

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE 42ND ANNUAL LYNDON WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION:

First Place: **CHARLES SY, Tenor**
Second Place: **BRIAN GIEBLER, Tenor**
Third Place: **KRISTIN GORNSTEIN, Mezzo-soprano**



Charles Sy and Competition Chairwoman Janet Plucknett; Kristin Gornstein, Charles Sy, and Brian Giebler (photos by Tim Dwight)

The tenor **Charles Sy**, a native of Toronto, is the First Place winner of the Oratorio Society of New York's 2018 **Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition**. The award was announced by Competition Chairwoman Janet Plucknett following a performance by eight finalists in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall on Saturday, April 14. The Oratorio-Solo Competition, the only competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing, is now in its 42nd year. The full list of finalists and prizes is:

- **Charles Sy**, tenor: The Ellen Lopin Blair Award for **First Place**, \$7,000
- **Brian Giebler**, tenor: The Stanley C. Meyerson Award for **Second Place**, \$5,000
- **Kristin Gornstein**, mezzo-soprano: The Janet Plucknett Award for **Third Place**, \$3,000
- **Amy Broadbent**, soprano: The Alfred H. Hubay Award, \$2,500
- **Christopher Richardson**, bass-baritone: The Frances MacEachron Award, \$1,500
- **Devony Smith**, soprano: The Lyndon Woodside Encouragement Award, \$1,000
- **Scott Brunscheen**, tenor: The Robert & Winifred Connelly Green Award, \$1,000
- **Cairan Ryan**, baritone: The Leopold Damrosch Award, \$1,000

Charles Sy, a graduate of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio who is currently completing an Artist Diploma in Opera Studies at The Juilliard School, sang "Nicolas devotes himself to God" from Britten's *Saint Nicolas* and "I must with speed amuse her" from Handel's *Semele* to win the top prize.

This year the Competition had 163 applicants from around the world – including those from Mexico, England, France, and Sweden – and the eight finalists came from across the U.S. and Canada, as well as Australia.

The panel of judges for the finals consisted of **James Bagwell**, the chorus master of the American Symphony Orchestra and Associate Conductor of The Orchestra Now; **Jonathan Griffith**, co-founder and Artistic Director of Distinguished Concerts International New York; **David Hayes**, Music Director of the New York Choral Society and Director of Orchestral and Conducting Studies at the Mannes School of Music; **Kent Tritle**, Music Director of the Oratorio Society of New York, Director of Cathedral Music and Organist of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Music Director of Musica Sacra; and soprano **Jennifer Zetlan**, who has performed in oratorio, symphony, opera, and on Broadway.

The pianist for the finals was Amir Farid, who has collaborated with Ian Bostridge and Wolfgang Holzmair, among others, and is currently a staff pianist in the Juilliard School Vocal Arts department.

Charles Sy, tenor, completed his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees at the University of Toronto and is an alumnus of several prestigious opera training programs including Music Academy of the West, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Program, and the Opera as Theatre program at the Banff Centre. He is a graduate of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio and received First Prize and Audience Choice in the COC's 2014 Centre Stage Competition. He is currently completing an Artist Diploma in Opera Studies at The Juilliard School. This season, he makes his Juilliard Opera debut as Belfiore in *La finta giardiniera* and also makes his Carnegie Hall debut as the Evangelist and tenor soloist in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* under the baton of Maestro Mark Shapiro. www.charles-sy.com

Brian Giebler, tenor, a Philadelphia native, has performed the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the GRAMMY®-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street under Julian Wachner and Stravinsky with The Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst, as well as roles in *Les Misérables* and *Into the Woods*. www.briangiebler.com

Kristin Gornstein, mezzo-soprano, a native of Long Beach, Indiana, recently sang the role of Ramiro in Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* in a co-production by On Site Opera and Atlanta Opera. A frequent performer on the New York scene, Ms. Gornstein has also appeared as Lucretia in Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Loft Opera, and as Mrs. Slender in Salieri's *Falstaff* with Dell'Arte Opera. www.kristingornstein.com

The Oratorio-Solo Competition was created in 1977 to encourage the art of oratorio singing and to give young singers an opportunity to advance their careers. In 2006, it was renamed the **Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Solo-Competition** in honor of the Society's long-time music director and the Competition's most devoted champion, who had died the year before.

Since its founding in 1873, the **Oratorio Society of New York**, the 200-voice avocational chorus, has become the city's standard for grand, joyous choral performance. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

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