



THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

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Judges for the 20th Annual Lotte Lenya Competition Announced!

International Singing and Acting competition celebrates its 20th year with an all-star panel of judges, bigger cash prizes, and a new award for performers of the songs of Kurt Weill.

NEW YORK (January 23, 2017) — Kim H. Kowalke, President and CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation, has announced the judges for the 20th Annual Lotte Lenya Singing Competition. Renowned stage director **Anne Bogart** and Tony Award winning actor and singer **Shuler Hensley** both join the finals judges' panel for their first time. Broadway music director, conductor, and orchestrator **Rob Berman** returns to judge the competition for the sixth time. The finals take place Saturday April 22 at Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, and are open to the public.

Bogart is known for her directorial work on major theater and opera stages around the world, including Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and Los Angeles' SITI Company, where she is co-founder and Artistic Director. Fresh off directing the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra's production of Weill and Maxwell Anderson's *Lost in the Stars*, Bogart brings her vast directorial experience to this year's jury. She is the first female stage director to judge the competition.

Broadway, film and television actor Hensley's credits include his Tony Award winning performance as Jud Fry in the 2002 revival of *Oklahoma!*. In 1998, he won an Olivier Award for the same role in Trevor Nunn's West End production. Hensley has also appeared on Broadway as The Monster in *Young Frankenstein*, and in the Japanese production of *Prince of Broadway*, the musical tribute to director Hal Prince. Most recently, Hensley played the role of Oscar in the Off-Broadway revival of *Sweet Charity* opposite Sutton Foster.

Anchoring the judges' panel is veteran Lenya finals judge Rob Berman, music director of City Center *Encores!* since 2010. Berman's theater credits include the Broadway productions of *Bright Star*, *Promises, Promises*, and the 2013 off-Broadway revival and cast recording of *Passion*. He regularly conducts the Kennedy Center Honors, and in 2012 won an Emmy for Outstanding Music Direction.

Semifinalists have the opportunity to audition for and be coached by stage, opera and concert performer **Judy Blazer** (*LoveMusik*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Candide*) and Tony Award-winning conductor, director, orchestrator, and Artistic Director of MasterVoices Chorale **Ted Sperling** (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *The King and I*, *South Pacific*). Semifinals take place March 9 and 10 at the Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY.

Founded in 1998 in honor of legendary performer Lotte Lenya, 2017 marks the 20th annual Lotte Lenya Competition. More than a vocal contest, the Lenya Competition recognizes talented young singer/actors, ages 19-32, 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. To commemorate this landmark year, top prizes for the competition have been increased to \$20,000 first prize, \$15,000 second prize, and \$10,000 third prize. New this year, the Kurt Weill Award in the amount of \$5,000, will be given for outstanding performance of two contrasting numbers by Weill. Additional discretionary awards of \$3,500 each recognize exceptional talent and outstanding performances of individual numbers. Prizes will exceed \$75,000. Past prize winners have gone on to appear on major theater, opera and concert stages around the world. Don't miss the competition described by *Opera News* as "target[ing] today's total-package talents, unearthing up-and-coming singers who are ready for their close-ups."

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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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