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THE GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION FOR SINGERS ANNOUNCES ITS 2017-18 SEASON OF EVENTS:

- **THE RECITAL SERIES:**
LEAH CROCETTO & ZACHARY NELSON
MARJORIE OWENS & QUINN KELSEY
HEIDI MELTON & ERRIN DUANE BROOKS
- **THE 47TH ANNUAL GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION AWARDS COMPETITION**

"Every year the George London Foundation for Singers holds a competition for vocalists from all over the United States and Canada. This year, the talent on display at the finals ... was eye-opening."

-Seen and Heard International, March 3, 2017

Watch full selections from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 competitions: <http://www.georgelondon.org/videos.html>



Leah Crocetto, Zachary Nelson, Marjorie Owens, Quinn Kelsey, Heidi Melton, Errin Duane Brooks ([download photos](#))

The George London Foundation for Singers has been honoring, supporting, and presenting the finest young opera singers in the U.S. and Canada since 1971. The foundation and the George London Awards are named for the legendary Canadian-American bass-baritone, one of the greatest opera singers of 20th century, who devoted much of his time and energy in his later years to the support and nurturing of young opera singers.

The foundation's 2017-18 season of events features three recitals with six of opera's young stars – four of whom have won George London Awards within the past eight years – and the famed George London Awards competition which, as the New York Times said, “can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera.”

All events take place at Gilder Lehrman Hall at The Morgan Library & Museum in Manhattan – and tickets include admission to the Morgan.

The George London Foundation Recital Series, which presents pairs of outstanding opera singers, many of whom were winners of a George London Award (the prize of the foundation's annual competition) continues in its 22nd year:

- **Leah Crocetto**, soprano, and **Zachary Nelson**, baritone. Leah Crocetto, who the San Francisco Chronicle's Joshua Kosman has christened “a major star,” headlines this summer's U.S. premiere of Donizetti's *Assedio di Calais* at the Glimmerglass Festival. Zachary Nelson won a George London Award in 2012; of that competition performance, The New York Times said, “Mr. Nelson captured the crucial element of verismo style: the emotion that is undoubtedly excessive but feels, in the moment, entirely right.” – Sunday, October 29, 2017, at 4:00 pm
- **Marjorie Owens**, soprano, and **Quinn Kelsey**, baritone, with Myra Huang, piano. Marjorie Owens won a 2009 George London Award – and when she appeared in a London Foundation recital later that year with James Morris, The New York Times described her as “a 28-year-old American soprano with a big, gleaming voice.” Quinn Kelsey is the cover subject of the June 2017 Opera News, which says, “Quinn Kelsey waited to sing the great Verdi baritone roles until the time was right. This month he's San Francisco Opera's Rigoletto.” – Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 4:00 pm
- **Heidi Melton**, soprano, and **Errin Duane Brooks**, tenor, with Craig Rutenberg, piano. Heidi Melton won the 2009 George London-Kirsten Flagstad Award for a potential Wagnerian singer; the following year, Montreal's La Presse was moved to say, “This could perhaps be the Wagnerian voice we have been waiting for since Flagstad and Nilsson.” Errin Duane Brooks won the same award in 2017; New York Classical Review said his “strength, projection, and sheer excitement earned him the George London-Kirsten Flagstad Award.” – Sunday, March 4, 2017, at 4:00 pm

The 47th annual **George London Foundation Awards Competition** begins with three days of preliminary auditions and culminates with the final round and award ceremony open to the public. The 2018 competition takes place February 12-16, and the public is invited to attend the competition finals and awards announcement on Friday, February 16, 2018, at 4:00 PM. The 2017 competition winners were sopranos Michelle Bradley and Lara Secord-Haid; tenors Aaron Blake and Errin Duane Brooks; and baritone Will Liverman.

At the announcement of the 2017 George London Awards, London's widow and the foundation's president, Nora London, said, "Even after so many years of listening at our competitions, I am so deeply moved by all of your great performances. This year, I feel it is more important than ever for us to applaud beautiful art, and for you to take your talent and share it with the world."

Watch full selections from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 competitions on the George London Foundation's website: <http://www.georgelondon.org/videos.html>

John Hauser Named Executive Director

John Hauser, who has been Artistic Director of the George London Foundation since September 2015, has been given the title of Executive Director.

The George London Foundation Awards and Recital Series

The George London Foundation Awards competition is one of the oldest vocal competitions in the United States and Canada, and it offers among the most substantial awards.

Through the annual juried competition for outstanding young American and Canadian opera singers (under the age of 35 who must have performed at least one professional engagement), awards are given to the most promising performers: at the 2017 competition, a total of \$75,000 was given in the form of five George London Awards of \$10,000, three awards of \$5,000, and 10 awards of \$1,000.

As is not always the case in musical competitions, no fee is charged to the applicants or competitors, a pianist is provided for the competition rounds, and the prizes are awarded immediately.

The recital series began at the Morgan in 1995 as a way to give grantees exposure and experience, and, in many cases, a New York debut. Each season consists of three recitals featuring recent award winners sometimes paired with a well-known international artist – often a past George London Award winner – that have in recent years included Joyce DiDonato, Eric Owens, Stephen Costello, Ailyn Perez, Matthew Polenzani, Christine Brewer, Renée Fleming, Thomas Hampson, Ben Heppner, René Pape, Samuel Ramey, Frederica von Stade, Bryn Terfel, and Dawn Upshaw.

The Legacy of George London

The goal of the London Foundation, the support and nurturing of young singers, was an abiding interest of the great American bass-baritone George London, who devoted a great part of the time and energy of his later years to this purpose. "Remembering his difficult road to success, George wanted to devise a way to make the road a little easier for future generations of singers," said George London Foundation President Nora London. Initially created under the auspices of the National Opera Institute, the George London Awards program has been administered since 1990 directly by the Foundation as a living legacy to George London's own exceptional talent and generosity. As The New York Times noted recently, "this prestigious competition...can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera."

Visit www.georgelondon.org.

Zachary Nelson, baritone (2012 George London Award) had a 2016-2017 season that brought debuts at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Donner in *Das Rheingold* and Escamillo in *Carmen* with Den Norske Opera; upcoming this summer is a fourth season with the Santa Fe Opera as Enrico Ashton in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Of his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut, Newcity Stage said, "Baritone Zachary Nelson (Donner) looks the part of Head God, moves with agile authority and sports a lightning-bolt voice enveloped in a silvery sheath. Is he the next generation's Wotan?" www.zacharynelsonbaritone.com

Leah Crocetto, soprano, who was described by The New York Times as "one of the standout winners at the 2010 Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions," opened the 2016-17 season in her role debut as *Aida* with the San Francisco Opera, about which performance the San Francisco Chronicle said, "Leah Crocetto ... continues to amaze with the full-bodied presence and agility of her soprano." As a profile in the June 2017 issue of Opera News said, "in the six years since the American soprano emerged from San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship Program, she has built an international reputation by tackling some of the most challenging assignments in the Italian repertoire." www.leahcrocetto.com

Marjorie Owens, soprano (2009 George London Award) this past season appeared at the Semperoper Dresden as Dorothea in *Schwanda*, and as Senta in *The Flying Dutchman* with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson. This past March, when she sang the title role of *Leonore* with Washington Concert Opera, Washington Classical Review said, "In the title role she was intense and refined, an aristocratic presence with a voice of silken softness as well as laser-focused volume that sailed over the massed instruments and chorus." [Marjorie Owens's management page](#)

Quinn Kelsey, baritone, received unanimous critical praise for his performances in the title role of a new production of *Rigoletto* at Frankfurt Oper in March of this year. Early in August, the 2015 Beverly Sills Award recipient appears with Anita Rachvelishvili, Sondra Radvanovsky, and Marcelo Alvarez in concert performances of *Aida* with the Chorégies d'Orange. Later that month, the baritone will make his first visit to Australia for a concert of Thaïs with the Melbourne Symphony under the baton of its music director Sir Andrew Davis. In 2017-18 at the Metropolitan Opera he sings the roles of Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*, di Luna in *Il Trovatore* and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. www.quinnkelsey.com

Heidi Melton, soprano (2009 George London Award), this past season made her role debut as Brünnhilde in new productions of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, both at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe. She also made debuts with the London Symphony Orchestra and Berlin Philharmonic in Ligeti's *Le grand macabre* under Simon Rattle, and made her Houston Grand Opera debut as Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung*. Of a performance of *Siegfried* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic conducted by Jaap van Zweden, the South China Morning Post said, "The vocal highlight was undoubtedly American soprano Heidi Melton's realisation of the great Brünnhilde. From the moment she walked on stage ... she commanded the auditorium as she brought her vocal gifts to the challenging role. ...her vocal qualities are staggering – pure in the lower register and breathtakingly powerful in the upper register." www.heidimeltonsoprano.com

Errin Duane Brooks, tenor (2017 George London Award), most recently appeared as the second Scottish Soldier in Kevin Puts's *Silent Night* and understudied Don Jose in Bizet's *Carmen*, both with Michigan Opera Theatre. Brooks has performed with other companies in the United States including South Shore Opera, Toledo Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Utah Festival Opera, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. While spending the summer of 2016 with Utah Festival Opera, Brooks placed first in the Michael Ballam Concorso Lirico in Logan, Utah. This sent him to the National Semi-Finals in Alessandria, Italy, where he was able to advance to the National Finals, place fourth, and win the Audience Favorite Award. Brooks has had success in several competitions, including winning the Grand Prize in The Bel Canto Competition, and he was a Regional Finalist in the 2014-15 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Past roles include Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Chicago Opera Theater (role debut), and Messenger in William Grant Still's *Troubled Island*, a Chicago premiere. Errin Duane Brooks was an Emerging Artist with Chicago Opera Theater from 2013 to 2015 after receiving his Master of Music degree from Bowling Green State University and his Bachelor of Music degree from Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan.

George London Award Winners 1971-2017 – A Selected List

Paul Appleby	Bejun Mehta
Dominic Armstrong	Susanne Mentzer
Kathleen Battle	Erie Mills
Isabel Bayrakdarian	Leona Mitchell
Rockwell Blake	Latonia Moore
Russell Braun	James Morris
Christine Brewer	Eric Owens
Measha Brüggergosman	Sean Panikkar
Vinson Cole	Susanna Phillips
Barbara Daniels	Dimitri Pittas
Alexandra Deshorties	Deborah Polaski
Michelle DeYoung	Matthew Polenzani
Joyce DiDonato	Florence Quivar
Maria Ewing	Sondra Radvanovsky
Ruth Falcon	Gianna Rolandi
Renée Fleming	Emalie Savoy
Christine Goerke	Neil Shicoff
Alan Held	Marietta Simpson
Barbara Hendricks	Diana Soviero
Isola Jones	Richard Stilwell
Kyle Ketelsen	Dawn Upshaw
Dominique Labelle	James Valenti
Anthony Laciura	Carol Vaness
Catherine Malfitano	Willard White
Mary Ann McCormick	Corinne Winters
Angela Meade	

GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION FOR SINGERS 2017-18 SEASON

Sunday, October 29, 2017, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

George London Foundation Recital

ZACHARY NELSON, Baritone

LEAH CROCETTO, Soprano

Pianist to be announced

Tickets: \$50

Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

George London Foundation Recital

MARJORIE OWENS, Soprano

QUINN KELSEY, Baritone

Myra Huang, Piano

Tickets: \$50

Friday, February 16, 2018, at 4:00 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

47th ANNUAL GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION AWARDS COMPETITION

Final Round and Awards Announcement

Tickets: \$25

Sunday, March 4, 2018, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

George London Foundation Recital

HEIDI MELTON, Soprano

ERRIN DUANE BROOKS, Tenor

Craig Rutenberg, Piano

Tickets: \$50

Subscription to the three-recital series: \$140. Tickets and information: (646) 461-3578, info@georgelondon.org

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Nora E. London, President

John Hauser, Executive Director

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