



Kotte Lenya
THE LENYA COMPETITION
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

2023 FINALS PROGRAM

From the Founder: Reflecting Back/Looking Ahead

This weekend we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Lotte Lenya Competition, which debuted in November 1998 here at Eastman. That is not quite 25 years ago, but any “anniversary” is a “plus 1” event. Today’s final round is actually the culmination of the 26th cycle of the Competition. And thus it is the first of the Competition’s next twenty-five years. The occasion is marked by retrospective reflection upon and celebration of the Competition’s first quarter century—with this morning’s panel discussions and this evening’s Gala Alumni Concert. This afternoon’s contest, however, showcases twelve extremely talented, diverse, and skilled singing actors, representing the next generation of performers attempting “to do it all.” To celebrate this milestone, the Kurt Weill Foundation has increased all prizes, with First Prize rising to \$25,000, Second to \$20,000, and Third to \$15,000. Additional discretionary prizes for an outstanding performance of an individual number or distinguished achievement in one facet of the Competition will increase to \$6,000 each. And all other finalists will receive a “finalist prize” of \$3,000.

One of the Competition’s most enthusiastic advocates has been five-time judge/coach Victoria Clark. Vicki couldn’t participate in this year’s cycle because she is starring on Broadway in the remarkable new musical *Kimberly Akimbo*, composed by yet another KWF trustee and veteran Lenya judge, Jeanine Tesori. Vicki plays a 16-year-old with a rare disease that causes her to age at an alarming rate, with a life expectancy that won’t surpass her teenage years. It is a uniquely moving yet uplifting, Tony-worthy performance. Recently *Playbill* launched a new series, “How Did I Get Here?,” by interviewing Vicki. One of the questions was “What advice would you give your younger self or anyone starting out?” She responded:

“Keep your eyes and ears open. Soak up as much as you can from everyone around you. Don’t take a single moment for granted. The day you live *this day* will eventually add up to being your whole life, so try to enjoy at least a sliver of every day. Be forever grateful, for everything large and especially small. Ask questions. Don’t be afraid of looking stupid. Trust your collaborators. Don’t second-guess yourself. Be brave. When you get knocked down, get back up. Trust. Yourself, the universe, God, whatever or whoever you believe in. As my soul sister Mary Beth Peil [an LLC finals judge in 2021] says, ‘You absolutely can do everything. Just maybe not *all* at the same time.’”

Her advice might well inspire our dozen performers trying to make their mark this afternoon.

Kim H. Kowalke



Michael Iskander, Justin Cooley, Victoria Clark, Nina White, Olivia Hardy, and Fernell Hogan in *Kimberly Akimbo*. Photo: Joan Marcus.

Perspectives on the Lenya Competition

10:00 am – Past Competition Winners

Natalie Ballenger, Christopher Herbert, Justin Hopkins, Reilly Nelson, Andrew Polec, and Laura Corina Sanders.

Moderated by Katherine Ciesinski, Chair of ESM Voice, Opera, and Vocal Coaching Department



Q&A forum with Teresa Stratas and moderator Kowalke, following a showing of her Academy Award-nominated documentary, *Stratasphere*. She received an honorary doctorate from the University of Rochester during the 1998 Weill Festival. Photo: Louis Ouzer.

11:00 am – Judging, Coaching, and Mentoring

Ted Chapin, James Holmes, Amy Justman, and Carolyn Weber.

Moderated by Kim H. Kowalke



Intently listening to Stratas's remarks: Weill's longtime advocate, Maestro Julius Rudel, with Weill's musical assistant on Broadway, Lys Symonette. Both would eventually be honored with the Kurt Weill Lifetime Achievement Award. Photo: Louis Ouzer.

1:00pm: Welcome and Introductions – Kim H. Kowalke

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

1:15	Alicia Russell Tagert "Quando me'n vo" from <i>La bohème</i> "Come Home" from <i>Allegro</i> "Denn wie mann sich bettet" from <i>Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny</i> "Verdi"	Shane Schag, piano Puccini/Illica/Giacosa Rodgers/Hammerstein Weill/Brecht Gerle
1:30	Celeste Rose "What Good Would the Moon Be?" from <i>Street Scene</i> "Emily's Goodbye Aria" from <i>Our Town</i> "I Cain't Say No" from <i>Oklahoma!</i> "The Story Goes On" from <i>Baby</i>	Lyndon Meyer, piano Weill/Hughes Rorem/ McClatchy Rodgers/Hammerstein Shire/Maltby
1:45	Stavros Koumbaros "Something's Coming" from <i>West Side Story</i> "Serenade" from <i>The Student Prince</i> "Lonely House" from <i>Street Scene</i> "Taking Flight" from <i>Allison Under the Stars</i>	Shane Schag, piano Bernstein/Sondheim Romberg/Donnelly Weill/Hughes Goldrich/Heisler
2:00	Lucie St-Martin "Enfin, je suis ici" from <i>Cendrillon</i> "Vanilla Ice Cream" from <i>She Loves Me</i> "Je ne t'aime pas" "Always Starting Over" from <i>If/Then</i>	Lyndon Meyer, piano Massenet/Caïn Bock/Harnick Weill/Magre Kitt/Yorkley
2:15	Midori Marsh "Je suis encore" from <i>Manon</i> "Till There Was You" from <i>The Music Man</i> "Is It Him or Is It Me?" from <i>Love Life</i> "The Life I Never Led" from <i>Sister Act</i>	Shane Schag, piano Massenet/Meilhac/Gille Willson Weill/Lerner Menken/Slater
2:30	Ian Williams "Love Song" from <i>Love Life</i> "Moving" "Avant de quitter ces lieux" from <i>Faust</i> "Try Me" from <i>She Loves Me</i>	Lyndon Meyer, piano Weill/Lerner Sonnenblick Gounod/Barbier/Carré Bock/Harnick

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- 3:15 Juliane Stolzenbach Ramos** Shane Schag, piano
 "Quel guardo il cavaliere" from *Don Pasquale* Donizetti/Ruffini
 "Somebody, Somewhere" from *The Most Happy Fella* Loesser
 "Arie der Lucy" from *Die Dreigroschenoper* Weill/Brecht
 "Maybe I Like It This Way" from *The Wild Party* Lippa
- 3:30 Jeremiah Sanders** Lyndon Meyer, piano
 "Everybody Says Don't" from *Anyone Can Whistle* Sondheim
 "Vien, Leonora" from *La favorita* Donizetti/Royer/Vaëz
 "Boundaries" from *A Strange Loop* Jackson
 "O Tixo, Tixo, Help Me!" from *Lost in the Stars* Weill/Anderson
- 3:45 Taylor-Alexis DuPont** Shane Schag, piano
 "Nobles seigneurs " from *Les Huguenots* Meyerbeer/Scribe/Deschamps
 "Trouble Man" from *Lost in the Stars* Weill/Anderson
 "No One Else" from *Natasha, Pierre and
 The Great Comet of 1812* Malloy
 "Wie lange noch?" Weill/Mehring
- 4:00 Ryan Johnson** Lyndon Meyer, piano
 "And Where Is the One Who Will Mourn Me When I'm Gone?"
 from *Down in the Valley* Weill/Sundgaard
 "She Loves Me" from *She Loves Me* Bock/Harnick
 "I Can Hold You" from *Listen to My Heart* Friedman
 "E la solita storia del pastore" from *L'Arlesiana* Cilea/Marenco
- 4:15 Rebekah Howell** Shane Schag, piano
 "Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln"
 from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* Mozart/Stephanie
 "Mr. Right" from *Love Life* Weill/Lerner
 "I Won't Mind" Blumenkrantz/Kessler/Saines
 "I Have Confidence" from *The Sound of Music* Rodgers
- 4:30 Nyla Watson** Lyndon Meyer, piano
 "Come Down from the Tree" from *Once on This Island* Flaherty/Ahrens
 "Dieu quel frisson" from *Roméo et Juliette* Gounod/Barbier/Carré
 "That's Him" from *One Touch of Venus* Weill/Nash
 "Being Good Isn't Good Enough" from *Hallelujah, Baby!* Styne/Green/Comden

Finalists



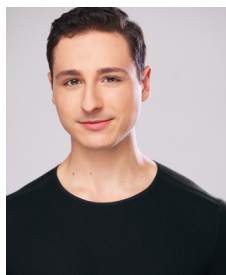
Hailing from Orlando, **Taylor-Alexis DuPont** received her MM in Voice from Peabody Conservatory. She was in the ensemble of the Met's Grammy-winning *Porgy and Bess* in 2019-2020 and then sang Moth in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Santa Fe Opera. She debuted as a soloist with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in *El Amor Brujo*, and won the inaugural Rebecca Luker Award in the 2021 LLC. In 2023, she debuted with Washington National Opera as Phoebe in *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* and with Virginia Opera as Flora in *La Traviata*. She will play Audrey in the world premiere of *The Rip Van Winkles* at Glimmerglass this summer.

Praised for her bell-like tone, **Rebekah Howell** is comfortable with everything from bel canto to "can belt-o." Her repertoire includes *The Witch (Into the Woods)*, *Cunegonde (Candide)*, *Ado Annie (Oklahoma!)*, *Zerlina (Don Giovanni)*, *Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro)*, *Queen of the Night (The Magic Flute)*, and the soprano solos in Mahler's 4th Symphony, *Carmina Burana*, and *Messiah*. This year, Rebekah will play Mother Abbess (*The Sound of Music*) with Studio Tenn and be featured at Knoxville Opera. In 2021, she won the inaugural Kurt Weill Award in the Lenya Competition. Rebekah has taught voice both privately and as a masterclass clinician.



Ryan Johnson's performing experience spans opera and music theater. He recently appeared at Opera Saratoga as Ira in Lembit Beecher's *Sky on Swings*. In 2023, Ryan will debut at Glimmerglass as the Grand Inquisitor and Governor in *Candide*. He has been a finalist in the George London Foundation Competition and a district winner for the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions. As a Gerdine Young Artist at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Ryan performed the role of Borsa in *Rigoletto* and covered Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. He holds an MM from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a BM from Texas Tech.

Tenor **Stavros Koumbaros** is originally from Shelton, Connecticut. A graduate of the musical theater program at University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, Stavros is a veteran of the national tour of *Les Misérables* (Joly; u/s Marius). He played Tony at the Summer Rep Theatre Festival production of *West Side Story* in 2017, and more recently was seen in *Titanic* (Fleet) at Milwaukee Rep. Stavros is also a personal trainer and group fitness instructor at "Ambition" in Brooklyn Heights. He'd like to thank Hannah and Joey for their help in preparing, and his family for their constant and continuing support. @stavros.koumbaros



American-Canadian soprano **Midori Marsh** hails from Cleveland, OH. She received her BM at Wilfrid Laurier in 2017 and her MM at the University of Toronto in 2020. She won both first prize and the Audience Choice Award at the Canadian Opera Company's Centre Stage Competition in 2019. Midori is currently a member of the COC's Young Artist ensemble. In 2020 she was named one of the CBC's "30 Hot Classical Musicians under 30," and in 2022 was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for her portrayal of Papagena in the COC's *The Magic Flute*. She is a semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera's 2023 Laffont Competition.



Originally from California, **Celeste Rose** received her BFA in Musical Theatre from Ithaca College, and has since called NYC home. Off-Broadway she has appeared in *We Are The Tigers* and The York Theatre Company's *Unexpected Joy*, as well as on the original cast recordings of both. Regionally, Celeste has performed in *A Connecticut Christmas Carol* and the world premiere of *Passing Through* (Goodspeed Opera House); *Freaky Friday* and the world premiere of *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma); *Sister Act* (Ogunquit Playhouse and The Gateway Playhouse); and *Titanic* (Westchester Broadway Theatre). www.CelesteRose.com, [@_Celeste_Rose](https://www.instagram.com/_Celeste_Rose)

Alicia Russell Tagert has upcoming debuts at Virginia Opera as Waldvogel (*Siegfried*) and at Glimmerglass as u/s Musetta (*La bohème*). Recent credits: Gretel at Opera Birmingham; Susanna at Fargo-Moorhead Opera; and Morgan (*Fierce*), a world premiere by Cincinnati Opera. COVID cancelled her debut with Lyric Opera Unlimited in the Chicago premiere of *Blue*. She has sung with the Charlotte Symphony (Beethoven's 9th). Alicia was a semifinalist in Shreveport Opera's Singer of the Year Competition and finalist in Opera Birmingham's Competition. She is a four-time award winner in the Met's Laffont Competition. Alicia has an MM from Northwestern.



Described as "a hulk with a robust voice," **Jeremiah Sanders** is currently a Resident Artist with Minnesota Opera. He has performed with the Indianapolis Symphony, Lima Symphony, Lakes Area Music Festival, Opera Saratoga, Des Moines Metro Opera, and Union Avenue Opera. Sanders has also won several national and international voice competitions. The baritone is currently a doctoral candidate at Indiana University, after previously earning a Vocology Certificate and Performer's Diploma in Voice from Indiana, an MM in Vocal Performance from Butler University, and a BA from Manchester University.

Juliane Stolzenbach Ramos has worked privately with Teresa Berganza, Natale de Carolis and Raúl Giménez. She has appeared with the Philharmonie Baden-Baden, the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and Theater Bern. She sang Sandmännchen (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and Ida (*Die Fledermaus*) at the Freiburg Theater and Carolina in *Il matrimonio segreto* in Budapest. She received scholarships from "LiveMusicNow" and the International Music Festival Portogruaro, and won a Special Prize at the Tenor Viñas Contest in 2021. The same year she joined the Young Artist program of Teatro Real Madrid and sang the title role in Viardot's *Cendrillon* at the Teatro Real, Opera of Seville, and Opera Oviedo.



Lucie St-Martin studied at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and École de musique Vincent d'Indy, and is currently a member of the Atelier lyrique at Opéra de Montréal. She has sung Giannetta (*L'Elisir d'amore*, Opéra de Québec), Armide/narration (*L'Enfer des lumières*), la Passagère (*Le Flambeau de la nuit*, Opéra de Montréal), the title role of *La Fille du tambour-major*, Titania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Adèle (*Die Fledermaus*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pauline (*La vie parisienne*) and Meg Giry and Christine Daaé (*The Phantom of the Opera*). In 2019, she received the Lieutenant Governor's Youth Medal.



Nyla Watson is a Cleveland-born NYC-based actor, singer, and coach currently on tour with *Hadestown* (Fate 2 and Persephone). She is a 2019 Lenya Competition award winner, and recorded “But You’ll Be Fine” for the LLC Songbook series. She has appeared on Broadway in *Waitress* and Off-Broadway in *Black No More* and *Gigantic*. National Tours include *Wicked* and *The Color Purple*. Notable concerts: *Show Boat*: Live at Lincoln Center, *Oklahoma!* at 75, and “Broadway Sings Whitney Houston.” She attributes her success to her Christian faith, her parents, her education, and her professional and personal influences. Nyla is a graduate of Baldwin Wallace and NYU Steinhardt. www.queennyla.com, @brandnewnyla. Acts 4:7-12.

Fort Wayne, IN native **Ian Williams** is thrilled to return as a LLC finalist! He has sung as the bass soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* and the Fauré and Mozart *Requiems* with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, and with Broadway veteran J. Mark McVey (*Les Misérables*). Recent roles include Coalhouse Walker, Jr. (*Ragtime*) and Jason (*Ordinary Days*) with Art 4, and The Captain (*The Three Hermits*) with Heartland Sings, Inc. He is a Level I graduate of the Institute of Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method, and a co-founder of the Fort Wayne chapter of Opera on Tap. Ian also serves as a Unit Director at the Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Indiana.



Accompanists



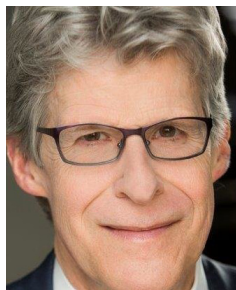
Lyndon Meyer is a Tulsa-based pianist and conductor. He has served as chorumaster, assistant conductor, principal pianist, and vocal coach for the Tulsa Opera since 2014. As a vocal coach, Mr. Meyer has held positions at the University of Oklahoma, Michigan State University, and the Eastman School of Music, as well as at the Florida Grand Opera and the OK Mozart International Festival. In February 2019, he made his professional conducting debut for Heartland Opera’s production of *La bohème*. He has served as staff accompanist for the Lotte Lenya Competition since 2009. Mr. Meyer appears frequently as a recitalist and chamber musician. In Tulsa, he holds the post of Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary and appears as a guest choral conductor and clinician, in addition to maintaining an active coaching studio. Mr. Meyer is a graduate of the University of Arkansas (BM) and the Eastman School (MM).

Shane Schag is a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music, where he music directed *And the World Goes ‘Round*, *Godspell*, *Ragtime*, *A Little Night Music*, *Moving Right Along: The Music of Jeff Blumenkrantz*, *Defying Gravity: The Magical World of Stephen Schwartz*, and *September Songs: The Musical Legacy of Kurt Weill*. Mr. Schag served as an associate conductor on *Nine*, *Cabaret*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *The Drowsy Chaperone* under the baton of David Loud. He has served on the faculty of OperaWorks, International Vocal Arts Institute, Chautauqua Opera, Vocal Coach Asia (Singapore) and the Creative Voice Institute (Taiwan). He collaborated with Lisa Vroman and William Sharp in the original cabaret *Change the World, It Needs It! The Music of Kurt Weill and Marc Blitzstein*, presented at the Brevard Festival, Depauw University, and UNC Chapel Hill.



Judges

Dame Josephine Barstow CBE, DBE is recognized as one of the world's leading singing actresses. During a long career she has performed in most of the world's major opera houses and with many of the great conductors, singing a varied repertoire of Verdi, Richard Strauss, Puccini, and Janáček, among others. She has performed on stages around the world, across Europe, Asia, and Australia, including a historic trip in 1986 to the Soviet Union singing *Tosca* and *Lady Macbeth*. Herbert von Karajan invited her to sing the title role in *Tosca* with Pavarotti, and Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Plácido Domingo. Recent and forthcoming engagements include Bernstein's *Symphony No. 3* with Antonio Pappano and the Orchestra Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Roma; Heidi Schiller, *Follies* (National Theatre), Countess, *Queen of Spades* (The Grange Festival), and Mme Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* (Opera North), among many others. Josephine Barstow was awarded the CBE in 1985, promoted to DBE in 1995.



Ted Chapin was chosen by the Rodgers and Hammerstein families to run their office. He expanded it into the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization, which manages the copyrights of Richard Rodgers and/or Oscar Hammerstein II. He was the co-founder of the Encores! series at City Center and was for two seasons the producer of the 92nd Street Y's Lyrics and Lyricists series with programs saluting Bobby Darin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Irving Berlin, among others. In addition to his chairmanship of the Kurt Weill Foundation, Ted serves on several other boards including the American Theatre Wing where he is immediate past co-chair, New York City Center, and Goodspeed Musicals. His book *Everything Was Possible: The Birth of the Musical 'Follies'* won both an ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award and a Special Jury Prize for Distinguished Achievement by the Theatre Library Association.

James Holmes is a British musical director, editor, and arranger. A former staff conductor at English National Opera and Head of Music at Opera North, his long-time interest in classic American musical theater has seen him play a significant role in its emergence as a staple in the repertoire of those houses. While at ENO, he conducted the first production by a British opera company of a work by Stephen Sondheim, *Pacific Overtures*, the recording of which earned a Grammy nomination. James has conducted as wide a range of Kurt Weill's work as anyone in the world, including multiple productions of *Street Scene*, as well as *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Arms and the Cow* (*Der Kuhhandel*), *Lady in the Dark*, and *The Seven Deadly Sins*. In recognition of his service to the composer, the Kurt Weill Foundation honored him with their seventh Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018.



Kyle Scatliffe currently appears as Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson in the Broadway production of *Hamilton*. His theatrical credits include Enjolras (*Les Misérables*), Harpo (*The Color Purple*) on Broadway, Haywood Patterson in the London premiere production of *The Scottsboro Boys* (Olivier Award Nomination), Coalhouse in *Ragtime* (Zach Theatre), Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* (5th Avenue Theatre), Marley in *A Christmas Carol: The Concert* (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra/PBS) and Mitch Mahoney in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival). He has appeared in television roles on "Bull" (CBS) and "Chicago P.D." (NBC). Kyle is a graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York. In 2010 he won a Lys Symonette Award in the LLC.

Panelists and Moderators

Natalie Ballenger (LLC '14; ESM '11), a Santa Cruz, CA native, is based in NYC. She was recently seen as Maria Shriver, opposite Andy Karl as Arnold Schwarzenegger, in the industry reading of *Arnold Da Musical* in NYC. Stage credits include world tours of *West Side Story* (Maria) and *Beauty & The Beast*, *Aleko/Pagliacci* (New York City Opera), and regional productions of *South Pacific* (Nellie Forbush), *My Fair Lady* (Eliza Doolittle), *Guys and Dolls* (Sarah Brown), *HMS Pinafore* (Josephine), and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Blanche). www.natalieballenger.com; @natalieballenger

Mezzo-soprano **Katherine Ciesinski** is the Martin E. and Corazon D. Sanders Professor of Voice and current chair of the Voice, Opera & Vocal Coaching department at the Eastman School of Music. Her international career spans five decades and includes three Metropolitan Opera productions, Grammy and Echo Klassik Awards, and numerous televised opera productions across three continents. She has been a frequent clinician and has adjudicated myriad vocal competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera and Paris International competitions. Since joining the Eastman faculty she has earned a Master of Science degree in Medical Humanities at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Recent performances of **Christopher Dylan Herbert** ('07) include the premiere of Judd Greenstein's *A Marvelous Order*, Vivier's *Kopernikus* in Buenos Aires, and *WINTERIZE*, his own reimagining of Schubert's *Winterreise*, in New York and Weimar. He is currently developing the role of Rodrigo with the Talea Ensemble in the new opera *Macabéa*. He sang baritone in the quartet of the Grammy-nominated New York Polyphony and also recorded *Voices in the Wilderness*, highlighting eighteenth-century American female composers. He is an associate professor and Vocal Coordinator at William Paterson University. Herbert holds degrees from Yale, Harvard, and Juilliard, and serves on the boards of NATS-NYC and The Plimpton Foundation. www.christopherdylanherbert.com

Hailed by the *L.A. Times* for his portrayal of Stephen Kumalo in *Lost in the Stars*, **Justin Hopkins** ('12) portrayed Krishna in *Satyagraha* (Opera Vlaanderen), and Narumov in *Pikovaya Dama* (Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie) this season. He also returned to Walt Disney Hall in Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Mr. Hopkins has been a solo ensemble member at Grand Théâtre de Genève and the Konzert und Theater St. Gallen. He debuted at Glimmerglass in 2019 as Joe in *Show Boat*, and was hailed as "the soul of the production" by *DC Theatre Scene*.

Broadway veteran **Amy Justman** ('04) appeared as Susan in the 2006 revival of *Company*, *Carousel* with Renée Fleming, *White Christmas*, *A Gentleman's Guide...*, and *In Transit*, as well as the Broadway and national tour productions of *The Phantom of the Opera*. She played Clara in the Off-Broadway revival of *Passion* and will originate the role of Adrienne in *Double Helix* at Bay Street Theater this summer. She has appeared as a soloist at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, NYC Ballet, and with numerous orchestras. She can be seen on the recent PBS broadcast of Bernstein's *Mass*. Amy teaches at Yale University and Marymount Manhattan College.

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 Lotte 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 two for Eastman Opera. In 2020, he received the Erwin Piscator Award for his contributions to international musical theater.

Reilly Nelson (LLC '18; ESM '11) made her Glimmerglass Festival debut in 2022 as Gianna in *Tenor Overboard* to great acclaim. In Toronto, Reilly has performed with the JoM Collective and the Kingston Road United Church concert series, also winning the Toronto Mozart Vocal Competition. She has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic, Reno Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony, Cincinnati Opera, and Tiroler Festspiele Erl, and was a 2018 district winner of the Met's National Council auditions. Reilly has been a Young Artist with Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, Tanglewood Music Center, and Glimmerglass. She holds Master's and Doctoral degrees from the University of Cincinnati.

Award-winning actor and singer **Andrew Polec** (LLC '21; UR, '12) originated the role of Strat in the international hit *Bat Out of Hell*, for which he won the "West End Debut" Award; he also led it in Manchester, Toronto, and New York. Other credits include Berger in *Hair* (BroadwayWorld Award), the Grinch in *How The Grinch Stole Christmas!* (The Old Globe), Matt in *The Fantasticks* (Theatre Center), *Legacy of Love* (Bucks County Playhouse) and TV appearances in *Katy Keene*, *Prodigal Son*, and *The Today Show*. Upcoming projects include *The Beautiful Lady* and his debut EP *Disillusioned Funk*. Andrew holds a BA in music from the University of Rochester and an MFA from Brown University.

Currently based in Houston, **Laura Corina Sanders** (LLC '18; ESM '18) won 1st place in the 2023 Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston Career Grant Competition, and an Encouragement Award in the 2019 Met National Council auditions. She has been a Young Artist at Wolf Trap and Central City Opera, and a Resident Artist at Shreveport Opera. Laura has appeared in leading roles with Hawaii Opera Theatre, Shreveport Opera, Baltimore Concert Opera, Oswego Opera Theatre, and Minnesota Opera. This year she will debut at Painted Sky Opera as Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), and join Opera Orlando as a Studio Artist.

Carolyn Weber has over forty years of experience on both sides of the footlights. She earned an MM from the Manhattan School of Music, participating in numerous young artist programs. After performing with regional musical theater companies in the US, she spent four years at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. Switching to music administration in New York, she took a position at Columbia Artists Management, overseeing orchestra tours and residencies of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in Tokyo. In 1998 she joined the Kurt Weill Foundation, where she served as Director until 2014, with administration of the Lenya Competition one of her most beloved activities. Since her retirement, she has served on the boards of two foundations that support musical theater.

Don't miss the collection of original Weill manuscripts and correspondence on display as part of this weekend's Lenya Competition celebration. Exhibits are located in Lowry Hall and throughout the Sibley Music Library (open 12:00 to 5:00 pm today and 8:00 am to 9:00 pm weekdays). Among the treasures presented is Weill's holograph score of Dreigroschenoper, which bears annotations by both Marc Blitzstein and Leonard Bernstein.

Competition Administration

Kim H. Kowalke, President & CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music,
Founder of the Competition

Brady Sansone, Director of Programs, Competition Administrator

Leni Kreienberg, Administrative Assistant

Ed Harsh, Publicity

Kingsbridge Media, Visual Media

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, thanks to Jamal Rossi, Dean of the Eastman School of Music; Katherine Ciesinski, Lindsay Baker, and the rest of the Voice, Opera, and Vocal Coaching Department; Michael Stefiuk, Director of Concert Activities; Julia Ng, Assistant Director of Concert Activities; David Peter Coppen, Head of Special Collections, Sibley Music Library; Mark Wazowicz, Director, Technology & Media Production; Deirdre Graves, Kilbourn Hall Stage Manager; Dominick Fraczek, AV Tech; Joshua Lau, Production Stage Manager, Eastman Opera; Angela Rice, gala performers' facilitator; and all alumni of the Lenya Competition who joined us today, both in the hall and here in spirit.

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music administers, promotes, and perpetuates the legacies of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya. It encourages broad dissemination and appreciation of Weill's music through support of performances, productions, recordings, and scholarship, and it fosters understanding of Weill's and Lenya's lives and work within diverse cultural contexts. Building upon the legacies of both, it nurtures talent, particularly in the creation, performance, and study of musical theater in its various manifestations and media. To subscribe to the Kurt Weill Newsletter and our E-News, please visit our website, kwf.org.

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