

# Acting Singers/Singing Actors

## The Lenya Competition

by Michael Lasser

After hearing his name called as the winner of the \$15,000 top prize in the twelfth annual Lotte Lenya Competition on 18 April, tenor Alen Hodzovic walked onstage holding his head in his hands, then extended his arms sideways and whirled like a helicopter, in a moment of disbelief, unabashed joy, and beguiling modesty. A few hours later, as the post-concert reception wound down, he was calmer, still charming, and only mildly incredulous. As we were choosing a time for an interview, he leaned in to whisper, “I have no classical vocal training. I trained in theater.” A moment later, he began to recite the lyrics to a favorite song of his, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart’s “It Never Entered My Mind”: “Once I told you I was mistaken, / That I’d awaken with the sun.” By then, he was grinning.

In the Competition’s evening concert in the Eastman School of Music’s Kilbourn Hall, Hodzovic had reprised the “Bilbao Song,” in German. Earlier that day, though, as part of his four-number set, the Berlin resident had also performed a moving English-language version of “If I Didn’t Believe in You” from Jason Robert Brown’s 2002 off-Broadway musical, *The Last Five Years*. Even though he had previously appeared in the show in Germany, this was the first time he had sung the song in English. His emotional investment in the performance made it hard to believe that English was not his native language.

Soprano Lauren Worsham placed second (\$10,000) and bass-baritone Zachary James third (\$5,000); 22-year-old mezzo-soprano Ginger Costa-Jackson, who is already singing at the Metropolitan Opera, won one of three Lys Symonette Awards (\$2,500) for vocal talent, as did soprano Yannick-Muriel Noah and baritone Michael Anthony McGee. Named in honor of Weill’s musical assistant on Broadway and Lenya’s longtime accompanist and advisor, the Symonette awards honor contestants who excel in a particular aspect of the competition but do not win one of the top prizes.

Kim Kowalke, president of the Kurt Weill Foundation who also teaches at the University of Rochester, established the Competition in 1998 to celebrate the centennial of Lenya’s birth and the Eastman School’s receipt of Weill’s holograph scores from Vienna. At that time, many classically trained singers were doing crossover recordings of American musical theater, Kowalke recalls, “as if the operatic voice were ‘honoring’ or ‘elevating’ this repertoire. At the same time, TV stars were appearing in Broadway musicals with no musical or theatrical credentials. Their only real qualification was their celebrity.”

Kowalke hoped that the competition might in a small way encourage singers to become more versatile. “This is a theater singing competition, not a vocal or recital competition,” he explains. “Dramatic context and content are very important. When



First Prize winner Alen Hodzovic learns that he has won the 2009 Lotte Lenya Competition. Photos: Kate Melton

opera singers do musical theater, they often treat it with disrespect because they think it’s just popular music. We’re not saying that every singer must do Weill or even musical theater, but we want to reward those who can ‘cross over,’ bringing to varied material the resources required to do each idiomatically.”

Weill Foundation Director Carolyn Weber, herself a former musical theater performer and artist manager, adds that in vocal competitions singers are used to standing and singing as beautifully as they can, but in the Lenya Competition they have to perform each selection as if they’re actually creating a character in a dramatic situation.

Right from the start, the Competition emphasized versatility

and acting as well as singing. The guidelines instruct participants to treat each song as a dramatic moment, complete in itself: “You should know the character, plot, situation, etc. of every excerpt that you sing . . . Think of the four selections as an opportunity to portray four different characters.”

To put it another way, the Lenya Competition reflects Kowalke’s convictions and beliefs: “Somebody has to encourage performers to sing in the right style with the right voice in a wide range of music with honesty and integrity. When you sing an aria, sing it like an aria. When you sing Cole Porter, don’t sing it as if you’re singing Wagner. Give both the respect they deserve.”

Giving that particular kind of respect to whatever you’re singing helps to establish the Competition’s standards and define what makes it distinctive. It also explains why the singers, in Kowalke’s words, “take such fierce ownership of it. ‘We don’t all have big voices,’ they say, ‘but this recognizes what we do.’” Artists are allowed to return for as long as they are eligible age-wise, as long as they have not won a First, Second, or Third Prize; they learn from their experiences in the competition, and some have finally won top prizes after several tries. Richard Todd Adams, 2004 prizewinner, recalled, “The first year I entered, Teresa Stratas was the regional judge and gave me unbelievable feedback. So when I went to the finals, I had a swelled head and faked my way through it. I didn’t win and afterward, Stratas grabbed me and cussed me out: ‘You’re too good to do that crap. You always have to sing from the heart.’ She really opened my eyes. The next year I said, ‘I’m gonna freakin’ win this thing’ and I did.”

Kowalke also underscores the importance of not singing musical theater numbers as popular songs stripped of their dramatic function. The work’s integrity and its original identity are paramount. He instructs participants, “Don’t choose a female character’s song if you’re a male; don’t sing a world-weary song of bitterness and disillusionment for a 45-year-old character if you’re only 22 . . . choose material that you could believably perform if cast in a full-scale production . . .” His cautionary guidance extends to style: “There is a time and place for jazz versions, personal arrangements, and ‘updated’ renditions, but the Lenya Competition is not it.”

Kowalke can be very tough about breaches in the Competition’s guidelines. During the New York City regionals at the Dicapo Opera Theatre, housed in the basement of a church on East 76th Street, he asked where an arrangement had come from. The singer didn’t know the answer, but Kowalke and judge Paulette Haupt soon agreed that it was probably from the 1972 off-Broadway revue, *Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill*, rather than the original production. At another point, Kowalke and Weber wondered why a singer had chosen to perform an English translation of Weill and Jacques Deval’s “J’attends un navire” from *Marie Galante*, originally written in French and performed in Paris in 1934, as the contest rules require all songs to be sung in their original language.

*“When I began to branch out from grand opera into other forms of musical theater, I discovered the simple truth that the various categories of musical theater were actually nothing but different ways of mixing the same ingredients—music, drama, and movement.”*

Kurt Weill, 1947

remained unchanged. What *has* changed are the number of participants and the general level of competition. (And the prize amounts: The top prize of \$1,000 in 1998 has increased over time to \$15,000 in 2009. \$300,000 has been awarded since the competition began, including prizes, Lys Symonette Awards, and “encouragement awards” to non-finalists.) Kowalke speculates that someone who would have made it into the finals as recently as four or five years ago might not have done so this year. With 13 finalists drawn from an initial field of 164, this year’s group included singers from Brazil, Canada, and Germany, as well as the United States. “Singers have become self-selective as the competition has become better known. If they know they’re not ready, they don’t enter,” Kowalke says. The age limits remain 18–32, but the median age has increased over time to 28 this year. Hodzovic, 31, entered this year because it was his last chance.

The Competition’s requirements reflect various aspects of Weill’s own career. Each contestant must prepare four numbers—two contrasting numbers by Weill, an aria from opera or operetta, and a song from the American musical theater. At least one selection

must also be in a language other than English. In the evening performance, each singer reprises one selection. This year, the performers made their own choices, although in past years the judges have made them.

Few singers are equally strong in all aspects of theater singing, and therein lies the challenge. Kowalke says, “The finest voices don’t necessarily win. It’s the combination of acting and singing that matters.” Such great singers as Teresa Stratas and Audra McDonald might have won a Lenya Competition when they were young; equally great singers like Birgit Nilsson and Ethel Merman probably would not have because their careers were less varied—Nilsson’s singularly devoted to opera and Merman’s to musical theater.

For Hodzovic, trained in theater rather than opera, performing an aria was the most difficult challenge in the Competition. Instead of selecting something from grand opera, he wisely—and suitably—chose a number from the popular 1930 German operetta, *Im weißen Rössl* (*White Horse Inn*). “I have no classical training,” he says, “but I took a chance.” Similarly, singers trained in opera must be able to “act” a song, most essentially in the two Weill selections and the one from musical theater, some of which display the jazzy “looseness” that makes the American theater song distinctive. Hodzovic, who received the highest first-round point total in the Competition’s twelve-year history, comes impressively close to embodying the values, convictions, and intentions of those who founded it and those who judge it. Describing the particular value of the Lenya Competition, he says, “It’s wonderful to have a competition that rewards acting through song.”

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When tenor Erik Liberman sang “Try Me” as part of his program in the 2005 finals, Broadway director Harold Prince was one of the judges. Forty years earlier, Prince had directed *She Loves Me*, the Jerry Bock-Sheldon Harnick musical from which the song comes. Following the first round, the judges called some of the contestants to a closed-door coaching session, Liberman among them. Prince

The first Competition in 1998 had seventeen contestants, all Eastman School of Music students. As the Competition blossomed from local to international in scope, its essential concept has

said to him, “In the original production, we had a single spotlight on the actor’s face for this number. I’d like to see if you can do it as if you’re being lit that way.” After eight bars, Prince interrupted, “That’s it; he can do it.”

Kowalke explains that Prince was trying to get Liberman to eliminate the extraneous movement that was getting in the way of the song, what Prince privately called “all that crap.” Liberman simplified his performance and, later that night, won second prize. Liberman never forgot that moment, and, apparently, neither did Prince. Two years later, he hired Liberman for the original production of *LoveMusik*, the musical based on Weill’s and Lenya’s relationship as chronicled in their letters, edited by Symonette and Kowalke as *Speak Low (When You Speak Love)*. That kind of quick teaching between the finals’ afternoon and evening programs is an essential part of the Lenya Competition’s distinctive profile.

Last year, Tony-winning singer and Competition judge Victoria Clark asked finalist Rebecca Jo Loeb to reprise Weill and Ogden Nash’s “That’s Him” at night, a tender but witty ballad from their score to *One Touch of Venus*. “The judges chose it because it was my worst song,” Loeb remembers. “Vicki Clark didn’t like my standing behind a chair as if I was hiding. I tend to do too much stuff to indicate what I’m feeling rather than putting it in the song.” Loeb’s deeply felt version that night helped her to win First Prize. She recently completed featured roles in runs of both a musical and an opera, *A Little Night Music* with the Boston Pops at Tanglewood and *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Juilliard Opera Center, as well as being cast by James Levine as Jenny in *Mahagonny* at Tanglewood. That’s precisely the kind of versatility the competition encourages and rewards.

In 2007, I attended the Competition’s evening performance for the first time, along with seven friends. When Kowalke announced the prizewinners, I was dumbstruck by one of the awards. I sidled up to him afterwards to tug at his sleeve and ask how that person

could possibly have won. “You had to have been here in the afternoon to hear the entire program,” he told me, “the aria and the musical theater number, everything.” I took him at his word. The following year, I returned in the evening with the same group, but two of us had also sat through the afternoon session in which each finalist performed a fourteen-minute set of four numbers. Of our group of eight, only the two of us who attended all day picked Rebecca Jo Loeb as the winner. This year, before presenting the awards, Kowalke explained to the near-capacity audience in Kilbourn Hall the scoring system: judges must evaluate each of the four numbers individually, awarding a maximum of ten points per selection, for a possible total of forty. A “perfect 10” on one number won’t put a singer into contention if it’s offset by a “5” on another selection.

It’s easy to fall into the trap of picking the best voice or finest vocal technique, but Kowalke insists again and again, “This is a theater singing competition, not a vocal competition.” That insistence frequently leads to additional preparation for those who make the finals. Suggestions from judges or competition administrators usually have to do with increasing or intensifying dramatic content or stylistic range of the program as a whole, and that may involve replacing a song for the finals. Kowalke explains both the reasoning behind it and the way it’s done: “Very, very few finalists score well with all four numbers in the regionals, so we discuss with the judge what worked and what didn’t. Sometimes the performer does all four numbers perfectly well, but two are so similar in style or affect that one of them becomes a ‘wasted’ number. We suggest a change, even urge it, on behalf of the judge, but in the end we can’t require it. The contestant is free to refuse and sometimes does, but I have to say, the regional judge was usually right.”

Case in point: When Carolyn Weber called Yale graduate and eventual Second Prize winner Lauren Worsham to congratulate her on making the finals, she suggested that “Mr. Right” from *Love*



Second Prize winner Lauren Worsham performs with accompanist Andy Einhorn. Photo: Kate Melton



*Life* should be sung in the original key (rather than the higher one found in the published popular song version). This would require her to “belt” the number, as Weill intended. The regional judge had also suggested replacing the title song from Adam Guettel and Craig Lucas’s *The Light in the Piazza* because it is about a very specific moment in the plot and thus hard to “land” out of context. Worsham heeded the advice: she sang “Mister Right” down a third and substituted “Simple Little Things” from *110 in the Shade*, because its simplicity contrasted with her other numbers, and its intimacy provided expanded opportunities for acting.

Finalist Marcy Richardson observed that Weber’s comments were very practical and very specific. “You walk away from her phone call with lots of feedback and then you have a month to digest it and master new material.”

Even a cursory look at the brief biographies of this year’s finalists and previous winners (see pp. 8–9) demonstrates how successful the participants have been, including those who did not win a prize. They have consistently been cast in both featured and leading roles in opera and musicals throughout the country, and more recently, the world. For instance, Worsham, who won this year’s Second Prize for her “glittering pyrotechnics combined with the simplest of little things,” has appeared in straight plays as well as at New York City Opera in *Candide*. Third Prize winner Zachary James, who won for his “commanding versatility,” has played in everything from the musicals *Li’l Abner* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* to the operas *Don Giovanni* and *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Just a week before the finals, he left the Lincoln Center production of *South Pacific* after a year as Seaman Thomas Hassinger.

Among the most notable successes of previous years Nicole Cabell won a Lys Symonette Award in 2002, and then in 2005 won the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff. She recently appeared as Adina in Donizetti’s *L’Elisir d’amore* at the Metropolitan Opera. Looking ahead, on 4 August, at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, six previous Lenya Competition winners will make up the entire cast of Weill and Brecht’s *Mahagonny Songspiel*.

It was possible to talk to only a few of this year’s prizewinners, but a moment spent looking ahead brought into focus the vagaries, variables, and opportunities of a singer’s career. Alen Hodzovic returned to Germany to appear as Cliff in a German language production of *Cabaret*. Michael McGee went from the Competition to a performance of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* with the New York Choral Society and, for the first time, a Tanglewood appearance in *Die Meistersinger* under James Levine. Meanwhile, Lauren Worsham and Marcy Richardson returned to New York, Lauren to start auditioning and Marcy to seek out workshops in both acting



Kim Kowalke with Competition judges Teresa Stratas, Theodore S. Chapin, and Rob Berman. Photo: Kate Melton

and singing. Lauren also leaves the Competition with a dream. She and a friend aspire to start a small opera company in downtown Manhattan, devoted to new work by young composers. She says, “We want to fill the gap between Broadway and opera by using people with beautiful voices who can also act. Not Broadway and not opera, but music theater, the world in between. It would embody the spirit of Lenya.”

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Competition finalists are chosen from regional auditions—held this year in Ann Arbor, Mich., Rochester, and New York City—and from video submissions. I observed one of the three days of auditions in New York; the judge that day was Paulette Haupt, Artistic Director of the National Musical Conference at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center in Connecticut. She heard nearly three dozen singers, of whom four made the finals (the other regional judges this year were David Loud, actor and Broadway music director; Charlie Scatamacchia, vice president of R&H Theatricals; and Broadway actress Grace Keagy). Unlike the finals, where the singers were together all day, here they pop in a few minutes before their scheduled times, perform, and head back out—just one stop in a busy day. Each singer takes the stage to announce a first selection; Haupt then selects a second number in contrast to the first. That’s it, unless she thinks the singer has a shot at the finals; then she requests the rest of the program. Sitting there, you can’t help turning yourself into a “judge” to see if your choices match hers. What becomes clear very quickly is that from a group of trained, talented singers, the best immediately stand out.

Once the regionals conclude, the Competition administrators begin the process of merging the regional rankings and determining how many top-rated contestants will be included in the finals, usually ten to fifteen. Referring to video records to remind them of contestants’ performances, they compare contestants from different regions. When they reach the ‘maybe pile,’ the last two or three slots, balancing factors such as voice type may be taken into account. If the judges have already put seven sopranos in the top group, another soprano may not have an equal shot at the last slots.

In the finals, the three-person panel of judges always includes one singer, one theater practitioner (director, actor, producer), and

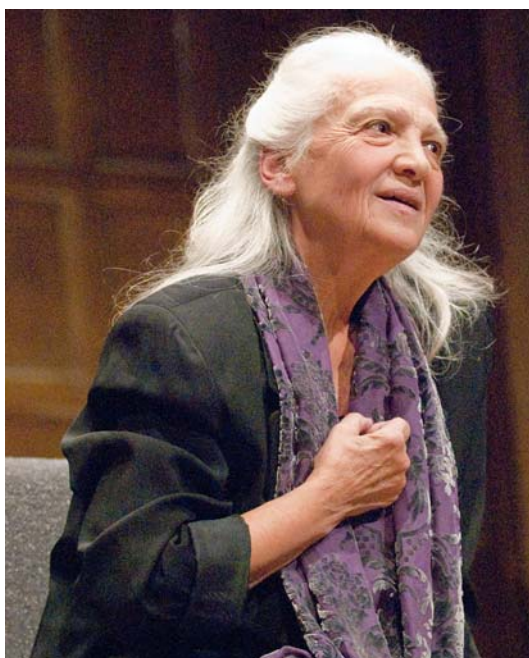
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one composer, coach, or conductor. This year, legendary soprano Teresa Stratas judged for the ninth time and Theodore S. Chapin, president and executive director of the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization, for the sixth. For *Encores!* Music Director Rob Berman, it was the first. Judges in the past have included producer and director Harold Prince, actor and director Alvin Epstein, musical director and arranger Ted Sperling, composer William Bolcom, and conductors James Holmes and Julius Rudel. There are disagreements, even arguments, between the judges, but not always predictably. "You'd think an actor would speak up for the best actor and a singer for an outstanding singer, but sometimes the 'theater' judge favors the singers and vice versa," Kowalke explains. The judges often advocate passionately for their opposites until the expert points out the problems, perhaps in technique, perhaps in interpretation.

Each of the three judges awards a maximum of ten points for each of a contestant's four numbers—a maximum of 120 points per singer. Each singer's total becomes the basis for discussion although, in nearly every case over the years, the person with the highest score in the first round ended up winning. The judges start with the numbers, but set them aside as they consider individual strengths and weaknesses, which they may try to address in private callbacks or in the evening concert. Close decisions, often about second and third prize, have been made on the basis of second looks during the evening concert. "Standards change and judges change," says Kowalke, "but what defines the Competition doesn't change." He makes no attempt to define for the judges what each of the numbers, one through ten, means. He asks only that each award them consistently, and he waits eagerly for the first score of ten.

This year, when Lauren Worsham sang "Glitter and Be Gay" from *Candide* with panache and humor, "the judges knew what a ten looked like. It gave them a reference point. It's important to avoid inflating the numbers, and equally important to keep from having that ten bleed over into your evaluation of everything else you hear from that contestant."



Teresa Stratas. Photo: Kate Melton

In addition to providing knowledge and insight, the judges, especially those who have done it before, have another role to play. Kowalke says that no one is a better consensus builder than Chapin. At the same time, it's hard to imagine the Competition without Stratas because Lenya crowned her as her successor; Kowalke calls her "the keeper of the flame." As a judge, she is both demanding and enormously sympathetic. Although she doesn't believe in competitions and participates only in this one, she embraces the goal of deeply felt singing combined with equally genuine acting. She yearns for performers whose deepest self informs their singing. "It's no small thing to bare yourself. Ultimately," she says, "I'm looking for something that will stir my heart. I want these young singers to be truthful, to strip away artifice. I want them to go away knowing that the most important thing is for them to bring what is special about themselves to their singing."

Stratas adds, "This is the only competition that requires contestants to prepare so many kinds of songs, and then take what the judges give them and immediately put it to work." She reflects on what the competition bearing Lenya's name achieves: "What a terrific idea that honors the singing and Lenya both. And now it's one of the most important international competitions in the world."

### Notable Engagements after They Won

**Brian Mulligan** (1998): Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, English National Opera.

**Jennifer Dyan Goode** (2001): Baz Luhrmann's *La Bohème* on Broadway.

**Kyle Barisich** (2002): Raoul, national tour and Broadway, *Phantom of the Opera*.

**Lucas Meachem** (2002): title roles in *Don Giovanni* (Santa Fe Opera) and *Billy Budd* (Paris Opera).

**Nicole Cabell** (2002): leading roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera, and Deutsche Oper, Berlin.

**Elaine Alvarez** (2003): Mimi in *La Bohème*, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Frankfurt Opera.

**Richard Todd Adams** (2004): *Woman in White* and *The Pirate Queen* on Broadway; title role in the national tour of *Phantom of the Opera*.

**Amy Justman** (2004): Broadway productions of *Company* and *White Christmas*, *A Little Night Music* at Baltimore Center Stage.

**Liam Bonner** (2005): Leading roles at English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera.

**Erik Liberman** (2005): *LoveMusik* on Broadway, *Merrily We Roll Along* at Signature Stage (Helen Hayes Award), Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof* national tour.

**Rodel Aure Rosel** (2006): Comprimario roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Metropolitan Opera.

**Jeanine De Bique** (2007): New York Philharmonic debut in Mahler's 8th Symphony.

**Zachary James** (2009): *The Addams Family*, bound for Broadway in 2010.

# Timeline: The Lotte Lenya Competition, 1998–2009

## **12 November 1998, Eastman School of Music** for students of the University of Rochester.

Winners: Rachel Albert, Leah Arington, Heidi Bieber, Rebecca Comerford, Katia Escalera, Danielle Frink, Elizabeth McDonald, Brian Mulligan, Lauren Pastorek, Tami Petty, Teresa Winner.  
Judges: Teresa Stratas, Julius Rudel, Mark Cuddy.

## **3 December 1999, Eastman School of Music** for students in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

First Prize: Amy Orsulak (Manhattan School of Music); Second Prizes: Christina Carr (Eastman School of Music), Dirk Weiler (City College, City University of New York); Third Prizes: Daniel Spiotta, Amy Van Looy (both Eastman School of Music). Lys Symonette Prize (Outstanding Accompanist): Thomas Rosenkranz (also of Eastman).  
Judges: Teresa Stratas, Jonathan Eaton, John Mauceri.

## **16 February 2000, Akademie der Künste Berlin** for students in Germany.

First Prizes: Sophia Brickwell (Leipzig), Lisa Löfquist (Berlin), Juliane Price (Essen), Susanne Serfling (Berlin); Second Prizes: Nicole Johannhanwar (Munich), Rosa Schneider (Potsdam), Annela Ulmer (Chernitz).

## **17 February 2000, Kurt Weill Zentrum Dessau** for young professional singers in Germany.

First Prize: Annette Postel (Baden-Württemberg); Second Prizes: Kaja Plessing (Düsseldorf), Kathrin Unger (Berlin), Cordula Wirkner (Nuremberg).  
Judges for both competitions: Teresa Stratas, Elmar Ottenthal, James Holmes.

## **17 March 2001, Eastman School of Music** for students in the United States and Canada.

First Prize: Jennifer Dyan Goode (Manhattan School of Music); Second Prizes: Raquela Sheeran (The Juilliard School), Jacob Langfelder (Boston Conservatory); Lys Symonette Special Awards: Noah Stewart (The Juilliard School), Misty Ann Castleberry Sturm (Eastman School of Music).  
Judges: André Bishop, Teresa Stratas, Welz Kauffman.

## **13 April 2002, Eastman School of Music** for singers residing in the United States and Canada who had not yet reached their 32nd birthday as of 31 December 2001.

First Prize: Lisa Conlon (Rochester, NY); Second Prizes: Kyle Barisich (New York, NY), Ethan Watermeier (Astoria, NY). Lys Symonette Awards (Outstanding Vocal Talent): Amy Van Looy (Rochester, NY), Nicole Cabell (Chicago, IL), Lucas Meachem (Rochester, NY).  
Judges: Eric Stern, Teresa Stratas, Stanley Walden.

## **22 March 2003, Eastman School of Music** for singers residing in the United States and Canada born after 31 December 1970.

First Prize: Siri Vik (Cincinnati, OH); Second Prize: Peter McGillivray (Toronto, ON); Third Prizes: Elaine Alvarez (Brooklyn, NY), Jeffrey Behrens (Pittsburgh, PA), Michael McKinsey (Brooklyn, NY).  
Judges: Teresa Stratas, Theodore S. Chapin, Ted Sperling.

## **27 March 2004, Eastman School of Music** for singers born after 31 December 1971.

Three equal prizes awarded to Richard Todd Adams (New York, NY); Amy Justman (New York, NY), and Misty Ann Sturm (Lindenhurst, NY).  
Judges: Theodore S. Chapin, Alvin Epstein, Angelina Réaux.

## **9 April 2005, Eastman School of Music** for singers born between 1 January 1973 and 31 December 1985.

First Prize: Jonathan Michie (Rochester, NY); Second Prizes: Liam Bonner (New York, NY), Erik Liberman (New York, NY); Third Prize: Morgan James (New York, NY); Lys Symonette Award (Outstanding Individual Number): Jendi Tarde (Chicago, IL).  
Judges: William Bolcom, Harold Prince, Angelina Réaux.

## **22 April 2006, Eastman School of Music** for singers born between 1 January 1974 and 31 December 1986.

First Prize: Justin Welsh (Toronto, ON); Second Prizes: Justin Lee Miller (New York, NY), Rodell Aure Rosel (Chicago, IL); Third Prizes: Sarah Blaskowsky (New York, NY), Hallie Silverston (Rochester, NY); Lys Symonette Awards (Outstanding Individual Number): Karim Sulayman (New York, NY), Meredith Arwady (Chicago, IL), Bray Wilkins (Port Gibson, MS).  
Judges: Teresa Stratas, Theodore S. Chapin, James Holmes.

## **21 April 2007, Eastman School of Music** for singers born between 1 January 1975 and 31 December 1987.

First Prize: James Benjamin Rodgers (New York, NY); Second Prize: Analisa Leaming (Rochester, NY); Third Prizes: Christopher Herbert (New York, NY), Leena Chopra (New York, NY); Lys Symonette Awards (Outstanding Vocal Talent): Paul Corona (Chicago, IL), Jeanine De Bique (New York, NY); Lys Symonette Award (Outstanding Dramatic Talent): Brian Charles Rooney (New York, NY).  
Judges: Teresa Stratas, Ted Sperling, Theodore S. Chapin.

## **12 April 2008, Eastman School of Music** for singers born between 1 January 1976 and 31 December 1988.

First Prize: Rebecca Jo Loeb (New York, NY); Second Prize: Ariela Morgenstern (Brooklyn, NY); Third Prizes: Bray Wilkins (Moscow, ID), Maija Skille (Helsinki, Finland); Lys Symonette Awards (Outstanding Individual Number): Tora Augustad (Berlin, Germany), Lauren Jelencovich (New York, NY), Elizabeth Reiter (New York, NY); Lys Symonette Award (Vocal Promise): John Brancy (Mullica Hill, NJ).  
Judges: Victoria Clark, James Holmes, Theodore S. Chapin.

## **18 April 2009, Eastman School of Music** for singers born between 1 January 1977 and 31 December 1989.

First Prize: Alen Hodzovic (Berlin, Germany); Second Prize: Lauren Worsham (New York, NY); Third Prize: Zachary James (New York, NY); Lys Symonette Awards (Outstanding Individual Number): Michael Anthony McGee (New York, NY), Yannick-Muriel Noah (Toronto, ON); Lys Symonette Award (Vocal Promise): Ginger Costa-Jackson (New York, NY).  
Judges: Rob Berman, Theodore S. Chapin, Teresa Stratas.