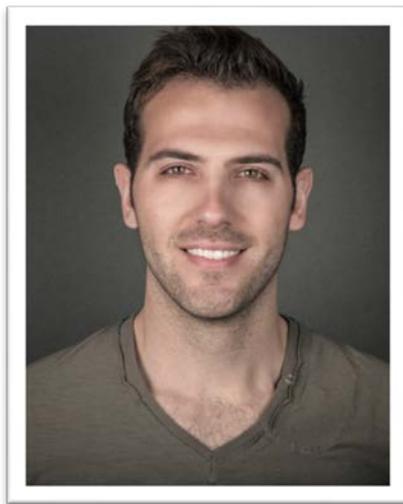




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**ISABEL LEONARD, MEZZO-SOPRANO, AND JARED BYBEE, BARITONE,  
LAUNCH THE 2016-17 SEASON OF THE GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION  
FOR SINGERS WITH A RECITAL ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2016, AT 4:00 PM,  
AT THE MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

**Isabel Leonard Returns to NYC for the Event in the Midst of Performances of  
*Norma* with the Canadian Opera Company – Her Role Debut as Adalgisa**



Isabel Leonard, photo by Becca Fay ([Download](#))  
Jared Bybee, photo by Doria Bybee ([Download](#))

Last April, the George London Foundation for Singers concluded the 20<sup>th</sup> year of its celebrated **George London Foundation Recital Series** with a gala featuring some of opera's most prominent American and Canadian stars. The foundation has been honoring, supporting, and presenting the finest young opera singers in the U.S. and Canada since 1971, and the annual series presents pairs of outstanding opera singers, many of whom were winners of a George London Award, the prize of the foundation's annual vocal competition.

The 2016-17 season of the George London Foundation Recital Series launches on Sunday, October 9, presenting New York City native **Isabel Leonard**, one of the world's most acclaimed young mezzo-sopranos, and **Jared Bybee** (of Modesto, California), a young baritone who has been receiving critical raves in productions of Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts, where he is in his fourth year as a resident artist. Mr. Bybee is a 2016 winner of a George London Encouragement Award. They are joined by Djordje Nestic, piano.

Just three days before the event, Isabel Leonard makes her debut in the role of Adalgisa in Bellini's *Norma* at the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto (to which she will return to finish the run right afterward), her first of three major role debuts this season. So, fittingly, her portion of the October 9 program includes "Sgombra è la sacra selva...Deh! proteggimi, o Dio!" – Adalgisa's Act I aria –as well as the "Habanera" from Bizet's *Carmen*, and a set of Spanish songs: "Clavelitos" by Valverde, "La tarara" by Lorca, "Oración de las madres que tienen a sus hijos en brazos" by de Falla, and "Gracia mía" by Granados.

Jared Bybee will perform Ravel's song cycle *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*, "Vision fugitive" from Massenet's *Hérodiade*, and *Voices from World War II*, a 1998 song cycle by composer/librettist Gene Scheer, whose most recent opera collaborations were with composers Joby Talbot (*Everest*) and Jennifer Higdon (*Cold Mountain*, whose premiere productions featured Isabel Leonard in the principal role of Ada). The two singers will conclude first half of the program with a performance of the duet "Il core vi dono" from Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, and for the concert finale will sing the duet "Crudel! Perchè finora" from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

### **Recent Praise for Isabel Leonard and Jared Bybee**

When Isabel Leonard performed the role of Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Metropolitan Opera early this year, James Oestreich called her "wonderful" in a New York Times review titled "In the Met's 'Figaro,' a Scene Stealer in Her Element," continuing: "Ms. Leonard's lustrous, full-bodied mezzo-soprano and her exquisite comic timing seized attention at every turn." In May, she participated in the 125th anniversary gala of Carnegie Hall, where she is a member of the board of trustees.

And, of an April Academy of Vocal Arts production of *Il Tabarro*, David Patrick Stearns said in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, "Jared Bybee carried the show with his smoldering characterization of the cuckolded husband, whose snapping point was effectively timed and sung with his formidable baritone" – the latest instance of acclaim that Bybee has received in the *Inquirer*.

The **George London Foundation's 2016-17 season** continues with three more events:

- **Paul Appleby**, tenor, and **Sarah Mesko**, mezzo-soprano, in recital. Mr. Appleby won his George London Award in 2011, and Ms. Mesko won hers in 2015. *Sunday, March 5, 2017, at 4:00 pm*
- The 46<sup>th</sup> 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 2017 competition takes place February 13-17, and the public is invited to attend the competition finals and awards announcement on *Friday, February 17, 2017, at 4:00 PM*. The 2016 competition winners were sopranos Antonina Chehovska, Kirsten MacKinnon, and Claudia Rosenthal; tenor A. J. Glueckert; and baritones Steven LaBrie and David Pershall.

- **Amber Wagner**, soprano, and **Reginald Smith, Jr.**, baritone, in recital. Ms. Wagner won her George London Award in 2010, and Mr. Smith won his in 2015. [Sunday, April 2, 2017, at 4:00 pm](#)

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

### ***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 earlier this year, “this prestigious competition, which, now in its 45th year, can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera.” Visit [www.georgelondon.org](http://www.georgelondon.org).

**Isabel Leonard**, mezzo-soprano, in 2016-17 season makes her role debut as Adalgisa in *Norma* at the Canadian Opera Company, her role debut as Charlotte in *Werther* at Teatro Comunale di Bologna with Juan Diego Flórez and Michele Mariotti, followed by *Werther* at the Metropolitan Opera, and her role debut as Donna Elvira in a new production of *Don Giovanni* at Festival D’Aix-en-Provence. She is a recent Grammy Award winner for Ravel’s *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges* with Seiji Ozawa on Decca (Best Opera Recording) and the recipient of the 2013 Richard Tucker Award. She began the 2015-16 season singing the lead role in the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s *Cold Mountain* at the Santa Fe Opera, about which The Wall Street Journal said, “Isabel Leonard was a beautiful, believable Ada, the richness of her mezzo evoking Ada’s reserve and desire.” She won praise also for the opera’s spring production at Opera Philadelphia.

Isabel Leonard recently joined the supporters of the Prostate Cancer Foundation to lend her voice in honor of her father who died from the disease when she was in college; she is also a member of the board of trustees of Carnegie Hall. In recent years, she has participated in a number of projects geared toward children, among them a recording of Rob Kapilow’s musical interpretation of *Dr. Seuss’s Gertrude McFuzz*, and a recent CD release from Doctor Noize, *Phineas McBoof Crashes the Symphony*. She has also performed on [Sesame Street](http://Sesame Street). <http://isabelleleonard.com>

**Jared Bybee**, baritone, is a fourth-year resident artist at the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, under the direction of maestro Christopher Macatsoris and voice teacher Bill Schuman. There, he has performed such roles as Guglielmo (*Così Fan Tutte*), Prince Yeletsky (*Pique Dame*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Valentin (*Faust*), the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Manfredo (*L’Amore Dei Tre Re*), about which The Philadelphia Inquirer said, “Jared Bybee has a well-honed voice, and a natural way of projecting the opera’s highly colored rhetoric with truth in every phrase,” and Michele (*Il Tabarro*). He is currently preparing to perform the roles of Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), the title role in Anton Rubinstein’s *The Demon*, and the title role of *Rigoletto* this season.

In addition to being an Encouragement Award winner at the 2016 George London Foundation Competition, Jared Bybee was a Grant winner at the 2014 and 2015 and a Fifth Prize winner at the 2016

Licia-Albanese Puccini Foundation International Vocal Competitions, a Finalist in the 2015 International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition held at the Dutch National Opera, an Encouragement Award winner at the 2014 and a Fifth Prize winner at the 2015 Giulio Gari Foundation International Vocal Competitions, and was nominated for a 2015 and 2016 Sarah Tucker Study Grant by the Richard Tucker Music Foundation. In May of 2018 Jared will perform the role of Lescaut (*Manon Lescaut*) with the Gran Teatre Del Liceu in Barcelona. [www.jaredbybee.com](http://www.jaredbybee.com)

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**Sunday, October 9, 2016, at 4:00 pm**

***Gilder Lehrman Hall at The Morgan Library & Museum***

***225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street, New York City***

**The George London Foundation Recital Series presents**

**ISABEL LEONARD, Mezzo-soprano**

**JARED BYBEE, Baritone**

**Djordje Nestic, Piano**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>RAVEL</b>    | <b><i>Don Quichotte à Dulcinée</i></b><br><b>Mr. Bybee &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>                                     |
| <b>VALVERDE</b> | <b>"Clavelitos"</b>   |
| <b>LORCA</b>    | <b>"La tarara"</b>  |
| <b>FALLA</b>    | <b>"Oración de las madres que tienen a sus hijos en brazos"</b>   |
| <b>GRANADOS</b> | <b>"Gracia mía"</b><br><b>Ms. Leonard &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>  |
| <b>BIZET</b>    | <b>"Habanera" from <i>Carmen</i></b><br><b>Ms. Leonard &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>                                     |
| <b>MOZART</b>   | <b>"Il core vi dono" from <i>Così Fan Tutte</i></b><br><b>Ms. Leonard, Mr. Bybee &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>           |
| <b>MASSNET</b>  | <b>"Vision fugitive" from <i>Hérodiade</i></b><br><b>Mr. Bybee &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>                             |
| <b>BELLINI</b>  | <b>"Deh! Proteggimi, o Dio!" from <i>Norma</i></b><br><b>Ms. Leonard &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>                       |
| <b>SCHEER</b>   | <b><i>Voices from World War II</i> (1998)</b><br><b>Mr. Bybee &amp; Mr. Nestic</b>                              |
| <b>MOZART</b>   | <b>"Crudel! Perchè finora" from <i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i></b><br><b>Ms. Leonard, Mr. Bybee &amp; Mr. Nestic</b> |

***Tickets: \$50***

***Call (212) 956-2809, e-mail [info@georgelondon.org](mailto:info@georgelondon.org)***

***[www.georgelondon.org](http://www.georgelondon.org)***

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*September 12, 2016*