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ERIN WALL, SOPRANO & STEVEN LABRIE, BARITONE, LAUNCH THE 2015-16 SEASON OF THE GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION FOR SINGERS ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2015, AT 4:00 PM

Canadian soprano Erin Wall, who in August was featured in the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra's performance of Mahler's "Symphony of a Thousand" led by Andris Nelsons, and baritone Steven LaBrie, a 2013 George London Encouragement Award winner who has sung Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Jessica Lang Dance at BAM and Jacob's Pillow, are the two artists who will open the 2015-16 season of the George London Foundation for Singers. On Sunday, October 18, 2015, at 4:00 pm, they will be joined by pianist Spencer Myer for the first of the season's dual recitals in Gilder Lehrman Hall at The Morgan Library & Museum.

The 2015-16 season marks the 20th year of the George London Foundation Recital Series, which presents pairs of outstanding opera singers, many of whom were winners of a George London prize early in their careers or are recent George London Award recipients. An April 6, 2016, concert will celebrate the milestone anniversary (see below).

Erin Wall will sing Korngold's *Three Lieder*, Op. 22; Strauss's *Songs of the Orient*, Op. 77; and "No word from Tom... Quietly, night... I go to him," Anne Trulove's aria from Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. Steven LaBrie will sing "La mer est plus belle" and *Three Ballads by François Villon* by Debussy; "Ô vin, dissipe la tristesse" from *Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas; and a group of Mexican ballads. To conclude the program, the two will sing the duet "Lippen schweigen" from Lehar's *The Merry Widow*. (The full program follows below.)

Recent Praise for Erin Wall and Steven LaBrie

Erin Wall won raves earlier this year with her February Lyric Opera Kansas City debut as Anna Sørensen in Kevin Puts's Pulitzer-winning opera *Silent Night*, set during the World War I Christmas Eve Truce of 1914, KC Metropolis saying, "Erin Wall (Anna) sang effortlessly, with a luminous clarity across an astounding range," and the Kansas City Star praising her "assurance and clarity." Of her Seattle Opera debut last season as Donna Anna, her signature role, in *Don Giovanni* opposite Lawrence Brownlee, the Seattle Times noted her "resplendent soprano," saying "Wall's voice has both size and subtlety."

When Steven LaBrie performed Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Jessica Lang Dance in Ms. Lang's ballet *The Wanderer* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, The New York Times said, "The robust baritone Steven LaBrie and the pianist Tyson Deaton rendered the score with compelling

artistry. ... The integration of Mr. LaBrie is equally excellent ... heightening the intensity of his relation to [the dancers] and the audience close by."

The George London Foundation's 2015-16 season continues with three more events:

- The 45th annual **George London Foundation Awards Competition**, which begins with three days of preliminary auditions and culminates with the final round and award ceremony open to the public. The 2016 competition takes place February 15-19, and the public is invited to attend the competition finals and awards announcement on Friday, February 19, 2016, at 4:00 PM. The 2015 competition winners were Julie Adams, Michael Brandenburg, Julia Dawson, Adam Lau, Sarah Mesko, and Reginald Smith, Jr.
- **George London Foundation Celebration Concert: Twenty Years of Recitals In Collaboration with the Morgan** on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, at 7:00 PM. Renowned Canadian tenor **Ben Heppner** is master of ceremonies for the starry event that features five George London Award winners who are among opera's biggest stars, and one recent winner: **Sondra Radvanovsky**, soprano (1997 George London Award); **Christine Brewer**, soprano (1991); **Susanne Mentzer**, mezzo-soprano (1983); **Matthew Polenzani**, tenor (1998); **James Morris**, bass-baritone (1973); and **Brandon Cedel**, bass-baritone (2012). Joining the singers on the recital stage will be two of the opera world's finest pianists, **Ken Noda** and **Craig Rutenberg**. The event also includes a festive post-concert reception.
- **Dimitri Pittas**, tenor, who sang the role of Cassio in the Metropolitan Opera's season-opening *Otello*, and **Jennifer Johnson Cano**, mezzo-soprano, who was Emilia in the same production, with Christopher Cano, piano. Dimitri Pittas is a 2004 George London Award winner; Jennifer Johnson Cano won her award in 2014. Sunday, May 15, 2016, at 4:00 PM.

The Legacy of George London

The goal of the George 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. www.georgelondon.org

Erin Wall, soprano, of Calgary, Alberta, is acclaimed for her musicality and versatility, singing an extensive opera and concert repertoire which spans three centuries. She has sung leading roles in many of the world's great opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Vienna Staatsoper, Opéra National de Paris, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her 2015-16 season

(Continued on next page)

- DEBUSSY "La mer est plus belle"
- Three Ballads by François Villon:*
"Ballade de Villon à s'amyé"
"Ballade que Villon fait à la requeste de sa mère pour priere Nostre-Dame"
"Ballade des femmes de Paris"
(Steven LaBrie & Spencer Myer)
- STRAVINSKY "No word from Tom... Quietly, night... I go to him" from *The Rake's Progress*
(Erin Wall & Spencer Myer)
- THOMAS "Ô vin, dissipe la tristesse" from *Hamlet*
(Steven LaBrie & Spencer Myer)
- R. STRAUSS *Songs of the Orient, Op. 77:*
"Ihre Augen"
"Schwung"
"Liebesgeschenke"
"Die Allmächtige"
"Huldigung"
(Erin Wall & Spencer Myer)
- ALFONSO ESPARZA OTEO A Set of Mexican Ballads:
"Dime que si"
AGUSTÍN LARA "Humo en los ojos"
MARÍA GREVER "Júrame" and "Despedida"
IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN "Íntima"
(Steven LaBrie & Spencer Myer)
- LEHAR "Lippen schweigen" from *The Merry Widow*
(Erin Wall, Steven LaBrie & Spencer Myer)

Tickets: \$45

Call (212) 956-2809, e-mail info@georgelondon.org

www.georgelondon.org

www.themorgan.org

Photos of Erin Wall: <http://www.erinwall.com/downloads/> and <http://www.cami.com/?webid=760>

Photos of Steven LaBrie: <http://www.cami.com/?webid=2325>

September 23, 2015