regarded private acting & vocal coach via both Zoom and in-person quarterly visits to Lamorinda.

In-person workshops will be held at Steve Harwood's Club 93, at 93 Van Ripper Lane. In-person workshops will be led by Rena Wilson and others, under the supervision of Rena, to assure a consistency of approach. Each in-person workshop will have a different theme. Participants will have the opportunity to sing and receive feedback based primarily on the theme for the workshop.

The schedule of Zoom workshops is:

- Tuesday, June 16, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 4:00-5:00, 5:15-6:15.
- Tuesday, June 23, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 4:00-5:00, 5:15-6:15.
- Tuesday, July 7, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 4:00-5:00, 5:15-6:15.
- Tuesday, July 21, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 4:00-5:00, 5:15-6:15.
- Tuesday, July 28, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 4:00-5:00, 5:15-6:15.

The schedule for in-person, community/peer workshops is:

- Saturday, June 20, led by Jocie Purcell.
 - 1:00-2:30 for grades 3-5, 3:00-4:30 for grades 6-12.
- Saturday, July 11, led by Rena Wilson.
 - 11:00-11:45 for grades K-2, 1:00-2:30 for grades 3-5, 3:00-4:30 for grades 6-12.
- Saturday, July 25, led by Renee DeWeese, focusing on movement, staging & performance.
 - 1:00-2:30 for grades 3-5, 3:00-4:30 for grades 6-12
- Saturday, August 8, led by Tosca Maltzman.
 - 1:00-2:30 for grades 3-5, 3:00-4:30 for grades 6-12

Those interested may sign up via a SignUpGenius link which will be provided to finalists on June 1. Each Zoom workshop slot will be for an individual soloist or group member and will be 15 minutes long. Each singer is limited to two Zoom workshop sessions. Students can log in for an extended period, muted with their cameras off, or they can just log in at their designated time slot.

If a singer needs to cancel their workshop session, they should provide a prompt email notice to Steve Harwood at zzz9harwood@gmail.com and Rena Wilson and renawilson@gmail.com and remove their name from the SignUpGenius page. Anyone who cancels with less than 48 hours' notice or is a no-show will forfeit their opportunity for a second workshop coaching session.

Singers should come to workshops with a song prepared on which they wish to be coached.

Prior to the singers' Zoom workshops, participants should:

- Be prepared to sing live to a backing track set up on a separate device with a quality speaker. The song can be any song of the singer's choosing.
- Test the balance between the singing and the back-up music.
- Change the Zoom settings as follows.
 - Go to "Preference" then click on "Audio."
 - Under "Audio Profile" click on "Original Sound for Musicians."
 - Check "High-Fidelity Music Mode," "Echo Cancelation," and "Studio Audio."
 - Close "Preferences" window. In the Zoom meeting in the upper left-hand corner should say "Original Sound for Musicians: On."
- Change the name of the Zoom screen to be the name of the singer.

FINALS INFO

Schedule

The rehearsal for the Finals will be Friday, August 14, 2026, from 4-8 PM at the Orinda Theatre. Each category's rehearsal session typically runs ~1 hour long. It's critically important that finalists join for the rehearsal or they're at a disadvantage for sound and lighting for the Finals. The Finals will be on Sunday, August 16, 2026, from 11 am to 7:30 pm, at the Orinda Theatre. The schedule for the Finals is shown below.

Session	Category	Session Time
1	Solo K – 2 Solo 3 – 5	11am – 1pm
2	Groups K – 5 Groups 6 – 8 Groups 9 – 12	1:30 – 3pm
3	Solo 6 – 8	3:45 – 5:30pm
4	Solo 9 – 12	6 – 8pm

Finals Feedback and Judging

Performers in the Finals will receive immediate feedback from the panel of three judges in each category who are Bay Area music and performance professionals. Winners will be determined by votes of the judges and voting from the audience. Each judge will vote for one performer. If the judges vote for three separate finalists in a category, the audience vote will be the tiebreaker.

Audience voting requires the voter to have viewed all the performances in the voting category. Voting and the announcement of the category winner will occur immediately following the category performance. Audience voting will take place via a smartphone QR code link.

Separately, an Audience Award will be given to that participant who receives the highest share of audience vote (adjusted for category size and number of total category votes) who is not a category winner.

Awards

The winners of each category will receive the following cash prizes:

Category	Award
Soloists Grades K – 2	\$200
Soloists Grades 3 – 5	\$300
Soloists Grades 6 – 8	\$400
Soloists Grades 9 – 12	\$500
Groups Grades K – 5	\$200
Groups Grades 6 – 8	\$300
Groups Grades 9 – 12	\$400
Audience Award	\$300

Award checks will be mailed to winners.

MEDIA & PUBLICITY

Photos and Videos

Finalists should provide the Administrative Manager a photo for use in the Finals Playbill, no later than July 1. Headshot photos are preferred. A local photographer who can create professional level headshots is Allison Paraiso-Silicani (allison@allisonparaisophotography.com or 626-215-8701).

Photos of the summer and finals performances will be posted to the Lamorinda Arts Council website Idol page and can be downloaded without cost. The photos may also be posted on social media and used in news articles.

Videos will be prepared of each performance at the Finals. These will be posted to YouTube as “unlisted” and linked to the Lamorinda Arts Council website Idol page. The links will also be provided to finalists. If any finalist or their parents do not want their photos or video posted (or later removed), please contact Steve Harwood.

Social Media and Publicity

Lamorinda Idol uses social media in various respects. The primary goals will be to publicize auditions and the Finals. Secondary goals will be to publicize summer performances, create general awareness of Lamorinda Idol, notify Lamorinda Idol participants of other singing and theatrical opportunities, and promote community bonding among participants.

Lamorinda Idol both supports and collaborates with several other performing arts groups in the area, including:

- Peter Pan Foundation (Lafayette)
- Performing Academy (Lafayette)
- Town Hall Theatre (Lafayette)
- Bradley School of Music (Lafayette)
- Berkeley Playhouse (Berkeley)
- The Ballet School (Walnut Creek)
- Poison Apple Productions (Martinez)
- Modern Tone (Lafayette)
- Korsa Musical Theatre (Berkeley)

To expand awareness about other performing arts opportunities, Lamorinda Idol may occasionally share info about others’ programming, or they may email you directly. Upon accepting the invitation to participate in Lamorinda Idol, finalists/parents have the option to opt-out of receiving such communications on other performing arts opportunities.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

Lamorinda Idol is a collaborative effort by both the organizers and parents. Parents are expected to volunteer for one or more of the following roles.

- Summer Social
 - Purchase and bring food.
 - Assist during party.
 - Lead BBQ/cooking.
 - Assist with karaoke music.
 - Assist in cleanup.
- Lafayette Plaza Performance
 - Assist in setting up equipment.
 - Assist in management of performers during the performance.
 - Assist in packing up equipment.
- Orinda Community Park Performance
 - Assist in setting up equipment.
 - Assist in management of performers during the performance.
 - Assist in packing up equipment.
- Moraga Commons Performance
 - Assist in setting up equipment.
 - Assist in management of performers during the performance.
 - Assist in packing up equipment.
- Rehearsal and Finals
 - Serve as a category chaperone at rehearsal and at Finals.
 - Provide snacks and refreshments for rehearsal.
 - Assist in set-up of equipment for rehearsal and Finals.
 - Assist in cleaning up theatre between Finals sessions.
 - Assist in packing up equipment after rehearsal and Finals.

Parents can sign up for volunteer positions using Signup Genius beginning on June 4.

COMMUNICATION

Communications to anyone on the Lamorinda Idol Committee should be sent to idol@lamorindaarts.org and the appropriate person on the Committee will respond.

All forms will be linked to the lamorindaarts.org Idol page.

The Finalist Info Page on the Lamorinda Arts Council website (lamorindaarts.org) gives singers and their parents one place to go back to and refer to signups and important dates throughout the summer.

PROGRAM FEES

Program participation fees are offered on a sliding schedule, with participants able to contribute any amount between \$300-500 that they can best afford. Program fees cover everything related to the June Summer Social, summer park performance opportunities in all three Lamorinda communities, the summer workshops, the Finals event in August, and each participant receiving a combination of both photos & videos of their Finals performance.

Program fees are paid to the Lamorinda Arts Council and are tax-deductible (EIN 94-6094855). All members of a group are expected to pay a participation fee. Participants don't have to pay the fee twice if they're in both soloist and group categories. Financial aid/support is available upon request.

ORGANIZATION / LEADERSHIP

Lamorinda Idol 2026 is led by the Lamorinda Idol Committee and comprised of the following individuals:

Function	Segment	Team Member(s)
Co-Chairs	Admin	Steve Harwood
	Admin	Rodger Morris
Administrative Manager	Admin	Aubrey Peterson
Website, Forms	Admin	Monique Rodriguez
Playbill	Admin	Aubrey Peterson
Photography	Admin	Dan Klein
Finals Emcees and Judges	Admin	Joanne Home
Gift Certificates	Admin	Bill Cosden
NCL Volunteer Chair	Admin	Ingrid Stabb
Music Editor	Admin	Boon Poh
Auditions	Events	Doug Home
	Events	Joanne Home
	Events	Jenn Klein
Performance Workshops	Curriculum	Rena Wilson
Summer Social, Park Performances	Events	Doug Home
	Events	Joanne Home
	Events	Rebecca Young
	Events	John Poole
	Events	Bill Cosden
4th of July Parade	Events	Steve Harwood
OMPA	Events	TBD
Rehearsal, Finals	Events	Rodger Morris, Chair
	Events	Ingrid Stabb
	Events	John Pennington
	Events	Sharon Koh
	Events	Bonnie Kim, Advisor
Community Outreach & Publicity Chair	Publicity / Media	Sharon Koh
Where Are They Now Project	Publicity / Media	June Lim
At Large	Publicity / Media	Jen Moeller