

Genelec 2026 AES Scholarship Recipients



Genelec Inc. has announced the recipients of its annual scholarships awarded in association with the Audio Engineering Society Educational Foundation (AESEF). Reaffirming the company's commitment to audio education, Genelec Inc. congratulates this year's recipients: Najla Silmi (University of Rochester, pictured on the left) has received a grant as beneficiary of the Genelec Dr. Ilpo Martikainen Audio Visionary Scholarship; and Nancy Rico-Mineros (Stanford University Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics [CCRMA], pictured on the right) has again been named the recipient of the Genelec Mike Chafee Audio Pioneering Scholarship.

Genelec Dr. Ilpo Martikainen Audio Visionary Scholarship: The Genelec Dr. Ilpo Martikainen Audio Visionary Scholarship was established in 2018 in honor of Genelec's late founder Dr. Ilpo Martikainen. For many years Dr. Martikainen was involved in the Audio Engineering Society, including being presented with the AES Fellowship Award for significant contributions in the field of loudspeaker development in 1993, and in 2015 delivering the Richard C. Heyser Memorial Lecture at the 138th AES International Convention in Warsaw, Poland.

This year's Martikainen Scholarship recipient, Najla Silmi, is an incoming student in electrical and computer engineering at the University of Rochester, also currently working toward her NYS hearing aid dispenser license. Silmi's long-term goal is to become a professor in electrical or audio engineering, conducting research at the intersection of auditory neuroscience, digital signal processing and hearing aid design. Silmi remarks, "I aim to develop computational neurophysiological models of the auditory system and apply them to the design of hearing aid algorithms, with a particular focus on improving music quality. In addition to research, I hope to mentor students from diverse academic backgrounds, including neuroscience,

engineering, and psychology, to foster interdisciplinary approaches to audio technology. Ultimately, I want to contribute to both academia and industry by advancing hearing aid technology through perceptually informed engineering. By combining computational modeling, clinical insight, and audio engineering expertise, I hope to shape the future of assistive listening devices and clinical training and improve access to meaningful auditory experiences. I would like to thank AESEF and Genelec for assisting me in my path.”

Genelec Mike Chafee Audio Pioneering Scholarship: The Genelec Mike Chafee Audio Pioneering Scholarship was established to promote the advancement of women in the audio industry while paying tribute to noted long-time Genelec manufacturer’s representative, audiophile, sound designer, acoustician, audio evangelist and supporter of women in audio, Michael Chafee. The scholarship is offered annually to U.S. female graduate students in the field of audio engineering who are members of the Audio Engineering Society.

Chafee Scholarship recipient Nancy Rico-Mineros, awarded this grant for the second year in a row, is a graduate student in audio engineering at Stanford University’s Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics [CCRMA], where she is working on her thesis which discusses Music Tech curriculum in higher education, addressing the past, the present and the possible future given the current state of AI. She remarks, “My place in audio lies within the power of education. I want to be able to educate the next generation of audio professionals. I did not see myself educating the generation of audio engineers until I found myself interning at the Women's Audio Mission, where I assisted in classroom support for Spanish-speaking students. I hope that my graduate education at Stanford will prepare me to continue my line of research at the PhD level, and I hope that my thesis highlights that as audio professionals we have responsibility in educating the next generation while addressing issues of representation and having audio be accessible to those who are disabled. I thank the AESEF and Genelec for supporting me in the trajectory that I am on!”

www.aeseducationalfoundation.org
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