

Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival Announces Top 10 Finalists for the Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest

Richardson spotlights new voices, rising talent, original music, and the stories that connect us.

RICHARDSON, TX, UNITED STATES, April 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival is proud to announce the [Top 10 Finalists](#) for the 2026 [Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest](#), an award-winning program that celebrates the art and craft of original songwriting and honors the legacy of longtime contest champion Al Johnson.



2026 Top 10 Finalists for the Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest at Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival in Richardson

Selected from hundreds of entries submitted by independent songwriters across the country, these finalists represent exceptional talent in storytelling, musicianship, and live performance. Each finalist was chosen through a blind screening process by a panel of industry professionals, ensuring a fair and highly competitive selection.

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The Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest is one of the most meaningful traditions. It honors not just the craft of songwriting, but the courage it takes to share your story on stage.”

*Dianna Lawrence,
Superintendent of Community
Events and Festival Director*

“The Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest is one of the most meaningful traditions of our festival. It honors not just the craft of songwriting, but the courage it takes to share your story on stage. These finalists represent the heart of what Wildflower! is all about—authentic music, emerging voices, and unforgettable moments,” said Dianna Lawrence, Superintendent of Community Events and Festival Director for the City of Richardson.

2026 Top 10 Finalists:
Bud Bierhaus, Katy, Texas

Paul Demer, Dallas, Texas

Jerome Goosman, Nashville, Tennessee
 Jeff Hewitt, Garland, Texas
 Michelle Raybourn, Nashville, Tennessee
 Ben Reneer, Phoenix, Arizona
 Stephanie Sammons, Dallas, Texas
 Branlin Shockey, Rockwall, Texas
 Alicia Stockman, Heber City, Utah
 Reed Waddle, Atlanta, Georgia

The Top 10 finalists will perform live on the Singer-Songwriter Stage during the festival on Saturday, May 16, 2026, where they will each perform two original songs for a live audience and judging panel. Finalists are evaluated equally on song quality and performance, highlighting both songwriting craft and stage presence.

In addition to competing for top honors, finalists receive:

- Festival passes and artist hospitality
- Lodging accommodations during the festival
- A featured performance opportunity on an additional festival stage
- The opportunity to collaborate and connect with fellow songwriters from across the nation

Winners of the contest will be awarded cash prizes and exclusive performance opportunities, continuing a tradition that has helped elevate emerging artists and connect them with new audiences.

The Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest has become a cornerstone of Wildflower!'s programming, fostering the growth of independent songwriters for more than two decades and offering a platform for artists to share original work in an intimate, performance-focused setting.

Held annually in Richardson, Texas, the Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival is one of North Texas' most celebrated live music events, drawing



Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival 2026
 Stage Headliners in Richardson, Texas



Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival 2026
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thousands of attendees for a weekend of live performances, art, and community experiences.

Event Details

What: Al Johnson Performing Songwriter Contest Finals

When: Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 12:30 p.m.

Where: Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, Singer-Songwriter Stage

Website:

<https://wildflowerfestival.com/songwriter-contest/>

The Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival takes place May 15-17, 2026, in Richardson, Texas. Festival passes and single-day tickets are now on sale. For ticket information, event details, and a full lineup of performances, follow on social media or visit the official festival website at

www.wildflowerfestival.com

About Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival

Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival, established in 1993, is a premier North Texas event produced by the City of Richardson Parks and Recreation Department. The three-day festival features live performances across multiple stages, a nationally recognized juried art show, and a variety of interactive and family-friendly experiences. Each year, Wildflower! draws thousands of attendees to celebrate music, art, and community. Follow the festival on social media using #WAMFEST26 and #RichardsonRocks or visit www.wildflowerfestival.com for more information.

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Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival in Richardson
Banner 2026



Wildflower! Songwriter Workshop with Instructor Cliff Eberhardt

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