2017 LOTTE LENYA COMPETITION FINALS

Daytime Round
Kilbourn Hall, Eastman School of Music
Saturday, 22 April 2017, 11:00 am
At the first Lotte Lenya Competition in 1998, the contestants were all Eastman voice students, and the top prize was just $1,000. This year 266 contestants from 17 countries and 31 states submitted video auditions. In March thirty-two semifinalists competed and coached in Manhattan. Today fourteen finalists spanning the boundaries of eligibility from 19 to 32 compete for a top prize of $20,000, increasing from $15,000 for the first time. This year’s prizes, recognizing and nurturing young singing actors, will bring the total awarded after twenty competitions to more than $850,000.

When I conceived the Competition in 1998 as a way to celebrate Lenya’s 100th birthday, as well as the arrival (on long-term loan) of the manuscripts of all Weill’s German compositions at Sibley Music Library, I had only a faint glimmer of hope that it might someday grow into what it’s become nineteen years later. Though strictly local that first year, with fewer than two dozen contestants, the LLC already encouraged idiomatic performances of a wide range of repertoire, and it was adjudicated by a distinguished panel of three, representing diverse expertise and viewpoints (a model that has remained unchanged): a conductor (Julius Rudel), a director (Mark Cuddy), and a versatile, world-class singer.

That singer is our Special Guest of Honor for the 20th Lenya Competition: Teresa Stratas has subsequently served on the judges’ panel for half of the finals. And Stratas’s own legendary talent and career exemplify the values engendered by the LLC, as her repertory encompassed music theater in its widest sense: opera, operetta, American musical theater, and particularly the music of Kurt Weill. Making her debut at the Met in 1959, she was already an international star before she turned 25. At the Met alone, she sang 41 roles in 382 performances over three decades, including seven new productions mounted for her.

Stratas first sang Weill’s music in 1979, when she played Jenny in the Met premiere of Mahagonny. In appreciation of “her dream Jenny,” Lenya gave Stratas a collection of unpublished material which she recorded in 1981 as The Unknown Kurt Weill, which garnered a fistful of awards. Then came Stratas Sings Weill, Peter Sellars’s film of Die sieben Todtenden, and September Songs: The Music of Kurt Weill. The Kurt Weill Foundation presented her with its Distinguished Achievement Award in Eastman Theatre in 1998 and elected her an honorary trustee in 2005.

Other career highlights include the world premiere production and recording of the three-act Lulu under Boulez in Paris, creating the leading roles in The Ghosts of Versailles and Rags (Tony nomination), and singing Julie in the landmark complete recording of Show Boat. She made more than two dozen opera films, and won three Grammy Awards, an Emmy, a Gemini, a Drama Desk Award, and an Academy Award citation for the documentary Stratsphere. Teresa holds five honorary doctorates, including one bestowed by the University of Rochester at the celebration here in 1998. This remains the only competition Stratas has ever judged, and now, at Number 20, it’s become almost as much her as Lenya’s.

—Kim H. Kowalke, President & CEO, Kurt Weill Foundation for Music; Founder of the LLC

Cover photos, clockwise from top left: Past winners in performance, Justin Hopkins (2012 2nd Prize) and Lauren Michelle (2015 1st Prize) in Lost in the Stars with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (photo credit: Reed Hutchinson); Matthew Grills (2012 1st Prize) (L) and Brian Mulligan (1998 Top Prize) (R) in Sweeney Todd at San Francisco Opera (photo credit: Cory Weaver); Megan Marino (2012 3rd Prize) and Rodell Rosel (2006 2nd Prize) in Der Rosenkavalier at Lyric Opera of Chicago (photo credit: Cory Weaver); Amy Justman (2004 Top Prize) (L) and Lauren Worsham (2009 2nd Prize) (R) with Kelli O’Hara (C) in The Mikado with MasterVoices (photo credit: Erin Baiano).

Each finalist will have fifteen minutes in which to present a program of four contrasting selections, as listed in the program below. To ensure that each contestant has the opportunity to sing his/her entire program, please withhold applause until the conclusion of each contestant’s final selection. For the daytime round, accompanists Lyndon Meyer and Shane Schag will alternate.

11:00 Molly Dunn, 28
“ Ain’t it a pretty night” from Susannah Floyd
“Show Me” from My Fair Lady Loewe/Lerner
“I Won’t Mind” Blumenkrantz/Kessler, Saines
“Es zog zu Salomon” from Der Kuhhandel Weill/Vambery

11:15 Philip Kalmanovitch, 32
“Lonely Town” from On the Town Bernstein/Comden, Green
“In Praise of Women” from A Little Night Music Sondheim
“E fra quest’ansie” from Pagliacci Leoncavallo
“This is the Life” from Love Life Weill/Lerner

11:30 Marie Oppert, 19
“Chacun le sait” from La fille du régiment Donizetti/Saint-Georges, Bayard
“Somebody, Somewhere” from The Most Happy Fella Loesser
“Astonishing” from Little Women Howland/Dickstein
“J’attends un navire” from Marie Galante Weill/Deval

11:45 Felice Bombonato, 28
“Nur die Nacht” from Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny Weill/Brecht
“Fanny” from Fanny Rome
“I Am Adolphe” from The Drowsy Chaperone Lambert/Morrison
“E lucevan le stelle” from Tosca Puccini/Illica, Giacosa

12:00 Jasmine Habershams, 27
“Mister Snow” from Carousel Rodgers/Hammerstein
“Trouble Man” from Lost in the Stars Weill/Anderson
“My Man’s Gone Now” from Porgy and Bess G. Gershwin/DuBose, I. Gershwin
“Still Hurting” from The Last Five Years Brown

12:15 Michael Hewitt, 26
“When my cue comes, call me” from A Midsummer Night’s Dream Britten/Pears
“Let Things Be Like They Always Was” from Street Scene Weill/Hughes
“Lonely Room” from Oklahoma! Rodgers/Hammerstein
“In Praise of Women” from A Little Night Music Sondheim

12:30 Gan-ya Ben-gur Akselrod, 29
“ Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man” from Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny Weill/Brecht
“Somebody, Somewhere” from The Most Happy Fella Loesser
“Children of the Wind” from Rags Strouse/Schwartz
“Non, monsieur mon mari” from Les mamelles de Tirésias Poulenc

-INTERMISSION-
Katherine Riddle, 25
“When Did I Fall in Love?” from Fiorello!
“Volta la terrea” from Un ballo in maschera
“That’s Him” from One Touch of Venus
“Through the Mountain” from Floyd Collins

Tony Potts, 24
“C’est Moi” from Camelot
“Love Song” from Love Life
“Mein Sehnen, mein Wählen” from Die tote Stadt
“Funny” from City of Angels

Taylor Raven, 25
“Bill” from Show Boat
“Cruda sorte! Amor tirannol!” from L’italiana in Algeri
“Stay Well” from Lost in the Stars
“I’m a Little Bit Off” from Starting Here, Starting Now

Curtis Bannister, 31
“A New Town is a Blue Town” from The Pajama Game
“Ah! Lève-toi, soilii!” from Roméo et Juliette
“She Cries” from Songs for a New World
“Erst trifft dich die Kugel” from Der Silbersee

Lisa Marie Rogali, 22
“The Prologue” from Transformations
“Much More” from The Fantasticks
“Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man” from Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny
“Somebody” from Amour

Bradley Smoak, 32
“This is the Life” from Love Life
“Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni” from La sonnambula
“Higher Than a Hawk” from Calamity Jane
“Me” from Beauty and the Beast

Paulina Villarreal, 27
“Carceleras” from Las hijas del Zebedeo
“One Life to Live” from Lady in the Dark
“Der Abschiedsbrief”
“Maybe I Like It This Way” from The Wild Party

MOLLY DUNN hails from South Orange, NJ. She spent her college years farming and traveling the world, eventually landing in New York City. She received her Master of Music in Vocal Performance: Musical Theatre from New York University, where she portrayed Margaret Johnson in The Light in the Piazza in her culminating performance. She made her operatic debut as an Apprentice Artist at the Miami Music Festival, as Erste Dame in Die Zauberflöte, and in the Zarzuela concert series. Favorite musical theater credits include Amalia in She Loves Me; Johanna u/s in Sweeney Todd; and Rosa Bud in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. Most recently, Molly played Babette in Beauty and the Beast at The Fireside Theatre. She studies with Virginia Grasso in New York City. All her love to her family, friends, and mentors. molly-dunn.com

Judges may choose to award, at their sole discretion, any combination of the following prizes: 1st ($20,000); 2nd ($15,000); 3rd ($10,000); Lys Symonette Awards ($3,500) for outstanding performance of a number or excellence in one area; Marc Blitzstein Award ($3,500) for outstanding performance of a Golden Age selection; Carolyn Weber Award ($3,500) for outstanding creativity in the design of a diverse program and exceptional sensitivity to text/music relationships; the inaugural Kurt Weill Award ($5,000) for outstanding performances of two selections by Weill. All finalists receive travel stipends and an award of at least $1,000.

Lotte Lenya Competition Finalists

For the 2016/17 season, CURTIS BANNISTER returned to the roster at Lyric Opera of Chicago for Les Troyens and Norma; performed as tenor soloist in Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass for the Baltimore Choral Arts Society; and debuted with Writers Theatre as Lieutenant Barri in Sondheim’s Passion. Additional season performances include his debut with Porchlight Music Theatre as Edward Moncrief in On A Clear Day You Can See Forever; Jim Conley/Newt Lee (u/s) in Parade with Writers Theatre; Jean Paul in the off-Broadway musical Little Fish for Kokandy Productions; and a recital tour in Sicily, Italy in August 2017. This month, Curtis was a finalist in the Rochester Oratorio Society’s Classical Idol XI Competition. Future season engagements include operatic and musical theater debuts in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Alaska. This is Curtis’ second appearance in the Lenya Competition finals.

Born in Tel-Aviv, GAN-YA BEN-GUR AKSELROD completed her Bachelor’s Degree cum laude at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music and a postgraduate degree in Opera from Brooklyn College. After winning 1st prize at the Hilde Zadek Competition in Vienna, she joined the Young Ensemble of Theater an der Wien, where she performed Lucy in Weill’s Die Dreigroschenoper. Other roles include Blondchen in The Abduction from the Seraglio with Glyndebourne Opera; Elvira in L’italiana in Algeri at Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse; Konstanze in The Abduction from the Seraglio at Israeli Opera; and Marie in Le Malentendu with the Neue Oper Wien. She has appeared with Aix-en-Provence, Berlin Deutsche Oper, Ravinia Music Festival, and at Carnegie Hall. Gan-ya won 2nd prize in the Güzin Gürel Competition, and additional awards from the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, the Paul Ben-Haim Competition, the AICF Foundation, the Ronen Foundation, and the IVAl Institute.

FELIPE BOMBONATO is a graduate of the University of Florida, with a BFA in Musical Theatre. His past professional credits include Judas in Jesus Christ Superstar; the national tour of Cats (swing); Billis in South Pacific; Ensemble/Padre in the national tour of Man of La Mancha; Philip in Upside Down; Eddie/Dr. Scott in Rocky Horror Picture Show; Little Bat in The Fantasticks; and Stine in City of Angels. He would like to thank his family for their continued support; the love of his life, “coach” Molly, for countless hours and advice on each song; his voice teachers, Matt Morgan and Eric Michael Gillett; and of course God, for without Him, I wouldn’t be where or who I am. 1 Corinthians 13:13.

MOLLY DUNN hails from South Orange, NJ. She spent her college years farming and traveling the world, eventually landing in New York City. She received her Master of Music in Vocal Performance: Musical Theatre from New York University, where she portrayed Margaret Johnson in The Light in the Piazza in her culminating performance. She made her operatic debut as an Apprentice Artist at the Miami Music Festival, as Erste Dame in Die Zauberflöte, and in the Zarzuela concert series. Favorite musical theater credits include Amalia in She Loves Me; Johanna u/s in Sweeney Todd; and Rosa Bud in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. Most recently, Molly played Babette in Beauty and the Beast at The Fireside Theatre. She studies with Virginia Grasso in New York City. All her love to her family, friends, and mentors. molly-dunn.com
JASMINE HABERSHAM is a native of Macon, GA. Most recently, she sang the roles of Yum-Yum in The Mikado (Kentucky Opera); Esther in Intimate Apparel (Cincinnati OperaFusion); and Clara in Porgy and Bess (Utah Festival). Her other performances include Papagena in The Magic Flute (Glimmerglass Festival) and Edith in The Pirates of Penzance (Atlanta Opera). She has appeared as a young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival, Kentucky Opera, Central City Opera, and the Brevard Music Center. Jasmine received her Masters and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she performed the roles of Despina in Così fan tutte; Norina in Don Pasquale; Mrs. Julian in Owen Wingrave; and Pearl in Morning Star. This summer, Jasmine will reprise the role of Papagena in The Magic Flute at Cincinnati Opera.

MICHAEL HEWITT specializes in Golden Age musical theater, Italian repertoire, and the music of J.S. Bach. He trained at The Music Academy of The West, Aspen Opera Center, Seagle Music Colony, and Barrington Stage Company. He has premiered works by Mohammed Fairouz, Osi Sladek, and Ben Morris. Favorite roles include the title role in Don Giovanni; Lancelot (Camelot); Emile (South Pacific); Bottom (Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream); Frank Butler (Annie Get Your Gun); and the title role in Gianni Schicchi. He will reprise the role of Jud Fry this summer in Oklahoma! at Glimmerglass Opera. When not on stage, he works as a fitness consultant. Recently, Michael raised nearly $3,000 for pediatric cancer research and treatment at MD Anderson in Houston, TX as a competitor in the D10 Decathlon.

TONY POTTS hails from Fargo, ND. Most recently, he performed the roles of Fredrik Egerman in A Little Night Music at the University of North Texas, and Charles Clerk in Titanic with Uptown Players in Dallas, TX. With the Miami Music Festival he sang Marcello in La bohème; Mr. Gudge in Britten’s Albert Herring; and the Father in Hansel and Gretel. Other stage roles include Fagin in Oliver!; Koko in The Mikado; The Watchman, Umpire, and Manager in The Mighty Casey; Curly in Oklahoma!; and Harold Hill in The Music Man. Tony completed his Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Northwestern, St. Paul where he studied with Carol Eikum. He is currently a first year Master’s student at University of North Texas, where he studies with Stephen Morschek. This is Tony’s second appearance in the Lenya Competition finals.

MARIE OPPERT was born in Paris. Marie’s first stage appearance was at the age of four, in a Parisian church, where she sang a solo of Ave Maria by Schubert. Marie studied at the conservatory of Cherbourg where she sang for the first time in her life. She then entered the Conservatory of Tours in France and at 19, she won first prize in the 2015 Denver Lyric Opera Competition. She has performed as a soloist with the American Pops Orchestra, the Fairfax Symphony, the Virginia Symphony, and the Miami Music Festival where she sang Marcello in The Magic Flute. She has appeared in operas and recitals from coast to coast in the United States, France, and Belgium. Marie currently resides in New York City where she is studying voice with John Warne. www.marieoppert.com

TAYLOR RAVEN is originally from Fayetteville, NC. This season, she joined Pittsburgh Opera as a Resident Artist, where she performed as Oronte (Riccardo Primo) and Hannah After (As One). Raven recently made her debut in Caminsky’s As One with Seattle Opera. In 2016, Raven performed in the Schwabacher Summer Concert with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program, where she also gave a debut recital. Other credits include Die Knusperhexe (Hänsel und Gretel); Ruth (The Pirates of Penzance); Ottavia (L'incoronazione di Poppea); Angelina (La Cenerentola); Martha (Dream Lovers); La Voix (Les Contes D'Hoffmann); and Annio (La Clemenza di Tito). She has participated in other young artist programs including Central City Opera and Virginia Opera and won 1st prize in the 2015 Denver Lyric Opera Competition. Raven holds degrees from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of Colorado, Boulder. A finalist in the 2015 Lotte Lenya Competition, Katherine RIDDLE recently appeared in the Broadway-aimed revival of The Secret Garden, co-produced by Shakespeare Theatre Company and 5th Avenue Theatre. Select credits and roles: Sweeney Todd and La bohème (Glimmerglass Festival); Madonna Butterfly and South Pacific (Annapolis Opera); Fiona (Brigadoon); Cosette (Les Misérables); Laurey (Oklahoma!); Cinderella (Into the Woods); Mary (Laura Ingalls Wilder National Tour). A frequent soloist with National Broadway Chorus, Katherine has shared the stage with Kevin Spacey, Christine Ebersole, LaChanze, and Renée Fleming at venues including the Kennedy Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center. She has performed as a soloist with the American Pops Orchestra, Fairfax Symphony, West Virginia Symphony, and the Miami Music Festival. Katherine graduated magna cum laude from American University and studied abroad at Kings College, London. Upcoming: A Grand Night for Singing (NextStop Theatre Company).

LISA MARIE ROGALI is currently pursuing her Master’s Degree in Vocal Performance at The University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Lisa recently graduated with her Bachelor’s in Music Education from Pennsylvania State University, where she was an active performer in opera, concert, and musical theater. Favorite professional credits include Elle in La voix humaine; Louise in Gypsy; Musetta in La bohème; Eliza Doolittle in My Fair Lady; Blanche de la force in Dialogues of the Carmelites; Cosette in Les Misérables; and Dorabella in Così fan tutte. Most recently, Lisa received the Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in Pittsburgh. Lisa is excited to make her debut with Opera Saratoga singing the role of Fatmë in Grétry’s Zémire et Azor this summer.
A recent graduate of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center and 2017 winner of The Richard F. Gold Career Grant, BRADLEY SMOAK has been heard with many companies nationwide, with particular success at Lyric Opera of Chicago (ten roles since 2014, including Zuniga/Carmen, Ghost of Hector/ Les Troyens, Antonio/Nazza di Figaro) and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (operas of Mozart, Puccini, Strauss, along with glowing critical praise for his Pirate King in The Pirates of Penzance). He has appeared in concert with Chicago Symphony Orchestra (l’enfant et les sortilèges, Pelléas et Mélisande) and onstage at Boston Lyric Opera, Palm Beach Opera, and Sarasota Opera, just to name a few. Smoak made his international debut at Ireland's Wexford Festival Opera in The Ghosts of Versailles and Donizetti's Maria Padilla, and was the winner of the inaugural Marc Blitzstein Award at the 2016 Lotte Lenya Competition.

Praised for her “mesmerizing” stage presence, and her “assured vocalism”, singer/actress PAULINÁ VILLARREAL is establishing a career as a prominent recitalist, cabaret, operatic, and musical theater singer around the United States and Mexico. She is a current Young Artist at Cincinnati Opera, and a graduate of the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. CCM Opera credits include William Bolcom’s Complete Cabaret Songs, Ricky Ian Gordon’s Bright-Eyed Joy: a Cabaret show; Marianna in Rossini’s Il Signor Bruschino; and the staged version of J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion. Performance highlights include a fellowship with the Tanglewood Music Center; Simply Sondheim with the Boston Pops (Boston, MA); Sondheim vs Webber with the Kentucky Symphony Orchestra; as well as featured performances with the Appalachian Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Today’s Staff Accompanists

LYNDON MEYER is thrilled to be returning as staff accompanist for the Lotte Lenya competition for the ninth consecutive year. A Tulsa-based conductor, pianist and vocal coach, Lyndon serves as chorus master, principal pianist, and assistant conductor for Tulsa Opera, and maintains an active coaching and performance schedule. Lyndon has degrees from the University of Arkansas and the Eastman School of Music. He has performed around the country as a recitalist, accompanist, chamber musician, and conductor, including twice at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Ohio native SHANE SCHAG has performed in recital both as soloist and ensemble performer throughout the United States and Europe, including a concerto performance with the Ashland Symphony Orchestra. He has won several awards and scholarships, including the Gwendolyn Koldofsky Memorial Award, given to “a musician who demonstrates outstanding professionalism in collaborative piano.” In 2007, Mr. Schag made his debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall. Now, he serves as staff pianist for the Weill Music Institute’s Musical Explorers and Link Up concert series — educational programs inspiring the next generation of music lovers in the classroom and beyond. Mr. Schag is a member of the recital coaching faculty and resident musical director for the American Musical Theater Ensemble at the Manhattan School of Music. In 2016, Mr. Schag was an inaugural faculty member of Vocal Coach Asia (Singapore) and the Creative Voice Institute (Taiwan). This July he will perform in the cabaret Kurt Weill’s America presented at the Brevard Music Festival with William Sharp and Lisa Vroman. He has accompanied the finals of the Lotte Lenya Competition since 2008.

Today’s Judges

ROB BERMAN is a New York based music director. He is in his tenth season as music director of Encores!, New York City Center’s acclaimed series of great American musicals in concert. There he has conducted twenty-five productions including Lost in the Stars; The Most Happy Fella; Merrily We Roll Along; Pipe Dream; Do I Hear A Waltz?; and Anyone Can Whistle. Last season on Broadway, Rob was represented by three shows: Dames At Sea; Tuck Everlasting; and the Tony and Grammy nominated Bright Star by Steve Martin and Edie Brickell. Other Broadway credits include Promises, Promises; Finian’s Rainbow; The Pajama Game; Wonderful Town; and Irving Berlin’s White Christmas. For nine years Rob was music director of the Kennedy Center Honors on CBS, for which he won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Musical Direction. He won a Helen Hayes Award for his music direction of the Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration’s production of Sondheim: the Man with George. His work with Stephen Sondheim also includes productions of Passion and Pacific Overtures at Classic Stage Company and the revue Opening Doors at Zankel Hall. Rob has conducted original cast recordings including a new recording of Jerome Kern’s Roberta. Other credits include conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Barbara Cook and music direction for the PBS presentation of A Broadway Celebration: In Performance at the White House. He is happy to be returning as a judge for the Lotte Lenya Competition for the sixth time.

ANNE BOGART is a Co-Artistic Director of the ensemble-based SITI Company, head of the MFA Directing program at Columbia University, and author of five books: A Director Prepares; The Viewpoints Book; And Then You Act; Conversations with Anne; and What’s the Story. With SITI, Bogart has directed more than 30 works in venues around the world, including Chess Match No. 1; Steel Hammer; The Theater is a Blank Page; Persians; A Rite; Café Variations; Radio Macbeth; American Document; bobrauschenbergamerica; and Hotel Cassiopeia. Recent opera works include Kurt Weill’s Lost in the Stars; Verdi’s Macbeth; Bellini’s Norma; and Bizet’s Carmen. Her many awards and fellowships include three honorary doctorates (Cornish School of the Arts, Bard College, and Skidmore College); a Duke Artist Fellowship; a United States Artists Fellowship; a Guggenheim Fellowship; a Rockefeller/Bellagio Fellowship; and a Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency Fellowship. This is her first time judging the Lotte Lenya Competition.

SHULER HENSLEY has won multiple awards for his work on Broadway, Off-Broadway, film and television. His powerful and moving performance as Jud Fry in Oklahoma!, earned him an Olivier Award for the production’s West End run and the “Triple Crown” for its Broadway iteration: Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards. Most recently, he starred as Oscar in The New Group’s production of Sweet Charity opposite Sutton Foster. Broadway: Monster in Young Frankenstein; Javert in Les Miserables; two plays in rep at the Court Theatre: Waiting for Godot and No Man’s Land. Off-Broadway: The Grinch in How the Grinch Stole Christmas; Tony in New York City Center’s Encores! production of The Most Happy Fella; Fiorello; The Whale, for which he was awarded “Stage Performance of the Year” by New York magazine; Silence! The Musical; Sweet and Sad; and The Great American Trailer Park Musical. Regional: Ghost Brothers of Darkland County at Atlanta’s Alliance Theatre; All About Us; The Phantom of the Opera; Julian Marsh in The Muny’s production of 42nd Street. TV & Film: Elementary; The Americans; Deadline; Law & Order: Special Victims Unit; recurring roles in Shades of Blue and OA; The Legend of Zorro; Van Helsing; The Bread, My Sweet; Odd Thomas; Cruiser; and President James Garfield in PBS’s Murder of a President, on Georgia Public Broadcasting. Work with symphony orchestras includes Carousel at Avery Fisher Hall with the New York Philharmonic, which was nationally broadcast on PBS; On the Town with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas; the Detroit Symphony, and the New World Symphony. A native of Marietta, GA, he devotes much time, energy and talent to support and further the arts in education. This is his first time judging the Lotte Lenya Competition.
**20 Competitions**

**Top Prize Winners**

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>Rebekah Camm Rodgers</td>
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**Finals Judges**


**7 Lenya Winners on Broadway This Season**


**LLC Winners on Grammy Award–Winning Recordings**

Lucas Meachem, 2002 Lys Symonette Award, on The Ghosts of Versailles (Best Opera Recording); and Kyle Scatliffe, 2010 Lys Symonette Award, on The Color Purple (Best Musical Theater Recording).

**Winners Performing Weill Around the World**

Justin Hopkins, 2012 2nd Prize (as Stephen Kumalo) and Lauren Michelle 2015 1st Prize (as Irina) in Lost in the Stars at Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Jeffrey Kahane and directed by Anne Bogart • Tora Augustad, 2008 Lys Symonette Award: Weill songs with the Bamberger Symphoniker, conducted by HK Gruber; Anna I in Die sieben Todsünden with the Oslo Philharmonic, May 2017 • Rebecca Jo Loeb, 2008 1st Prize: Anna I in Die sieben Todsünden with the Sinfonieorchester Aachen, 23 April 2017 • At the 2017 Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau, Germany: Jeannine De Bique, 2007 Lys Symonette Award, Matthew Grills, 2012 1st Prize, and Justin Hopkins appeared as soloists in Die Verheissung; • Tom Schimon, 2016 Carolyn Weber Award, in a concert adaptation of Johnny Johnson • Brian Charles Rooney, 2007 Lys Symonette Award: Berlin to Broadway with the York Theatre Company.

**Awards Presented Before the Finals**

**Non-Advancing Semifinalists ($500)**

Méroë Khalia Adeeb, 30 (Maryland, USA) • Carolyn Bacon, 26 (Oregon, USA) • *Daniel Berryman, 26 (Washington, USA) • Samantha Bruce, 27 (California, USA) • Kristin Choi, 29 (California, USA) • Jil Cesse, 26 (Luxembourg) • Kellie Cundiff, 32 (Illinois, USA) • Benjamin Dutton, 22 (New Jersey, USA) • Mauricio Hines, 31 (North Carolina, USA) • Charlotte Knight, 30 (Ontario, Canada) • *Reilly Nelson, 27 (Ontario, Canada) • *Lindsay O’Neil, 31 (New York, USA) • Mackenzie Rogers, 26 (Oregon, USA) • Laura Sanders, 22 (California, USA) • Aaron Sheddard, 25 (Newfoundland, Canada) • Elise Spurlock, 30 (Louisiana, USA) • Travis Taylor, 28 (Texas, USA) • Anson Woodin, 26 (Iowa, USA)

**Emerging Talents ($500)**

Danielle Bavli, 21 (New York, USA) • Annette Berning, 21 (New York, USA) • Tucker Breder, 21 (Pennsylvania, USA) • Kalyn Schnabel, 22 (New York, USA) • Juliane Stolzenbach Ramos, 21 (Freiburg, Germany) • Trevor Vanderzee, 23 (Illinois, USA)

**Grace Keagy Award for Outstanding Vocal Promise ($500)**

Jennifer Witton (London, United Kingdom)

2017 Semifinals Coach/Adjudicators were veteran Broadway performer Judy Blazer and Tony Award-winning music director Ted Sperling

*Denotes a contestant who has previously reached the finals of the Lenya Competition*
“No vocal contest better targets today’s total package talents.” -OPERNA NEWS 2014

About the Competition

In 1998, to honor the centenary of the birth of Lotte Lenya (1898-1981), an extraordinary singer/actress and one of the foremost interpreters of the music of her husband, Kurt Weill (1900-1950), the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music established the annual Lotte Lenya Competition. The competition recognizes talented young singer/actors who are dramatically and musically convincing in repertoire ranging from opera/operetta to contemporary Broadway scores, with a focus on the works of Kurt Weill. More than a vocal competition, the Lotte Lenya Competition emphasizes idiomatic performances of diverse repertoire and the acting of songs and arias within a dramatic context.

Competition Administration for the Kurt Weill Foundation

Kim H. Kowalke, President & CEO, Founder of the Competition
Brady Sansone, Director of Programs and Business Affairs
Elizabeth Blaufox, Associate Director of Programs and Promotion
Veronica Chaffin, Office Manager and Administrative Assistant
Natasha Nelson, Administrative Assistant

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., administers, promotes, and perpetuates the legacies of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya. It encourages broad dissemination and appreciation of Weill’s music through support of performances, productions, recordings, and scholarship, and it fosters understanding of Weill’s and Lenya’s lives and work within diverse cultural contexts. Building upon the legacies of both, it nurtures talent, particularly in the creation, performance, and study of musical theater in its various manifestations and media. To sign up for the Kurt Weill Newsletter and our E-News, please visit our website, kwf.org.

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