



The graphic features four stylized human silhouettes standing on the letters of the word 'LENYA'. From left to right: a red silhouette of a man with arms outstretched on the 'T' of 'THE'; a yellow silhouette of a woman with arms outstretched on the 'E'; a light yellow silhouette of a man with hands in pockets on the 'N'; and a light blue silhouette of a woman with arms outstretched on the 'A'. The word 'LENYA' is rendered in large, bold, block letters with a color gradient from red to blue. Below it, the words 'COMPETITION' and '2025' are written in a similar bold, sans-serif font.

THE LENYA COMPETITION 2025

Saturday, 3 May 2025 Kilbourn Hall, Rochester, NY

Kotte Lenya

THE LENYA COMPETITION

A program of The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music

Today's events are streaming **LIVE** at:
kwf.org/2025finals

Kindly withhold applause until the conclusion
of each contestant's final selection.

1:00 Kim H. Kowalke, Competition Founder: Welcome and Introductions

1:15 Rebecca Madeira

"Je veux vivre" from <i>Roméo et Juliette</i>	Gounod/Barbier/Carré
"Simple Joys of Maidenhood" from <i>Camelot</i>	Loewe/Lerner
"What Good Would the Moon Be?" from <i>Street Scene</i>	Weill/Hughes
"The Epiphany" from <i>Emma</i>	Gordon

1:30 Ian Williams

"Papagena, Papagena, Papagena!" from <i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	Mozart/Schikaneder
"O Tixo, Tixo, Help Me!" from <i>Lost in the Stars</i>	Weill/Anderson
"I'll Be Here" from <i>The Wild Party</i>	Lippa
"Try Me" from <i>She Loves Me</i>	Bock/Harnick

1:45 Tamara Bounazou

"Non, monsieur mon mari" from <i>Les mamelles de Tirésias</i>	Poulenc
"Mister Snow" from <i>Carousel</i>	Rodgers/Hammerstein
"Wie lange noch?"	Weill/Mehring
"The Light in the Piazza" from <i>The Light in the Piazza</i>	Guettel

2:00 Schyler Vargas

"Guido's Song" from <i>Nine</i>	Yeston
"Here I'll Stay" from <i>Love Life</i>	Weill/Lerner
"Ah, per sempre" from <i>I puritani</i>	Bellini/Pepoli
"The Rain Song" from <i>110 in the Shade</i>	Schmidt/Jones

2:15 Elenora Hu

"Youkali"	Weill/Fernay
"Warm All Over" from <i>The Most Happy Fella</i>	Loesser
"If I Didn't Know Better" from <i>The Luckiest Girl</i>	Hayden
"Surta e la notte...Ernani in volami" from <i>Ernani</i>	Verdi/Piave

2:30 Gemma Nha

"Prendi per me sei libero" from *L'elisir d'amore*
"Seeräuberjenny" from *Die Dreigroschenoper*
"Kindergarten Boyfriend" from *Heathers, the Musical*
"My White Knight" from *The Music Man*

Donizetti/Romani
Weill/Brecht
O'Keefe/Murphy
Willson

INTERMISSION

3:00 Crystal Glenn

"Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante" from *Carmen*
"Waitin' For My Dearie" from *Brigadoon*
"Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man"
from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*
"Your Daddy's Son" from *Ragtime*

Bizet/ Halévy/Meilhac
Loewe/Lerner

Weill/Brecht
Flaherty/Ahrens

3:15 Jonathan Heller

"I Just Can't Wait" from *Subways Are For Sleeping*
"It Never Was You" from *Knickerbocker Holiday*
"It's Hard to Speak My Heart" from *Parade*
"A Hundred Thousand Stars"
from *Out of Darkness: Two Remain*

Styne/Comden/Green
Weill/Anderson
Brown

Heggie/Scheer

3:30 Olivia LaPointe

"Obéissons quand leur voix appelle" from *Manon*
"Somebody, Somewhere" from *The Most Happy Fella*
"Youkali"
"Live a Little Julia" from *The Last Resort*

Massenet/Meilhac/Gille
Loesser
Weill/Fernay
Arden

3:45 George Roberts

"Am I alone and unobserved?" from *Patience*
"Tonight at Eight" from *She Loves Me*
"Muschel von Margate" from *Konjunktur*
"Franklin Shepard, Inc." from *Merrily We Roll Along*

Sullivan/Gilbert
Bock/Harnick
Weill/Gasbarra
Sondheim

4:00 Queen Hezumuryango

"Mattes, ist unsre Tochter bei dir?" from *Die Bürgschaft*
"If You Hadn't, But You Did" from *Two on the Aisle*
"Werther...qui m'aurait dit la place" from *Werther*
"My Days" from *The Notebook*

Weill/Neher
Styne/Comden/Green
Massenet/Blau/Milliet
Michaelson

Meet the Finalists



Tamara Bounazou is a French-Algerian lyric soprano known for her versatility in opera roles. In Vienna, she performed at the Schloss Schönbrunn Theater as Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Carolina (*Il matrimonio segreto*). In France, she appeared as Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*) and L'Amour (*Platée*) at the Opéra National de Paris, and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Recently, she performed Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) with Barbara Hannigan at the Cologne Philharmonie and Eurydice (*Orphée aux Enfers*) with Marc Minkowski at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg. Among her upcoming projects is the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, conducted by Louis Langrée and directed by Wajdi Mouawad.

New York native, **Crystal Glenn**, is an alumna of Manhattan School of Music (MM, Opera Performance) and Westminster Choir College of Rider University (BM, Vocal Performance). She recently appeared as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Blonde in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Taconic Opera. Other highlights include: soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with Princeton Pro Musica; Julie (cover) in Rhiannon Giddens' & Michael Abels' Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, *Omar*, with Carolina Performing Arts and the Spoleto Festival USA; Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera* with Taconic Opera; Pamina and Despina in *Die Zauberflöte* and *Così fan tutte*, respectively, with New York Opera Conservatory in Westchester County, NY.



Jonathan Heller is a New York City based actor, singer, and dancer. National Tour: *CATS* - Vacation Swing (Munkustrap, Old Deuteronomy, Gus/Bustopher Jones). Regional: *Chicago* - Fred Casely/Ensemble, Billy Flynn u/s (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina), *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* - Giorgio/Ensemble, Neil Bogart u/s (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina), *I Left My Heart* - Man 1 (RMRT), *Cinderella* - Prince Christopher (OLO), *Hello, Dolly!* - Barnaby Tucker (OLO), *The Pirates of Penzance* - Samuel (OLO), *A Little Night Music* - Frid (CLOC). B.M. Eastman School of Music, M.M. NYU Steinhardt. Love and gratitude to my family and friends for their constant support! For Ted. www.jonathanheller.me /@jonathanhellerj



Originally from Burundi, **Queen Hezumuryango** holds both B.M. and M.M. degrees in Vocal Performance from the University of Montreal and is a returning member of the Canadian Opera Company's 2024-2025 Ensemble Studio. Performance credits include Ebba Sparre in *La Reine-garçon* (COC), Mercédès in *Carmen* (COC), and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* (Highlands Opera Studio). She was a semifinalist in the OSM Competition in 2021 and won an Encouragement Award at the Eastern Region of the Met's Laffont Competition in 2023. In 2024, she was named one of CBC's "30 Hot Classical Musicians Under 30" and nominated for a Dora Award for her work in Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*. This is her second time participating in the finals of the Lenya Competition.



Praised for her vocal technique and musical sensitivity, Dutch soprano **Elenora Hu**'s repertoire includes the Second Nymph (*Rusalka*), Amina (*La Sonnambula*), and Madama Cortese (*Il Viaggio a Reims*). She is an alumna of the Dutch National Opera Studio in Amsterdam and the Accademia Rossiniana "Alberto Zedda" in Pesaro. Elenora has sung in several oratorios, including the *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions* (J.S. Bach), *Ein deutsches Requiem* (Brahms), and *Carmina Burana* (Orff). As a recitalist, she and her duo partner, Amy Chang, were awarded the Vrienden van het Liedprijs at the International Vocal Competition in Den Bosch in 2023. In 2021, she recorded *American Songs Remembered* with Roberta Alexander and pianist Gilbert den Broeder.



Canadian soprano **Olivia LaPointe** has extensive experience spanning opera, musical theater, jazz, and pop. She is a District Winner in the 2025 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and won Third Prize in the 2024 Canadian Opera Company Centre Stage: Ensemble Studio Competition. Recent roles include Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (VIMA, Italy), Angelica in *Orlando*, Giulietta in *Un giorno di regno* (Opera McGill), Lily in *The Secret Garden* (Opera NUOVA), and Antonia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (HSOF), for which *Opera Canada* praised her as "breathtakingly perfect." In 2023, she debuted in Europe as a Voice Fellow with Opernfest Prague. She loves performing with her family's vocal group and teaching voice. Olivia received her MM from McGill Univ. and her BM from the Univ. of Toronto.

Rebecca Madeira is a multidisciplinary artist from New Jersey. Graduating with a B.A. in Music from Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts in 2021, she has since performed musical theatre, opera, and choral repertoire in the US and abroad. Credits include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Philia u/s) and *Sweeney Todd* (Swing) at Signature Theatre, *Anything Goes* (Hope) at Milton Theatre, *Seussical* (Gertrude McFuzz) at Light Opera of NJ, and *The Magic Flute* (Pamina) at the International Lyric Academy. She has also originated new works including CreArtBox's *Architecture of a Common Man*, and Brooklyn Tavern Theatre's *Walls and Windows*. She previously received an Emerging Talent Award in the 2023 Lenya Competition. Endless thanks to her family!



Korean-Australian soprano **Gemma Nha** is part of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where she debuted as the Page in *Rigoletto*, reprised Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and performed as Jess and covered Ashley in Missy Mazzoli's *The Listeners*. Her repertoire ranges from Mozart to musical theatre; roles include: Barbarina (Volkoper Wien) and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Schlosstheater Schönbrunn), Tuptim in *The King and I* (Seefestspiele Mörbisch) and Meg in *7 Little Australians* (Opera Carnivale). Gemma was the first female singer to win the Seoul International Music Competition and was a National Semifinalist of the Laffont Metropolitan Opera Competition. She holds a MM from Juilliard as a Toulmin Scholar and Kovner Fellow, and a BA from University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.



George Roberts has performed at such venues as the Edinburgh International Festival, Garsington Opera, and the Grange Festival. A 2023 Guildhall graduate, he made his theatrical debut in Longborough Festival Opera's adaptation of *The Fairy Queen*, winning praise for his "lanky, delightful Bottom" (*The Stage*). Credits include numerous Mozart and Britten roles (Count Almaviva, Leporello; Junius, Noye, Starveling), and various comic parts. He has appeared in recital alongside Graham Johnson and Dame Felicity Lott, performing wide-ranging repertoire from Schubert to Noël Coward. George studied German and Italian at Oxford University, developing a keen interest in Weill, Brecht, and the music of Weimar Germany, around which he has devised several performances.



Acclaimed as a "superb" (*New York Stage Review*) and "powerful" baritone (*Washington Post*), Mexican-American **Schyler Vargas** is gaining recognition as a premier cross-over artist, succeeding in comedic and dramatic roles in opera, operetta, and musical theater. Notable credits include performing at Carnegie Hall twice with MasterVoices in Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Gilbert & Sullivan's *Iolanthe*, and premiering *UNKNOWN* by Shawn Okpebholo, which was featured on PBS NewsHour and NPR. Role highlights include: Guido, *Nine*; Eisenstein, *Die Fledermaus*; Cinderella's Prince and Wolf, *Into the Woods*; Papagena, *Die Zauberflöte*; Riff, *Diesel*, and Chino, *West Side Story*; El payador, *María de Buenos Aires*; and Count Almaviva, *Le nozze di Figaro*.



Continued



Ian Williams is a professional singing actor located in South Bend, IN, and the owner of the Ian Michael Vocal Studio. Recent theater credits include *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* at Wagon Wheel Theatre (Drifter/Ensemble), *Tosca* (The Jailer) with South Bend Lyric Opera, and *Gianni Schicchi* (Simone) with Purdue University Fort Wayne. Ian is a graduate of the University of Michigan with a BMA in Voice Performance and Bachelor of Theatre Arts. He has studied the principles of Levels I-III of the LoVetri Institute of Somatic Voicework™. He is also the co-founder of the Fort Wayne and South Bend chapters of Opera on Tap, a non-profit based out of New York City.

Competition Founder

Since 1981, **Kim H. Kowalke** has been the elected president of the Kurt Weill Foundation. In 1986 he joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music and founded the music department in the College of the University of Rochester. In the 1990s he also founded the Kurt Weill Edition and the Lenya Competition, while teaching full-time as Professor of Musicology and the Turner Professor in Humanities. He also established the musical theater workshop at the University, and conducted dozens of productions, including three for Eastman Opera. In 2020, he received the Erwin Piscator Award for his contributions to international musical theater.



Accompanists



Lyndon Meyer serves as chorus master, assistant conductor, principal pianist, and vocal coach for Tulsa Opera, where he opened the 2024 season by curating and conducting the company's first-ever choral gala concert with the Tulsa Opera Orchestra and Chorus. He has held vocal coach positions at the Univ. of Oklahoma, Michigan State Univ., ESM, Florida Grand Opera, and the OK Mozart International Festival. He is also Director of Music at Tulsa's Church of St. Mary and is active as coach, clinician, and studio teacher. Mr. Meyer is a graduate of the Univ. of Arkansas (BM) and ESM (MM), and has served as staff accompanist for the Lenya Competition since 2009.

Shane Schag is a member of the Vocal Arts and Musical Theater Depts. at the Manhattan School of Music, where he music directed *And the World Goes 'Round*, *Godspell*, *Ragtime*, *A Little Night Music*, *Moving Right Along*, *Defying Gravity*, and *September Songs*. He has also served as an associate conductor to David Loud on *Nine*, *Cabaret*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Shane has also been a faculty member of OperaWorks, International Vocal Arts Institute, Chautauqua Opera, Vocal Coach Asia (Singapore), and the Creative Voice Institute (Taiwan). He premiered with Lisa Vroman and William Sharp a revue showcasing music of Weill and Marc Blitzstein.



ABOVE: 2025 Semifinals Coach/Adjudicators: acclaimed composer Jeanine Tesori (L) with Rebecca Madeira and Broadway star Lisa Vroman (R) with Ian Williams.

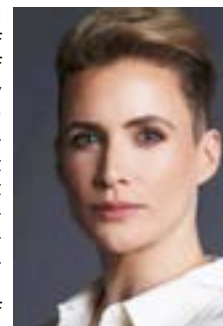
Judges

Rob Berman is an Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New York based conductor and music director. For fifteen years he was the music director of *Encores!*, New York City Center's acclaimed series of great American musicals in concert, where he conducted over thirty productions, including the revival of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Into the Woods*, which transferred to a Broadway run and for which he received a Grammy Award as co-producer and conductor of the cast recording. This past March, Berman conducted the long-awaited revival of Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner's *Love Life* for *Encores!* Other productions he conducted for *Encores!* include Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*, Cole Porter's *The New Yorkers*, Loesser's *The Most Happy Fella*, Sondheim's *Anyone Can Whistle*, and Weill's *Lost in the Stars*. On Broadway, Rob was music director and vocal arranger for the Steve Martin and Edie Brickell musical *Bright Star*, which was nominated for 5 Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Score. Rob's additional Broadway credits as a conductor include the revival of Leonard Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*; the Tony Award-winning production of *The Pajama Game*; the stage adaptation of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*; and revivals of *Finian's Rainbow*, *The Apple Tree*, and *Promises, Promises*. For nine years, Rob was music director of the Kennedy Center Honors, for which he won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Music Direction.



Catherine Malfitano— singer, actor, director, and teacher—was born in New York City to a dancer/actress mother, and a violinist father. Renowned as a unique music theatre performer, she repeatedly sang on all of the world's leading opera, concert, and recital stages, collaborating with the most eminent conductors, pianists, and directors. Her Emmy Award-winning portrayal of *Tosca*, telecast live from the actual Roman settings, was seen by more than one billion viewers worldwide. Ms. Malfitano's stage repertoire of more than eighty roles spans the entirety of operatic history, including appearances in multiple works by Kurt Weill: Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* (Minnesota Opera), Rose and Anna Murrant in *Street Scene* (New York City Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, respectively), Jenny in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Florence Maggio Musicale, Salzburg Festival and Lyric Opera of Chicago) and Anna I and II in *Die sieben Todsünden* (Cincinnati Opera, Brussels La Monnaie). Her championing of 20th and 21st Century music enabled Catherine to perform in 11 world premieres. She is proud to have been raised in New York City, and trained at The High School of Music and Art, and The Manhattan School of Music. Her early performances at these two illustrious schools ignited her passion for music and drama. Now that Ms. Malfitano's primary focus is mentoring young singers and active professionals, she is thrilled to witness her students grace many of the same stages where she made her career.

After a decade of leading original productions in American regional opera houses, **Alison Moritz** was recently named Artistic Director of Central City Opera. She is known for her exciting interpretations of the classic repertoire and her equally incisive takes on contemporary music theatre. Her current projects include new productions of *Don Giovanni* at Opera Philadelphia, *Aida* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, *The Knock* and *Once Upon a Mattress* at Central City. Her recent work includes the 50th anniversary production of Bernstein's *Mass* at The Kennedy Center, and new productions of *Faust* at Wolf Trap Opera, *Don Giovanni* at Cincinnati Opera, *Elizabeth Cree* at Glimmerglass Festival, and *Candide* at Atlanta Opera, Tanglewood, and Ravinia. An alumna of Eastman School of Music, Ms. Moritz has served on the directing staffs at Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Minnesota Opera and was a proud recipient of the KWF Harold Prince/Kurt Weill Directing Fellowship in 2016.



Join us Tonight!

LIVE AT KILBOURN HALL

7:30 PM

Finalists return for a
Special Concert
for the first ever

**AUDIENCE
CHOICE
AWARD**

YOU BE THE JUDGE!

9 PM

**AWARDS
PRESENTATION**

PRIZES TOTALING
OVER \$90,000

TOP PRIZES

1ST \$25,000

2ND \$20,000

3RD \$15,000

You can also watch LIVE at kwf.org/2025finals

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kurt Weill Foundation is grateful to the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music for hosting today's events in Kilbourn Hall. In particular, Michael Stefiuk, Director of Concert Operations; Julia Ng, Assistant Director of Concert Operations; Jess Green, House Manager; Deirdre Graves, Kilbourn Hall Stage Manager. The KWF would also like to thank the Opera Guild of Rochester and David Runzo.

Competition Administration

Kim H. Kowalke, President & CEO

Brady Sansone, Director of Programs, Competition Administrator

Ed Harsh, Publicity

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