

The 2026 Hans Schmelzer Music Award

Every aspect of our music today, whether classical, pop, rock, or jazz, has been influenced by the cultures of central and eastern Europe. The music of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, as well as the rest of eastern Europe, has deep roots in the folklore and traditions of its people. These cultures, through the music created by them, have had a profound impact on the development of music history. Yet many musicians and non-musicians know little about the origins or current developments of such music.

The "Hans Schmelzer Music Award" was established in 2010 by the Alemannia Music Foundation, Inc., (AMF) to promote the study of central and eastern European music in the schools, universities, and musical organizations of the So. California area. And through this study, to better connect student and advanced musicians with the roots of music development. It is our belief that by knowing where the music of today has come from, musicians will be better able to develop their own talents and apply their knowledge to the development of music as a whole. The award includes a monetary grant, the amount of which may vary dependent upon the funding received for the year. For 2026, the grant is \$500.00. Multiple awards may be made each year based on available funding.

The AMF reserves the right to decline making the award in the event insufficient applications are received, no application is received that meets the criteria of the award, or for any reason whatsoever. The criteria and requirements of the award may be changed at any time without notice. Organizations directly affiliated with the AMF or any of the sponsoring organizations are ineligible to receive the award. All decisions of the AMF Award Committee are made at its sole discretion and are final.

The Hans Schmelzer Music Award is administered and primarily funded by the AMF. Additional funding for 2026 has been generously provided by the German-American League of Los Angeles, Inc., Ltd., which is an organization representing 22 affiliated social, cultural, and business organizations in the So. California area. More information about the German-American League can be found on the League website at www.germanleague.us.

About Mr. Schmelzer

Johann "Hans" Schmelzer was born in 1919. His family were *Donauschwabens* - an ethnic German group that had emigrated from the Swabia area of Germany to settle along the Danube River in Romania, the area of the former Yugoslavia, and Hungary at the urging of Empress Maria Theresa of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in the mid-1700's. She promised them homestead land for farms if they would drain and settle the swamp lands of the Danube. Other groups also emigrated to the area, including French, Hungarian, Austrian, and Serbian families. With its proximity to a number of ethnic regions, the music of the area has not only been influenced by the groups that settled there, but also by its Slovak, Czech, Polish, and Croat neighbors.

Mr. Schmelzer was interested in music as a boy. He learned to play accordion and then eventually the trumpet and fluegelhorn. World War II uprooted many Danube Swabians, and other ethnic groups of the area, and they left their homeland and headed west – many of them eventually settling in the Los Angeles area. Mr. Schmelzer was among this group and, coming to Los Angeles, he recognized the need to culturally support the newly settled ethnic groups.

In 1962 he founded the German-American Brass Band (or *Deutsch-Amerikanische Blaskapelle*) which quickly became a favorite at numerous ethnic festivals. Today, as the performance activity of the Alemannia Music Foundation, Inc., it is an ensemble of over 25 musicians from varied ethnic and musical backgrounds. The musicians come from all over the Southern California area with various musical experiences, from high school students to professional musicians.

The band maintains an extensive library of authentic German, Austrian, Swiss, Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Danube Swabian music, as well as music from other countries and areas. It supports music education and appreciation by giving the participating musicians the opportunity to study this music and perform the music as an ensemble. The band supports public education by performing for the public at events sponsored by civic and cultural organizations. Because of his work with the band, Mr. Schmelzer was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1989. Mr. Schmelzer served as the band's *Kapellmeister Emeritus* until he passed away at the age of 94 in 2014.



Information Brochure

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Sponsored by



Alemannia Music Foundation, Inc.
Dedicated to Promoting Music Understanding
& Education www.alemanniamusic.org

**German-American League
of Los Angeles, Inc., Ltd.**
An Association of Social, Cultural, and Business
Organizations Serving the So. California Area
www.germanleague.us



About the Award & How to Nominate or Apply

The recipients of the Hans Schmelzer Music Award are determined by an Award Committee appointed by the president of the Alemannia Music Foundation (AMF). Nominations for the award may be made by Award Committee members, by the general public, or by application by a group eligible for the award. The following are the terms and criteria of the award:

(1) The nominee/applicant may be either an instrumental or choral ensemble organized by a school or non-profit organization.

(2) If the nominee/applicant is a school ensemble, the school must be accredited and be either a middle school (grades 6 through 8), a high school (grades 9 through 12), a college, or a university (the term "school" used in these criteria refers to any of these institutions). If the nominee/applicant is organized by a non-profit organization, the organization must be a recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The school or organization must be located in one of the following California counties: Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura.

(3) A school ensemble must be a recognized school organization or included as part of the curriculum. An organizational ensemble must be a regular part of the organization's activities or programs. The ensemble may be a choir, band, orchestra, chamber group or any other group of musicians.

(4) There must be at least 4 performing members in the ensemble (not including a conductor/director). If it is a school ensemble, at least 90% of the ensemble must be students currently registered at the school.

(5) The ensemble must perform at least one musical work which has direct origins from, or has been directly influenced by, the music or culture of the following countries: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland. The musical work must be performed by the ensemble in a publicized concert or performance open to the public sometime between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026. Should the ensemble perform multiple works meeting this criteria at one or more concerts during the specified period, this will be taken into consideration when determining the efforts of the ensemble in promoting the education and appreciation of this type of music.

(6) The musical work can be of any genre including

Recent Prior Recipients

2022-2025 – No award made due to Covid pandemic

2021 – Colburn Orchestra / *Symphony No. 6* by Anton Bruckner

2020 – Tesserae Baroque Ensemble / *The Legend of Zelenka*, a concert featuring works of Jan Zelenka, Johann Hasse, Johann Goldberg, Johann Fasch, Johann Heinichen, and Johann Pisendel

2019 – California State University, Long Beach, Bob Cole Conservatory Symphony Orchestra / *Overture to The Sea Hawk* by Erich Wolfgang Korngold and *Symphony No. 8* by Franz Schubert

2018 – Fountain Valley High School String Orchestra / *Divertimento Es-Dur für vier Streichinstrumente* by Joseph Haydn and *Deception I* by Hans Zimmer

2017 – University of California, Los Angeles - Herb Alpert School of Music / *Amadigi* by Georg Friedrich Händel

2016 – California State University, Northridge, Opera Ensemble / *Hansel and Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck

2015 – Notre Dame High School Irish Knights Band / *German Christmas* by Jan Hadermann

2014 – Huntington Beach High School Oiler Band / *Slavonic Dance No. 1* by Antonin Dvorak

2013 – Granada Hills Charter High School / *Psalm 46* by John Zdechlik

Information about additional prior recipients is available at www.alemanniamusic.org/schmelzermusicaward.html

folk music, polka, waltz, opera, overture, ballet, pop, jazz, etc. The length, difficulty, and nature of the work is not determinative regarding the award, but is taken into consideration.

(7) Nominations by the general public or an application for the award must be submitted to the AMF **postmarked at least 30 days before the performance of the musical work** (on a form to be provided by the AMF). A copy of the score to be performed must accompany any application. No fee is required for submitting a nomination

or application.

(8) The Award Committee will rank nominations/applications received and issue awards/grants to applicants based on how well the music selected meets the requirements of (5), (6), and how well the goals of student and public education are met by the ensemble through the concert(s) at which the music is performed. The award will be issued based on availability of funding and may be made either before or after the concert performance(s). Each school or organization is limited to the receipt of one award per calendar year and only once every three years.

(9) Two complimentary tickets to the concert at which the musical work will be performed must be provided to the AMF for performance verification purposes.

(10) By accepting a nomination or applying for the award, the nominee/applicant acknowledges and agrees that the AMF may publish in its materials, press releases and website the issuance of the award, the names of the schools or organizations being nominated for or applying for the award, any photographs relating to the performance and/or presentation of the award, and any other information relevant to a recipient school or organization and the receipt of the award.

(11) A grant in the amount of \$500.00 will be given to the recipient of the award. The grant will be payable by check drawn on the account of the AMF. The grant is to be used solely for the benefit of the music program of the school or organization. Should the school or organization be unable to use it for such benefit, the grant must be returned to the AMF, or the school or organization may petition the AMF to have the award money applied for an alternate benefit. The decision of the AMF to allow an alternate benefit is at its sole discretion. The AMF reserves the right to rescind the grant and obtain a refund of the award money should it make a determination that any criteria of the award or grant was not met.

To download a nomination/application form or for questions about the award and additional information, please visit the AMF website at

www.alemanniamusic.org

or send written inquiries to:

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Alemannia Music Foundation, Inc.
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