

## **Houston Grand Opera Announces Concert of Arias 2020 Semifinalists**

*The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers is set for Feb. 7, 2020*

Houston – January 7, 2020 – Houston Grand Opera (HGO) has selected the semifinalists for the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers Concert of Arias, to be presented in the Wortham Theater Center on Feb. 7, 2020 at 7 p.m. A limited number of tickets for the performance are available for purchase [here](#). The program will also be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube for all to enjoy, inviting viewers to cast their votes for the Online Viewers' Choice Award.

This year's semifinalists are:

- **Sopranos: Tatiana Carlos, Lindsey Chinn, Amani Cole-Felder, Caitlin Gotimer, Emily Kern, Murrella Parton, Rachel Shaughnessy**
- **Mezzo-sopranos: Sun-Ly Pierce, Meridian Prall, Isabel Signoret, Polixeni Tziouvaras**
- **Tenors: Jehú Otero, Angel Romero**
- **Baritone: Juan Carlos Heredia**
- **Bass-baritones: Adam Kiss, Laureano Quant**
- **Bass: Cory McGee**

The competition and its final round, the Concert of Arias, are held annually to identify candidates for HGO's internationally acclaimed Studio program, which nurtures young artists who have the potential for major careers in opera. Past prize winners who are now artists on the international stage include Jamie Barton, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, and Tamara Wilson.

Now in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, the competition received over 650 applications from singers around the world. Auditions were conducted in November and December 2019.

After careful consideration, 17 semifinalists were selected to come to Houston for further rounds of the prestigious competition. The field of semifinalists will be narrowed to approximately eight finalists on the Monday prior to the Concert of Arias. The selected finalists will have the opportunity to learn more about HGO and work with HGO music staff leading up to the Concert of Arias, in which they will perform two arias each, competing for up to \$10,000 in cash prizes. Finalists will be accompanied by **Kirill Kuzmin**, HGO assistant conductor.

The judging panel will be led by HGO Artistic and Music Director **Patrick Summers** and HGO Managing Director **Perryn Leech**, HGO Artistic Advisor **Ana María Martínez** with guest judge **Tamara Wilson**. Both Martínez and Wilson were awarded first-place during the years they competed. For the sixth year, world-renowned soprano and HGO Studio alumna Ana María Martínez will select a finalist to receive her Encouragement Award. Audience members also have the opportunity to participate in the evening's events when they cast their votes for the Audience Choice Award. Proceeds from Concert of Arias 2020 benefit the Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers and the Houston Grand Opera Studio.

This is the fourth year the Concert of Arias will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube. The livestream will be hosted by HGO Studio alumna and 2007 Concert of Arias third-place winner **Jamie Barton**.

This year's Concert of Arias is chaired by Laura and D. Bradley McWilliams. The vocal competition commences at 7 p.m. CST. Current HGO Studio artists will also perform. Following the concert, artists, patrons, and underwriters will be seated for a dinner.

Since its inception 43 years ago, the HGO Studio has grown to be one of the most respected young artist programs in the world. Each of the young artists in the HGO Studio has access to a learning environment that emphasizes practical experience within the professional opera world. This includes regular coaching sessions with industry professionals, roles in HGO mainstage productions, recital performances, and a variety of other engagements.

#### Biographies:

##### **TATIANA CARLOS**

##### **SOPRANO**

Brazilian native Tatiana Carlos received her master's degree from Brigham Young University and a bachelor's degree from Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She made her professional debut at Theatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro in 2016 as Barena in *Jenůfa*. This season she debuted as Elisabetta in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at Amazonas Opera Festival and was a guest artist in Vittorio Grigolo's *Grandes Vozes Concert* at Theatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro. She was recently named a District Winner of the Utah District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and will be competing in the regional round in January. Ms. Carlos was a Resident Artist at Bidu Sayão Opera Academy of Theatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro. She was part of Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and was one of the singers selected to take part of the masterclasses given by the Royal Opera House's Jette Parker Young Artist Program in Brazil.

##### **LINDSEY CHINN**

##### **SOPRANO**

A Tennessee native, Lindsey Chinn earned her graduate degree at the Mannes School of Music in 2019, where she portrayed the role of Anna Maurant in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*. She received her undergraduate degree at Carnegie Mellon University, performing the roles of Galatea in *Acis and Galatea* and Soprano 1 in Philip Glass's *Hydrogen Jukebox*. She made her Carnegie Hall debut with the Mannes Sounds Festival in 2018 and has also appeared with the Mannes American Composers Ensemble as the vocalist in *Pierrot Lunaire*. In summer 2019,

she was a young artist at Chautauqua Opera where she sang the role of Gossip 2 and covered Marie Antoinette in John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* as well as covered the role of Roxanne Conti in *Figaro 90210*. In 2019, she won an encouragement award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

**AMANI COLE-FELDER****SOPRANO**

New Jersey-based soprano Amani Cole-Felder earned her Master of Music degree at the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC). She recently covered the role of Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and performed in recital with Ricky Ian Gordon at Chautauqua Institution. While studying at NEC, she performed the title role in *Suor Angelica* and First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, as well as scenes from *La bohème* (Mimi), *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Rosalba), and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Antonia). Previous roles include the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Maguelonne in Viardot's *Cendrillon*. Cole-Felder's awards include an Encouragement Award from The Metropolitan Opera National Council New England Region, second place in the New York Lyric Opera

Theatre National Competition, and an Encouragement Award from the Giulio Gari Foundation International Vocal Competition.

**CAITLIN GOTIMER****SOPRANO**

Originally from Malverne, New York, Caitlin Gotimer is a second-year resident artist with Pittsburgh Opera. Upcoming roles include Tink Enraught in *The Last American Hammer*, the title role in *Alcina*, Clotilde in *Norma*, and Micaëla in *Carmen*. She will make her debut at the Glimmerglass Festival this summer singing Armida in *Rinaldo* and covering Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. In the 2018-19 season at Pittsburgh Opera, she performed the roles of the Sandman and Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel*, Elettra in *AfterWARDs* (Mozart's *Idomeneo* reimaged) and Older Alyce in *Glory Denied*, and covered Mimi in *La bohème*. She studied at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) where she received a Master of Music in voice. At CCM, Gotimer sang the title role in *Suor Angelica*, Dalinda in *Ariodante*, and Anne Sexton in *Transformations*. She spent two summers at the Crested Butte Opera Studio, where she sang Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Musetta in *La bohème*. She received her Bachelor of Music from Binghamton University.

**EMILY KERN****SOPRANO**

Emily Kern is a third-year master's student at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Her operatic roles include Kayla in *Taking Up Serpents*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Giunone in *La Calisto*, Arminda in *La finta giardiniera*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and the title role in the collegiate premiere of David Carlson's *Anna Karenina*. As a concert soloist, she has performed works including Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Bach's *Magnificat* and *St. John Passion*, and Handel's *Susanna* and *Messiah*. Kern has participated as an Apprentice Artist at Des Moines Metro Opera, Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy (YAVA), and Le Chiavi: The Institute of Bel Canto Studies. This summer, she will join the Apprentice Program for Singers at The Santa Fe Opera, where she will cover Berta in *The Barber of Seville*.

**MURRELLA PARTON****SOPRANO**

Originally from Seymour, Tennessee, Murrella Parton was a 2019 semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a finalist for the Lyric Opera of Chicago Ryan Opera Center, received the second prize and soprano prize in the Young Patronesses of the Opera National Voice Competition, and is a semifinalist for the 2020 Vero Beach Rising Stars Competition. In recent years, she was awarded second prize in the Cooper-Bing

Vocal Competition and was the recipient of the Italo Tajo Award, the Andrew White Award, and the Seybold-Russell Award at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Opera Scholarship Competition. Previous performances include Older Alyce in *Glory Denied*, First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Sheva/Hannah in *Enemies, A Love Story*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Ginevra in *Ariodante*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Sylviane in *The Merry Widow*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee Knoxville and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

**RACHEL SHAUGHNESSY****SOPRANO**

A native of Traverse City, Michigan, Rachel Shaughnessy is currently pursuing her Master's in Vocal Performance at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. She received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at Michigan State University where she performed as Marcellina in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Charlotte in Robert Nelson's *A Room with a View*, and Amastre in Handel's *Serse*. Rachel recently performed Mrs. Johannes "Ma" Zegner in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* at Rice University. She has studied at Houston Grand Opera's Young Artists Vocal Academy and as a Young Artist with SongFest at Colburn. In the summer of 2018, Rachel joined Wolf Trap Opera as a Studio Artist, where she covered Elettra in Mozart's *Idomeneo*. She returned to Wolf Trap in the summer of 2019 to cover the title role in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Diamantine in Gluck's *L'île de Merlin*.

**SUN-LY PIERCE****MEZZO- SOPRANO**

Originally from Clinton, New York, Chinese-American mezzo-soprano Sun-Ly Pierce recently completed the Graduate Vocal Arts Program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance from the Eastman School of Music. As a winner of the Marilyn Horne Song Competition, Pierce will perform on an international recital tour with pianist Chien-Lin Lu. The tour includes appearances in Santa Barbara, Chicago, New York City, and London and will feature the premiere of a new song cycle written by two-time Grammy Award winning composer, Jennifer Higdon. This past fall, Pierce joined the Broad Street Orchestra as Dorinda in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. She returns to the Music Academy of the West this summer as a 2020 Vocal Fellow, performing the role of L'enfant in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and covering Hänsel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*.

**MERIDIAN PRALL****MEZZO-SOPRANO**

Meridian Prall is currently finishing her Master of Music in Voice Performance at the University of Michigan under the guidance of Freda Herseth and George Shirley. Recently, she won the Graduate Concerto Competition and performed the American premiere of *Verklärtes Jahr* by Joseph Marx with the University Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, she performed as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and as Aunt Lou in William Grand Still's *Highway 1, U.S.A* with the University of Michigan. In 2019, she was an Apprentice Artist at Des Moines Metro Opera. Upcoming engagements include covers of Iris in *Awakenings* and Mercedes in *Carmen* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

**ISABEL SIGNORET****MEZZO- SOPRANO**

A Miami native, Isabel Signoret is currently pursuing her master's degree at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, studying with Dr. Stephen King and is a graduate of HGO's Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA). Upcoming performances include Sesto in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* at The Shepherd School. Previous roles include Diana/Giove in Cavalli's *La Calisto* and L'enfant in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Signoret was a Studio Artist at Wolf Trap Opera where she covered the role of Concepción in Ravel's *L'heure espagnole*. She covered the role of Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with both Wolf Trap Opera and with the Aspen Music Festival,

where she studied in the summer of 2018. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Voice from the University of Michigan.

#### **POLIXENI TZIOUVARAS**

##### **MEZZO- SOPRANO**

Greek-American mezzo-soprano Polixeni (Xeni) Tziouvaras is originally from Santa Barbara, California. She recently completed her graduate studies at the Manhattan School of Music, studying with Joan Patenaude-Yarnell. Recent credits include Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Ralph Vaughn Williams' *Serenade to Music*, Signora Guidotti in *I due timidi*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Dorabella and Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Emma in Ned Rorem's *A Childhood Miracle*, Dog in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Marquis de LaBlurette in *Le roi l'a dit*, all with Manhattan School of Music. Tziouvaras has received multiple awards, most recently the Meche Kroop Encouragement Award (Premiere Opera Foundation/NYIOP 2019), finalist in the 2019 Mildred Miller Voice Competition, the Richard F. Gold Career Grant (Shoshana Foundation 2019), the Encouragement Award in memory of Alan M. Ades (George London Foundation 2019), and the Daniel Biaggi Career Consultation Prize (Premiere Opera Foundation 2018). Upcoming engagements include a recital in conjunction with the Shoshana Foundation and Maddalena in Verdi's *Rigoletto* as an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera.

#### **JEHÚ OTERO**

##### **TENOR**

Puerto Rico native Jehú Otero is currently a master's student at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music under the guidance of Dr. Stephen King. He debuted with Houston Grand Opera as Chucho in student performances of *El Milagro del Recuerdo*. Recent roles include the leading role of Anselmo in the world premiere of *Frenesí*, Mr. Erlanson in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Miles Zegner in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*, and Elder Hayes in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*. In 2018 he performed the role of Pane in Cavalli's *La Calisto* at Rice University and was the tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. He performed the role of Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, where he earned Bachelor's Degrees in voice and guitar.

#### **ANGEL ROMERO**

##### **TENOR**

Houston native, Angel Romero holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Houston Baptist University and recently completed his master's degree at Yale University under the tutelage of Richard and Doris Cross. His recent opera performances include Tamino in *The Magic Flute* (Yale University), Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, and Ruiz in *Il Trovatore* (Central City Opera). On the concert stage, he was the tenor soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Yale Philharmonia under the baton of Marin Alsop. In the summer of 2019, Romero joined the Santa Fe Opera as a young artist. This season he will cover the role of Arcadio in *Florenzia en el Amazonas* and perform the roles of Oronte in *Alcina*, Remendado in *Carmen*, and Flavio in *Norma* as a resident artist with Pittsburgh Opera.

#### **JUAN CARLOS HEREDIA**

##### **BARITONE**

Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, Juan Carlos Heredia was a 2016 winner of Operalia, where he was awarded the Don Plácido Domingo Ferrer Prize for Zarzuela. He was recently seen as Laurentino in student performances of HGO's

world premiere of *El Milagro del Recuerdo*. He joined the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at LA Opera for the 2017–18 season, appearing as Moralès in *Carmen* and Marullo in *Rigoletto*. His appearances for the 2018–19 season included Hormigon in *El Gato Montés* and Marchese d'Obigny in *La Traviata*. In 2019, he performed a recital with tenor Yusif Eyvazov in Paris, followed by a zarzuela gala concert with Plácido Domingo in Guadalajara. Previous appearances include Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lamermoor*, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Junius in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and the roles of the General and Sargento in the world premiere of Georgina Derbez's opera *La Creciente*. Upcoming performances include Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

#### **ADAM KISS**

##### **BASS-BARITONE**

Adam Kiss is currently studying in the professional studies program at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. While at Curtis, he performed excerpts from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Figaro) and *Così fan tutte* (Don Alfonso) with Maestro Yannick-Nézet Séguin. In 2019, he alternated the roles of Leporello and Commendatore in the Opera Philadelphia's production of *Don Giovanni*. In May of 2020, Kiss will join Maestro Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra in Strauss's *Elektra* alongside Christine Goerke. Recent operatic roles at Curtis include Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*. Kiss received his bachelor's degree from Manhattan School of Music and his Master's Degree in Opera from the Curtis Institute of Music. He has received several awards from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

#### **LAUREANO QUANT**

##### **BASS-BARITONE**

Colombian native Laureano Quant is a second-year master's degree candidate at Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of James Morris. Previous credits include Figaro in Mercadante's *I due Figaro*, Maguire in Picker's *Emmeline*, Zurga in Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*, Vittorio/Pensionante in Rota's *I due timidi*, Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Captain and Prince Ragotsky in Bernstein's *Candide*. He was the first prize winner in Premio de Canto Ciudad de Bogotá in 2018 and second prize winner in the National Voice Competition in 2016, hosted by Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra. Quant has performed as a soloist in the major theaters in Colombia. He has participated in several masterclasses, including the Royal Opera House Jette Parker YAP Latin American Tour, SongFest, and masterclasses hosted by Teatro Colon de Bogotá. Last summer, he joined Merola Opera Program in the Schwabacher Summer Concert. Quant is a recipient of the Mae Zenke Orvis Opera Scholarship.

#### **CORY MCGEE**

##### **BASS**

Hailing from Stafford, Virginia, Cory McGee is currently pursuing his Master of Music degree at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. This past summer, he joined Santa Fe Opera as an apprentice artist, portraying the role of the Gardener in Ruder's *The Thirteenth Child*. He recently performed the role of Sodbuster in The Shepherd School of Music's production of Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*. Previous roles include Elder Ott in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, La Voce in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, and Ranger Nat in Wolf Trap's commissioned children's opera, David Hanlon's *Listen, Wilhelmina!*. McGee was also a soloist in *Bernstein at 100 - A Celebration*, at Wolf Trap's Filene Center. Recent engagements include Sylvano in Cavalli's *La Calisto* (Rice University), the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Pandolfe in Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Oberlin Opera Theater), and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Oberlin in Italy).



\* \* \* \* \*

### About Houston Grand Opera

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. HGO is the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year in the 2019 International Opera Awards. In fulfilling its mission to advance the operatic art to serve an ever-evolving audience, HGO has led the field in commissioning new works (67 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO's pioneering community engagement initiative, HGOco, has served as a model for other arts organizations.

The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007, NEXUS has enabled more than 250,000

Houstonians to experience superlative opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and three Emmy awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

###

**Media Contact:** Abby Linney, Elmore PR, 713-524-0661; [abby@elmorepr.com](mailto:abby@elmorepr.com)

**Media Contact:** Natalie Barron, Houston Grand Opera, 713-546-0240; [nbarron@houstongrandopera.org](mailto:nbarron@houstongrandopera.org)

**Director of Marketing and Communications:** Dale Edwards, 713-546-0249

[HGO.org](http://HGO.org)

[facebook.com/houstongrandopera](https://facebook.com/houstongrandopera)

[twitter.com/hougrandopera](https://twitter.com/hougrandopera)

# # #



Official Health Care Provider  
for Houston Grand Opera



Official Airline of Houston Grand Opera



Preferred Jeweler of Houston Grand Opera