

THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcing the 2019 Lotte Lenya Competition Semifinalists

Twenty-eight performers selected to compete for a chance to win top prizes of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000; total prizes to exceed \$75,000; an all-star team of musical theater, opera, and Kurt Weill experts to adjudicate semifinals and finals.

NEW YORK (February 12, 2019) — Kim H. Kowalke, President and CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation, is pleased to announce the semifinalists for the **2019 Lotte Lenya Competition**.

Lily Arbisser (USA, 32)
Carolyn Bacon (USA, 28)
Brittany Baratz (USA, 32)
Danielle Beckvermit (USA, 26)
Paula Berry (Canada, 25)
Daniel Berryman (USA, 28)
Kyle Bielfield (USA, 31)
Sarah Bishop (USA, 26)
Timothy Bruno (USA, 31)
Jessica Fishenfeld (USA, 27)
Jonathan Heller (USA, 24)
Michael Hewitt (USA, 28)
Jonah Hoskins (USA, 22)
Suzanne Lane (USA, DC, 28)

Claire Leyden (USA, 24)
Trevor Martin (USA, 30)
Scott McCreary (USA, 29)
Florian Peters (Germany, 31)
Sun-Ly Pierce (USA, 24)
Katherine Riddle (USA, 27)
Claudia Roick (Germany, 30)
Rachel Sparrow (USA, 31)
Maria Vasilevskaya (Russia, 24)
Adam von Almen (USA, 32)
Nyla Watson (USA, 28)
Amy Weintraub (USA, 24)
Jeremy Weiss (USA, 25)
Andrea Wozniak (USA, 28)

In addition to the semifinalists, seven singers received Emerging Talent Awards with a cash prize of \$500: Jenna Barbieri (USA, 21), Sondrine Bontemps (USA, 21), Katie Kallaus (USA, 21), Maxwell Levy (USA, 22), Lee Metaxa (USA, 19), Kaylee Terrell (USA, 19), Elsie Wagner Sherer (USA, 19). Isaac Frishman (USA, 29) received the Grace Keagy Award for Outstanding Vocal Promise in the amount of \$500. The 2019 competition drew 215 applicants from 21 countries and 29 US states and Puerto Rico, each performing a program of four selections totaling no more than fifteen minutes each.

Semifinals take place on 7 and 8 March in New York. Contestants will audition for and be coached by Broadway music director and conductor **Andy Einhorn** and Tony Award-winning theater, film, and opera composer **Jeanine Tesori**. They compete for a spot in the finals, which take place on **13 April 2019** in Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY. The finals daytime round and evening concert are both free and open to the public. Additionally, both will be live-streamed for free online viewing, making the entire finals round available to

audiences around the world for the first time. The stream will be accessible at <https://www.esm.rochester.edu/live/kilbourn/>. In addition to top prizes of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000, discretionary awards ranging from \$3,500 to \$5,000 recognize outstanding performances of individual numbers or particular aspects of performances. All semifinalists who do not advance to the finals will receive an award of \$500. Total prizes for this year's rounds will again exceed \$75,000.

Judges for the 2019 Lotte Lenya Competition

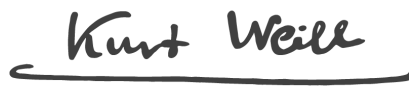
A distinguished roster of musical theater, opera, and Kurt Weill experts will adjudicate both rounds of the competition. This season, **Einhorn** leads the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Tucson Symphony and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in concert with Audra McDonald. Most recently he served as the Music Supervisor and Musical Director for the Broadway productions of *Carousel* and *Hello, Dolly!*, as well as the North American tour of *The Sound of Music*. Einhorn has served as music director and pianist for six-time Tony Award Winner Audra McDonald since 2011.

Called “the most accomplished female composer in Broadway history,” **Tesori** co-wrote the musical *Fun Home*, for which she and Lisa Kron won the Tony Award for Best Original Score in 2015. Other major credits include *Caroline, or Change*, *Violet*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *Shrek, the Musical*. She is currently at work with Tazewell Thompson on a new opera, *Blue*, which will receive its world premiere at the Glimmerglass Festival this summer. In 2018, the Metropolitan Opera announced that it has commissioned Tesori to write a new opera, *Grounded*, the Met's first ever commission by a woman.

The three-person jury for the finals includes opera and musical theater performer and Weill specialist **Ute Gfrerer**, renowned opera and musical theater conductor **Adam Benzwi**, and **Mark Lamos**, artistic director of Westport Country Playhouse.

Internationally acclaimed singer and actor **Gfrerer** boasts a varied repertoire ranging from classical opera, operetta, and song to 20th century Broadway. Born in Austria and now residing in Boston, she has performed on major stages and with leading orchestras and opera and theater companies around the world. Her Weill credits include Anna I in *Die sieben Todsünden*; Venus in *One Touch of Venus*; regular appearances at the annual Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau, Germany; and the roles of both Jenny and Polly in the highly acclaimed European touring production of *Die Dreigroschenoper* with Ensemble Modern, conducted by HK Gruber. She can be heard on the recently released world premiere recording of Weill's *Lied vom blinden Mädchen*, and on the forthcoming recording of *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Chansons des quais* from Ensemble Modern. This spring she serves as a Kurt Weill Mentor at the University of Maryland, where she will give a master class to students performing as part of the UMD School of Music's year-long Kurt Weill Festival.

Based in Berlin, **Benzwi**'s credits include regular guest conducting appearances at the Komische Oper, where he has collaborated with director Barrie Kosky on numerous projects, including



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most recently *Grand Hotel*; as well as musical direction for several widely acclaimed productions at major theaters and performing venues throughout Berlin. As a highly sought-after accompanist, he has performed with Angela Winkler, Joyce DiDonato, and Gisela May. Currently, he is musical director and professor at Berlin's Universität der Künste, and a member of the panel for the German Government's Bundeswettbewerb Gesang singing competition.

Tony and Emmy Award-winning director **Lamos** is equally at home as a director of plays, musicals, and opera. In 1989, he won the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre for his work as Artistic Director of Hartford Stage Company. His wide-ranging credits include *Our Country's Good* (Tony nomination), *Cymbeline*, and *Seascape* (Tony nom) for Broadway; *Adriana Lecouvreur* starring Plácido Domingo for the Metropolitan Opera; numerous productions and world premieres for New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and San Francisco Opera. New York City Opera won an Emmy Award for the Lamos-directed *Madama Butterfly*, televised on PBS' "Great Performances." He was appointed Artistic Director of Westport Country Playhouse in 2009.

About the Lotte Lenya Competition

More than a vocal competition, the Lotte Lenya Competition recognizes talented young singer/actors who are dramatically and musically convincing in repertoire ranging from opera/opera to contemporary Broadway scores, with a focus on the works of Kurt Weill. Since its inception in 1998, the Lotte Lenya Competition has grown into an internationally recognized leader in identifying and nurturing the next generation of "total-package performers" (*Opera News*) and rising stars in both the opera and musical theater worlds. The roster of prizewinners has likewise grown to over 100, many of whom have gone on to major performing careers.

ABOUT THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. (<http://www.kwf.org>) is dedicated to promoting understanding of the life and works of composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) and preserving the legacies of Weill and his wife, actress-singer Lotte Lenya (1898-1981). The Foundation administers the Weill-Lenya Research Center, a Grant Program, the Kurt Weill Book Prize and the Lotte Lenya Competition, and publishes the Kurt Weill Edition and the Kurt Weill Newsletter.

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