



## THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: Elizabeth Blaufox

### Semifinalists Announced for the 2017 Lotte Lenya Competition

*Thirty-two singers selected as semifinalists; record number of audition videos received.*

**NEW YORK (February 15, 2017)** — Kim H. Kowalke, President and CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation, has announced the semifinalists for the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Lotte Lenya Competition. The Foundation received 266 audition videos, the most in the competition's history, from singer/actors ages 19-32, hailing from thirty-one US states, and sixteen countries on five continents. From that pool, thirty-two semifinalists from the US, Canada, France, Israel, Luxembourg, and Mexico have been selected to perform at the semifinals at the Manhattan School of Music on 9 and 10 March.

Meroë Adeeb  
Carolyn Bacon  
Curtis Bannister  
Gan-ya Ben-gur Akselrod  
Daniel Berryman  
Felipe Bombonato  
Samantha Bruce  
Kristen Choi  
Jil Clesse  
Kellie Cundiff  
Molly Dunn

Benjamin Dutton  
Jasmine Habersham  
Michael Hewitt  
Maurio Hines  
Philip Kalmanovitch  
Charlotte Knight  
Reilly Nelson  
Lindsay O'Neil  
Marie Oppert  
Tony Potts  
Taylor Raven

Katherine Riddle  
Lisa Rogali  
Mackenzie Rogers  
Laura Sanders  
Aaron Sheppard  
Bradley Smoak  
Elise Spurlock  
Travis Taylor  
Paulina Villarreal  
Anson Woodin

This year's semifinals judges are veteran Broadway performer **Judy Blazer** and Tony-award winning music director **Ted Sperling**. Each contestant will perform a fifteen minute program of repertoire from the operatic, golden age and contemporary musical theater stages, and the music of Kurt Weill, and then receive a fifteen minute coaching session with that day's judge. The top-rated performers will then proceed to the competition finals, where they will sing for another star-studded jury comprised of renowned stage director **Anne Bogart**, Tony-Award winning actor **Shuler Hensley**, and Broadway music director, conductor and orchestrator **Rob Berman**. Finals take place on 22 April at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY and are open to the public.

In addition to the semifinalists, six contestants were recognized with Emerging Talent Awards of \$500 each: Annette Berning, Tucker Breder, Kalyn Schnable, Juliane Stolzenbach Ramos, Trevor Vanderzee, and Danielle Bavli. Jennifer Witton of London, UK, received the Grace

Keagy Award of \$500 for Outstanding Vocal Promise. All semifinalists receive a cash award of \$500. Those who move onto the finals will receive a minimum of \$1,000, with individual discretionary awards of \$3,500 and \$5,000, and top prizes increased this year to \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000. Total prizes will exceed \$75,000.

More than a vocal competition, the Lotte Lenya Competition recognizes talented young singer/actors who are dramatically and musically convincing in wide ranging theatrical repertoire, with a focus on the works of Kurt Weill. 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."

#### **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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