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THE GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION FOR SINGERS ANNOUNCES ITS 2015-16 SEASON OF EVENTS:

- ***THE RECITAL SERIES:***
**ERIN WALL & STEVEN LABRIE, WITH SPENCER MYER
DIMITRI PITTAS & JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO, WITH
CHRISTOPHER CANO**
- ***GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION CELEBRATION CONCERT: AILYN PÉREZ, SONDRA RADVANOVSKY, CHRISTINE BREWER, SUSANNE MENTZER, MATTHEW POLENZANI, JAMES MORRIS, ERIC OWENS, AND BRANDON CEDEL WITH KEN NODA AND CRAIG RUTENBERG, CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF RECITALS; BEN HEPPNER IS M.C.***
- ***THE 45TH ANNUAL GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION AWARDS COMPETITION***

The 2015-16 season marks two milestones for the George London Foundation for Singers, which has been honoring, supporting, and presenting the finest young opera singers in the U.S. and Canada since 1971: the 45th annual George London Foundation Awards Competition, which gives George London Awards to young singers each year; and the 20th year of its acclaimed recital series, which presents pairs of singers, both established stars and recent George London Award winners, at The Morgan Library & Museum.

And so there will be a celebration: the ***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 eight George London Award winners who are among opera's biggest stars, and one recent winner: **Ailyn Pérez**, soprano (2006 George London Award); **Sondra Radvanovsky**,

soprano (1997); **Christine Brewer**, soprano (1991); **Susanne Mentzer**, mezzo-soprano (1983); **Matthew Polenzani**, tenor (1998); **James Morris**, bass-baritone (1973); **Eric Owens**, bass-baritone (1995); 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.

For those attending the April 6 event, the Morgan will open at 6:00 pm its special exhibition *Wagner's Ring: Forging an Epic* (January 29-April 17, 2016), that will focus on the cycle's 1876 premiere at Bayreuth and the 1889 premiere of the cycle at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

The 2015-16 **George London Foundation Recital Series** itself features three singers who won George London Awards between 2004 and 2014:

- **Erin Wall**, soprano, and **Steven LaBrie**, baritone, with Spencer Myer, piano. Steven LaBrie is a 2013 George London Encouragement Award winner. *Sunday, October 18, 2015, at 4:00 PM*
- **Dimitri Pittas**, tenor, and **Jennifer Johnson Cano**, mezzo-soprano, 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 45th 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 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.

All events will take place in Gilder Lehrman Hall at The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street.

2015-16 Recital Series Artists

Erin Wall, soprano, of Calgary, Alberta, sang the title role in *Arabella* at the Metropolitan Opera in spring 2014. In 2014-15 she performed her signature role, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, at the Bayerische Staatsoper and Seattle Opera (where the Seattle Times praised her "resplendent soprano"). She also made her Lyric Opera Kansas City debut as Anna Sørensen in Kevin Puts's Pulitzer-winning opera *Silent Night* (about which KC Metropolis said, "Erin Wall (Anna) sang effortlessly, with a luminous clarity across an astounding range"), and made debuts with the Tonhalle Zurich (Charles Dutoit), the Bayerische Rundfunk (Mariss Jansons), and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Sir Andrew Davis). This summer she sings Clémence in Kaija Saariaho's *L'amour de loin* in a new Robert LePage production with L'Opéra de Québec, and performs in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Bernard Haitink and the London Symphony Orchestra. Recent season highlights include Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Metropolitan

Opera, and a 2013 performance in the BBC Proms presentation of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*." www.erinwall.com.

Steven LaBrie (2013 George London Encouragement Award), baritone, a native of Dallas, Texas, is a recent graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. In the 2015-16 season, Mr. LaBrie will be making his debut at Lyric Opera Baltimore heading the cast, as Figaro, in their production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Last season, Mr. LaBrie reprised the role of Schaunard in *La bohème* for both his return to the Dallas Opera and his debut with the Washington National Opera. He also performed Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Jessica Lang Dance in Ms. Lang's ballet *The Wanderer* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and at the Jacob's Pillow Festival, about which 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." www.stevenlabrie.com

Jennifer Johnson Cano (2014 George London Award), mezzo-soprano, of St. Louis, Missouri, has over the last two seasons bowed at the Metropolitan Opera as Mercedes, Emilia, Wellgunde and Waltraute, and debuted as Meg Page in *Falstaff* and Bersi in *Andrea Chenier*. Other operatic debuts have included The Sharp Eared Fox in Janacek's *Cunning Little Vixen* with the Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst and Diana in *La Calisto* with Cincinnati Opera. Her 2014-15 season included Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with Boston Lyric Opera, Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with Manfred Honeck and the Pittsburgh Symphony, and a return to the Baltimore Symphony with Marin Alsop for Leonard Bernstein's *Jeremiah* Symphony (which was recorded live for Naxos); writing about this last, the Baltimore Sun praised "the riveting contributions of soloist Jennifer Johnson Cano. Her deep, velvety mezzo and impassioned phrasing gave Jeremiah's warnings such startling immediacy that I wouldn't have been surprised to see people in the hall ducking under their seats." www.jenniferjohnsoncano.net

Dimitri Pittas (2004 George London Award), tenor, a native of New York City, sings the role of Cassio in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Otello*, which opens its 2015-16 season; he also appears later in the Met's season as Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*. In 2014-15 he sang Rodolfo in *La bohème* with Opera de Paris and Opera National de Bordeaux, and the title role of *Don Carlo* in a new production for Opera Philadelphia, directed by Tim Albery. Dimitri also sang the tenor solo in Verdi's Requiem with the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin. Last season, Dimitri debuted with the Bolshoi Opera of Moscow in the title role of *Don Carlo*, and as Oronte in *I Lombardi* with the Hamburg State Opera. He also appeared as Rodolfo in *La bohème* and Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera* with the Canadian Opera Company, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* with Deutsche Oper Berlin. In New York, he sang in the Metropolitan Opera's 2012 production of *Macbeth*, about which the New York Times said, "As Macduff, Dimitri Pittas offered one of the most moving moments in [the] evening ... with a heartfelt, expressively rendered version of 'Ah, la paterna mano.'" www.dimitripittas.com

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 2015 competition, a total of \$71,500 was given

in the form of six George London Awards of \$10,000, and eight Encouragement Awards of \$1,000, with Honorable Mention awards of \$500 going to the seven remaining finalists.

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.

Visit www.georgelondon.org

George London Award Winners 1971-2015 – A Selected List

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

GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION FOR SINGERS 2015-16 SEASON

Sunday, October 18, 2015, at 4:00 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

George London Foundation Recital

ERIN WALL, Soprano

ZACHARY NELSON, Baritone

Spencer Myer, Piano

Tickets: \$50

Friday, February 19, 2016, at 4:00 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

45th ANNUAL GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION AWARDS COMPETITION

Final Round and Awards Announcement

Tickets: \$25

Wednesday, April 6, 2016, at 7:00 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION CELEBRATION CONCERT:

Twenty Years of Recitals In Collaboration with the Morgan

Ben Heppner, Master of Ceremonies

Christine Brewer, Soprano

Brandon Cedel, Bass-baritone

Susanne Mentzer, Mezzo-soprano

James Morris, Bass-baritone

Eric Owens, Bass-baritone

Ailyn Pérez, Soprano

Matthew Polenzani, Tenor

Sondra Radvanovsky, Soprano

Ken Noda, Piano

Craig Rutenberg, Piano

Tickets: \$75

Sunday, May 15, 2016, at 4:00 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

George London Foundation Recital

DIMITRI PITTAS, Tenor

JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO, Mezzo-soprano

Christopher Cano, Piano

Tickets: \$50

Subscription to the three-recital series: \$160. Tickets and information: (646) 461-3578, info@georgelondon.org

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