



THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

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Semifinalists Announced for the 2018 Lotte Lenya Competition

Twenty-eight performers selected as semifinalists for competition's 20th anniversary year.

NEW YORK (February 13, 2018) — Kim H. Kowalke, President of the Kurt Weill Foundation, has announced the semifinalists for the 2018 annual Lotte Lenya Competition, its twentieth anniversary year. The Foundation received 235 audition videos, from singer/actors ages 19-32, hailing from thirty-one US states and Puerto Rico, and sixteen countries on five continents. From that pool, fourteen men and fourteen women from the US, Canada, Austria, Germany, Israel, Italy, and Slovenia have been selected to perform at the semifinals at the Manhattan School of Music on 8 and 9 March.

Christine Amon (31, Michigan)
Carly Augenstein (28, Ohio)
Curtis Bannister (32, Wisconsin)
Gan-ya Ben-gur Akselrod (30, Israel)
Abigail Benke (24, Missouri)
Jason Berger (26, Delaware)
Daniel Berryman (27, New York)
John Brancy (29, Pennsylvania)
Maire Carmack (24, Colorado)
Caitlin Finnie (23, Texas)
Nkrumah Gatling (32, New York)
Richard Glöckner (23, Germany)
Anthony Heinemann (30, Missouri)
Caroline Hewitt (26, Texas)

Christian Hoff (24, Maryland)
Gabrielle Hondorp (20, New York)
Mark Hosseini (23, Illinois)
Barrie Kreinik (32, New York)
Andrea Lett (27, Manitoba, CA)
Christof Messner (31, Italy)
Reilly Nelson (28, Ontario, CA)
Benjamin Pattison (27, Virginia)
Laura Sanders (23, California)
Luke Sikora (29, California)
Philip Stoddard (26, Arizona)
John Tibbetts (27, Kansas)
Rachel Zatcoff (30, New York)
Andreja Zidaric (29, Slovenia)

This year's semifinals judges are stage, opera, and concert performer **Lisa Vroman** and Tony Award-winning theater and film composer **Jeanine Tesori**. 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 Tony Award-winning actress and singer **Victoria Clark**, renowned opera and musical theater conductor **James Holmes**, and **Jack Viertel**, Broadway producer, author, and Artistic Director of New York City Center *Encores!* Finals take place on 14 April at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY and are open to the public. The evening concert will be live-streamed for free online viewing. Information about where and when to watch will be published on www.KWF.org closer to the date.

In addition to the semifinalists, seven contestants were recognized with Emerging Talent Awards of \$500 each: Keenan Buckley, Emily Harkins, Marlene Jubelius, Sarah Jane Juliano, Claire Leyden, Grace Roberts, and Trevor Todd. Shannon Jennings received the Grace Keagy Award of \$500 for Outstanding Vocal Promise. All semifinalists receive a cash award of \$500. Those who advance to the finals will compete for top prizes of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000, and individual discretionary awards of \$3,500 and \$5,000. All finalists will receive a minimum of \$1,000. Total prizes will exceed \$75,000.

Founded by Kowalke in 1998 to celebrate the centenary of Lotte Lenya's birth, the 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. Since its inception, the LLC 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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