



The
Opera
Foundation

35TH
ANNUAL GALA
2021

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Dear Friends,



After a one-year absence, we are happy to welcome you back to our 35th annual Opera Gala! Despite the shutdown, it was an eventful year for the Opera Foundation and the Arts in general.

When we started 2020, we were full of optimism about the upcoming season, having just chosen six new singers at our audition in February, the largest group of singers the Foundation has ever supported. We had also just started our relationship with artistic director Sophie de Lint at the Dutch National Opera, where together with Rosemary Joshua, director of its Opera Studio we launched our first "Amsterdam Scholarship". Little did we know that just a few weeks later everything would be shut down. During the summer of 2020, some of our singers made their way to Europe but some remained stuck in their homes in the US. We were impressed how some opera houses like Deutsche Oper Berlin continued productions in innovative, outdoor spaces like parking lots. Deutsche Oper's outdoor production of Das Rheingold im Parkplatz which featured many of our singers will not soon be forgotten. Eventually, all our partnering opera houses including Teatro Regio Torino, Die Bayerische Staatsoper, and the Dutch National Opera had to cease productions which left our 6 singers stranded.

During the lockdown period we kept in close contact with all six. The Opera Foundation was a valuable lifeline to these singers because many were employed on a freelance basis. We are glad the Foundation could play a valuable role bridging the employment gap for our group of singers through the pandemic and we are happy to report that all remained healthy. We had to cancel our 2021 auditions and left it to the opera houses to choose singers virtually for the 2021/22 Season. We also gave the opera houses the option to take the existing group of singers for a second year. That was the case for bass-baritone, Tyler Zimmerman, who received the Björn Eklund Scholarship and for Mezzo-Soprano, Gina Perregrino who received the Curt Engelhorn Scholarship. She also gets a second chance at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Mezzo-soprano Emily Sierra, a 2021 winner of the Met Opera Competition, is going to Munich, at the Bayerische Staatsoper and Puerto Rican tenor, Ian Castro, winner of the Kinesis Scholarship, is going to the Opera Studio of the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam.

We are honored that the dream team from the Met's *La Bohème*, Federica Lombardi and Charles Castronovo, will join us tonight. We also welcome back our friend, Intendant, Dietmar Schwarz from Berlin, and from New York, Damian Woetzel, President of the Julliard School. It goes without saying that the pandemic has had a devastating effect on the Arts community. We are therefore grateful for your continued support. I would like to especially thank our board of trustees and long-term sponsors, who have been very generous during this difficult period. We also thank our wonderful Executive Director, Liz Walbroel who has kept our programs and communications running smoothly.

Wishing you an enjoyable evening!

Bernhard Koeppe
President, The Opera Foundation

Dear Friends of the Opera Foundation,



2022 will be a very special year for the connection between the Deutsche Oper Berlin and its friends in the USA. Because then it will be exactly a hundred years ago that many citizens of the United States could experience for the first-time what Wagner made in Berlin sounds like. The major tour that the ensemble of the then Städtische Oper undertook through the USA in 1922 was not only an important signal for the continuation of cultural exchange after the war, but also laid the foundation for a friendship that still exists today. At that time, Wagner's RING was at

the center of this tour, and even today, the passion for Wagner's work forms a bridge between opera friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Our new RING, which we have shown as a cycle for the first time in the past few weeks, is another building block to keep this connection alive, and I am already looking forward to welcoming many of you to the next performances.

In this new RING you will also experience singers who, thanks to the scholarships from the Opera Foundation, have become real Wagner interpreters and who have meanwhile become indispensable members of our ensemble. It is always a pleasure for us to see how these highly talented young artists soak up our more than 100-year-old tradition and create gripping, independent portraits of Wagner's stage characters on this basis. In the current RING there is Thomas Lehman, whose intensive character study of Gunther was celebrated by the public and the press. But also the moving giant Fasolt by Andrew Harris, the Woglinde by Meechot Marrero and Karis Tucker, who is present in three roles - as Norn, Walküre and Rhine daughter - testify to this fruitful partnership between the Opera Foundation and the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

These young singers are the best sign that the connection between the Deutsche Oper Berlin and its friends in the USA has lost none of its intensity and mutual respect even after 100 years.

Looking forward to the next 100 years!



Dietmar Schwarz
General Manager, Deutsche Oper Berlin



DEUTSCHE OPER BERLIN

Dear Colleagues , Members and Friends of the Opera Foundation ,



We are honoured to join the collaboration between the Dutch National Opera and The Opera Foundation in New York for these past two seasons. We have been delighted to support two very promising young artists at The Dutch National Opera Studio.

Tenor Jose Romero Simerilla sponsored last season (2020/21) has gone on secure a full time Fest contract in Hannover and Tenor Ian Castro who joined us this season will debut as Gastone in La Traviata and will sing the role of Signor Hervey in a new production of Anna Bolena later this season. Ian has also been nominated to appear in the final rounds of the prestigious Neue Stimmen competition in 2022.

The Opera Studio in Amsterdam started in 2018 and develops talented young artists guiding them to an International career. Our program runs for one or two years and includes voice lessons, regular language training, acting and movement classes as well as many masterclasses with world renowned singers and directors. The studio is an integral part of the Dutch National Opera and all our artists take small roles throughout the season. The opportunity to work with international singers, stage directors and conductors is an invaluable part of the process and experience that inspires the young singers to success.

We appreciate the support from the Opera Foundation in discovering young American artists for us to further develop and look forward to a long and fruitful collaboration.

On behalf of myself and all my colleagues at the Dutch National Opera I send my gratitude and best wishes to you all and hope to welcome you to many beautiful performances in Amsterdam over the coming seasons.



Rosemary Joshua
Artistic Director Dutch National Opera Studio

**DUTCH
NATIONAL
OPERA &
BALLET**



Dear Members and Friends of the Opera Foundation,



For the past ten years, we have been delighted to be a part of the collaboration between the Bayerische Staatsoper and the Opera Foundation. Our collaboration has proven to be very meaningful and rewarding in support for our Young Artist Program.

We have greatly appreciated and valued the sponsoring of the tenor James Ley in the last season (2020/21), as well as the sponsoring of the mezzo-soprano, winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Eric and Dominic Laffont Competition, Emily Sierra, in this season (2021/22). It has been wonderful to watch them prosper and excel at their work. These young singers are highly talented and are prepared for an international career as opera singers all over the world, through our Young Artist Program. The origins of the Young Artist Program of the Bayerische Staatsoper - the Opernstudio - date back to the 1970s. Our program typically runs one or two seasons and consists of role studies, voice lessons, acting and movement classes as well as language training. The fact that our program is completely integrated into the extensive performance schedule of the Bayerische Staatsoper with over forty different opera productions per year, gives our singers the invaluable experience to work side by side with the world's leading opera singers, conductors and stage directors.

We are incredibly grateful for the support from the Opera Foundation in finding young American singers that we have welcomed to Munich over the past seasons.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues at the Bayerische Staatsoper, I wish you all the best and look forward to welcoming many of you to our performances in Munich.

Sincerely,

Tobias Truniger
Artistic Director, Opernstudio

**BAYERISCHE
STAATSOPER**

THE LADENBURG FOUNDATION

Thank you for supporting a scholarship for 26 years bearing the name of Curt Engelhorn, the prominent German philanthropist. Thanks to your support, an entire generation of young American opera talent have launched their singing careers. Your support has had a major impact on the Arts and strengthened long standing cultural ties across continents.

THE CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARS

BAVAT MAROM / <i>Soprano</i>	Curtis School of Music	1996
CATHERINE CANGIANO / <i>Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	1997
MARK TEVIS / <i>Tenor</i>	Mannes School of Music	1998
ANNE MARIE SEAGER / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	1999
LAURE DE MARCELLUS / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Tel Aviv School of Music	2000
RAQUELA SHEERAN / <i>Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	2001
HAROLD WILSON / <i>Bass-Baritone</i>	Indiana University	2002
JESSICA MILLER / <i>Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2003
CHERI ROSE KATZ / <i>Soprano</i>	Universitaet Salzburg	2004
MELISSA SHIPPEN / <i>Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	2005
NICOLE PICCOLOMINI / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Academy of Vocal Arts	2006
JULIA BENZINGER / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Royal Northern College of Music	2007
ERICA MILLER / <i>Soprano</i>	University of Southern California	2008
JAMES KEE / <i>Baritone</i>	Curtis School of Music	2009
REBECCA JO LOEB / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	2010
KATHRYN LEWEK / <i>Soprano</i>	Eastman School of Music	2011
ANDREW HARRIS / <i>Bass</i>	West Virginia University	2012
MATTHEW NEWLIN / <i>Tenor</i>	Chicago College of the Performing Arts	2013
THOMAS LEHMAN / <i>Baritone</i>	Eastman School of Music	2014
NICOLE HASLETT / <i>Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2015
ABIGAIL LEVIS / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Moore School of Music	2016
DEAN MURPHY / <i>Baritone</i>	Yale University	2017
AMBER FASQUELLE / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Cincinnati Conservatory of Music	2018
KARIS TUCKER / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	University of Cincinnati	2019
REBECCA PEDERSEN / <i>Soprano</i>	Juilliard School	2020
GINA PERREGRINO / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2021

OUR UNDERWRITERS

The Opera Foundation thanks our underwriters the Dupire Family, Kinesis Foundation, and Amber Capital.

BJÖRN EKLUND SCHOLARS

MATTHEW GRILLS / <i>Tenor</i>	Eastman School of Music	2013
JOHN CARPENTER / <i>Baritone</i>	Penn State School of Music	2014
LEELA SUBRAMANIAM / <i>Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2015
GALEANO SALAS / <i>Tenor</i>	Yale University / Academy of Vocal Arts	2016
SANDRA HAMAOU / <i>Soprano</i>	San Francisco Conservatory	2017
BRYAN MURRAY / <i>Baritone</i>	Yale School of Music	2018
MATTHEW COSSACK / <i>Baritone</i>	Yale School of Music	2019
TYLER ZIMMERMAN / <i>Bass-Baritone</i>	Juilliard School	2020/21

KINESIS SCHOLARS

MEECHOT MARRERO / <i>Soprano</i>	Yale School of Music	2016
ANAÍS MEJÍAS / <i>Soprano</i>	Istituto Musicale Pareggiato Orazio Vecchi, Italy	2018
IAN CASTRO / <i>Tenor</i>	Juilliard School	2021

AMBER CAPITAL SCHOLARS

DIEGO MATAMOROS / <i>Baritone</i>	Yale School of Music	2008
DOMINIC MICHAEL ARMSTRONG / <i>Tenor</i>	Juilliard School	2009
JOHN PAUL HUCKLE / <i>Bass</i>	Boston University	2010
MATTHEW PEÑA / <i>Tenor</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2011
RACHEL HAUGE / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Boston University	2011
ANNIE ROSEN / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Mannes School of Music	2012
SCOTT JOHNSON / <i>Baritone</i>	University of Wisconsin	2012
RYAN MILSTEAD / <i>Baritone</i>	University of Illinois at Urban Champaign	2013
SAMANTHA KORBAY / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2014
KATE FRUCHTERMAN / <i>Soprano</i>	Mannes School of Music	2015
CULLEN GANDY / <i>Tenor</i>	Juilliard School	2016
JOSHUA SANDERS / <i>Tenor</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2017
ASHLEY MILANESE / <i>Soprano</i>	Curtis Institute of Music	2018
GABRIEL WERNICK / <i>Baritone</i>	Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini	2019
GINA PERREGRINO / <i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	Manhattan School of Music	2020

35TH ANNUAL GALA 2021

Musical Program

PERFORMANCES BY

2014/15 WINNER OF
THE CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARSHIP

Thomas Lehman

Baritone

2015/16 WINNER OF
THE CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARSHIP

Nicole Haslett

Soprano

2021 GUESTS OF HONOR

Federica Lombardi

Soprano

Charles Castronovo

Tenor

Craig Ketter

Piano

Hayes Kavanagh & Friends

Jazz Musicians

Mr. Castronovo and Ms. Lombardi sing courtesy of

The Metropolitan Opera

2021 GUEST OF HONOR

Federica Lombardi / Soprano



Italian soprano Federica Lombardi is one of the most sought-after artists of the young generation specialized in interpretation of the leading soprano roles in Mozart's operatic works.

In recent seasons, she marked her debut at the Teatro Real in Madrid as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. At Vienna State Opera, she performed Contessa in a stream of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. At Salzburg Festival, she gave her debut as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* conducted by Teodor Currentzis.

This October, she gave her debut at Berlin Staatsoper unter den Linden, where she performed both Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Firdiligi in a new production *Così Fan Tutte*, both conducted by Daniel Barenboim. After this she returned to New York as Musetta in *La Bohème* and as Contessa. In 2022, she will give her debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro* conducted by Antonio Pappano, sing her first Mimi in *La Bohème* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and give her debut as Amelia Grimaldi a new production of *Simon Boccanegra* in Liège. In 2023, she will be again in New York for *Don Giovanni* and *La Bohème*.

2021 GUEST OF HONOR

Charles Castronovo / Tenor



Acclaimed internationally as one of the finest lyric tenors of his generation, Charles Castronovo has also sung at most of the world's leading opera houses such as the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Berlin State Opera, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Munich, Theatre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels, and many others including at the Salzburg and Aix en Provence Festivals. His repertoire spans from the great Mozart tenor roles in *Don Giovanni*, *Così Fan Tutte* and *Die Zauberflöte*, to Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir D'Amore* and Alfredo in *La Traviata*.

In recent seasons Castronovo has also won wide acclaim for his performances as the tenor soloist in *Requiem*, the title role in *Don Carlo*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Rodolfo in *La bohème* and Carlo Moor in *I Masnadieri*.

Castronovo begins his 2021/22 season with the world reknown opera festivals in Europe, including Glyndebourne Festival and Salzburg Festival, followed by his return to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, Staatsoper Berlin, The Metropolitan Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper Munich as Rodolfo in *La bohème*, and more.

THE OPERA FOUNDATION'S 35TH ANNUAL GALA

We congratulate this year's scholarship recipients and welcome guests of honor

CHARLES CASTRONOVO, TENOR
FEDERICA LOMBARDI, SOPRANO

75TH / A BOLD
LEGACY
INSPIRING
OUR
FUTURE
ESTÉE LAUDER COMPANIES

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2014/15 CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Thomas Lehman / Baritone



After winning the Opera Foundation scholarship in 2014, American baritone Thomas Lehman became a member of the Ensemble at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music.

Thomas Lehman's future guest engagements include his debut for English National Opera as Hector in a new production of *King Priam* and Renato in *Un ballo in maschera* in Klagenfurt.

For the Deutsche Oper, upcoming highlights include: Gunther in a new production of *Götterdämmerung*, directed by Stefan Herheim; Lucifer in Ersan Montag's new production of *Antikrist* and Guy de Montfort in a new production of *Les vêpres siciliennes* conducted by Enrique Mazzola.

Other recent appearances include Lescaut in *Manon*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Marcello in *La bohème*, Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Il Conte Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Valentin in *Faust*, and Silvio in *Pagliacci*.

2015/16 CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Nicole Haslett / Soprano



After winning the Opera Foundation scholarship in 2015, American Soprano Nicole Haslett became frequent presence at Deutsche Oper Berlin. She has been hailed by the New York Times for her “technically accomplished coloratura” as well as, “floating lyricism”.

Last season, Nicole Haslett made her Opera Hong Kong debut as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and later returned to the company for her role debut as Ophélie in *Hamlet*. She also returned to the role of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Arizona Opera, made her role debut as Ännchen in *Der Freischütz* with Heartbeat Opera, and returned to the Deutsche Oper Berlin as the Shephard in *Dinorah*. In 2019, Haslett created the role of Kristina in the world premiere of Detlev Glanert's *Oceane* with Deutsche Oper Berlin, in addition to joining the company for the 4th *Blumenmädchen* in *Parisifal* and Hirt in *Tannhäuser*. She also made her Toronto Symphony debut in performances of *Carmina Burana* under Maestro Donald Runnicles, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera for their production of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*.

2021/22 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



BJÖRN EKLUND SCHOLARSHIP

Tyler Zimmerman / *Bass-Baritone*

As the winner of the Curt Engelhorn Scholarship, Young American bass-baritone Tyler Zimmerman was granted a 2021/22 season contract with Deutsche Oper Berlin, where he engaged in *Tosca*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Madama Butterfly* in the last season.

This season, He will be performing roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Carlo*, *Tosca*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Elektra*, *Lohengrin*, *La traviata*, *Tannhäuser*, *La bohème*, *Il viaggio a Reims*, *I vespri siciliani*, *Nabucco*, *Andrea Chénier*, and *Les contes d'Hoffmann*.



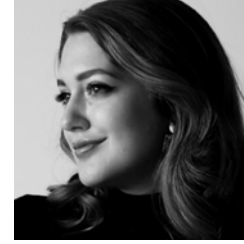
CURT ENGELHORN SCHOLARSHIP

Gina Perregrino / *Mezzo-Soprano*

Praised by Opera News and ArtsATL as a "standout", young American mezzo-soprano Gina Perregrino is garnering attention on stages around the country.

As the winner of the Curt Engelhorn Scholarship, Gina Perregrino was granted a 2021/22 season contract with Deutsche Oper Berlin, where she will perform roles in *Anti-crystal*, *Elektra*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, *Parsifal*, and *The Magic Flute*. This season, she has also made a guest appearance at Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, Dallas Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Lyric Opera of Guatemala, Central City Opera, and Opera Delaware.

2021/22 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



OPERA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Emily Sierra / *Mezzo-Soprano*

Rising star Cuban-American mezzo-soprano Emily Sierra was most recently a grand finals winner in the Met Opera National Council Auditions and was finalist of the Premiere Opera + NYIOP Vocal Competition.

As the winner of the Opera Foundation Scholarship, Emily Sierra will join the Opera Studio of the Bayerische Staatsoper Munich in 2021/22 season, performing roles through the year, including Vier Brautjungfern in *Der Freischutz*, Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Nanni in *L'infedeltà delusa*, Hécube in *Les Troyens*, Adelige in *Waise Der Rosenkavalier*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and Flora in *La Traviata*.



KINESIS SCHOLARSHIP

Ian Castro / *Tenor*

The Puerto Rican-American tenor Ian Matthew Castro has recently completed his Master's studies at The Juilliard School in New York.

As the winner of the Kinesis Scholarship, Ian Castro was accepted to Dutch National Opera Studio, where he will refine his artistry and sing the roles of Gastone in *La Traviata* and Signor Hervey in *Anna Bolena* with Dutch National Opera in 2021/22 season.

HONORARY COMMITTEE

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Kinesis Foundation	

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Bernhard Koepp / <i>President</i>	Santiago Trigo
Philip Lasser	Elizabeth Walbröl / <i>Executive Director</i>
Sherif Lotfi	Ashley von Perfall

HISTORY OF THE OPERA FOUNDATION

The Opera Foundation was originally launched in 1986. Its purpose is to support young American opera singers abroad via scholarships and study grants and to foster cross cultural ties between young opera singers around the world. The first scholarship program was established in 1986 with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, thanks to the late Professor Götz Friedrich. In 2008, a second scholarship program was established with Teatro Regio Torino, thanks to Maestro Gianandrea Noseda. In 2012, we announced a 3rd scholarship program with the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. In 2020, we announced a collaboration with the Open Studio of the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam. The Foundation has awarded 84 scholarships since inception, including study grants for voice coaching and linguistic purposes. The Opera Foundation is proud of the fact that many of our singers have gone on to build long lasting careers in the operatic world.

The idea to establish the first scholarship program was the brainchild of Professor Götz Friedrich, the legendary “Intendant” and creative force behind the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Professor Friedrich, along with his American-born wife, the soprano, Karan Armstrong, together with an enthusiastic group of New York-based supporters, envisioned this program for young American singers as a cross-cultural bridge between the United States and Germany. In 2008 this cross-cultural bridge was extended to include Italy, and in 2020, to the Netherlands.

For 36 years, the Foundation’s supporters have expanded to include individuals and corporations from all over the world, drawing from the rich cultural and corporate diversity of New York City and its environment. It is the Opera Foundation’s goal to continue expanding its scholarship activities where it believes it can make a difference in the development of young opera talent, in the spirit of cultural exchange between the United States and beyond.

PAST GUESTS OF HONOR

Karan Armstrong / Jamie Barton / Hildegard Behrens / Joseph Calleja / Andrea Carè / Francisco Casanova / Vladimir Chernov / Diana Damrau / Ghena Dimitrova / Plácido Domingo / Alexander T. Ercklentz / Simon Estes / Barbara Frittoli / Denyse Graves / Kirsten Harms / Ben Heppner / Kristan Johannsson / Kathryn Lewek / Dr. Bernd von Maltzan / Eva Marton / Maestro Kurt Masur / Angela Meade / Sherrill Milnes / Catherine Naglestad / Danielle De Niese / Rene Pape / Luciano Pavarotti / Susanna Phillips / Hermann Prey / Samuel Ramey / Maestro Carol Rizzi / Maestro Julius Rudel / Matti Salminen / Bryn Terfel / Maestro Christian Thielemann / Joseph Volpe / Bernd Weiki / Robert Wilson / Gösta Winberg

The Opera Foundation

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