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George and Nora London Foundation for Singers 2023-24 Season: Lindsay Kate Brown and Blake Denson in Recital, and the 52nd George and Nora London Foundation Competition



Lindsay Kate Brown, Blake Denson

Recitals by rising young opera stars and one of the vocal world's most prestigious competitions comprise the **George and Nora London Foundation for Singers** 2023-24 season of events at New York's Morgan Library and Museum. Mezzo-soprano Lindsay Kate Brown, a 2020 George London Award winner, and baritone Blake Denson, who won his George London Award in 2022, each performs a solo program, and the 52nd year of the foundation's competition for American and Canadian opera singers will confer 2024 George London Awards on five of the opera world's most promising young artists.

The George London Award and the foundation are named for the legendary Canadian-American bass-baritone, one of the great opera singers of 20th century.

Mezzo-soprano **Lindsay Kate Brown** performs in recital with pianist Alex Munger on **Sunday, October 22, 2023**, a program of works by Alma Mahler, Joseph Marx, Samuel Barber, and others. Ms. Brown was recently a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, and an Apprentice Artist at Santa Fe Opera where she performed the roles of Hippolyta in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, conducted by Harry Bicket, and Marcellina in Laurent Pelly's new production of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.

The **George and Nora London Foundation Competition Final Round** is a public event that takes place on **Friday, February 16, 2024**, at which approximately a dozen singers compete for five George London

Awards of \$12,000 each. Those finalists who do not receive George London Awards receive Encouragement Awards of \$2,000. As The New York Times has noted, “this prestigious competition ... can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera.” Michael Fennelly is the event’s pianist.

Baritone **Blake Denson** performs in recital with pianist Kevin Miller on **Sunday, April 28, 2024**, a program of music by Francesco Santoliquido, Shawn E. Okpebholo, Franz Schubert, and Johannes Brahms. In the 2022-23 season, Denson made his German debut in *La fanciulla del West* with the Bayerische Staatsoper; performed at Staatsoper Hamburg, making his house debut in a new production of *Carmen*; and made his debut with English National Opera in a new production of *Das Rheingold*. This summer he makes his Santa Fe Opera debut in productions of *Tosca* and *Orfeo*.

George London and the George and Nora London Foundation for Singers

George London (1920-1985) was one of the greatest opera stars of the 20th century, who blazed a trail for American singers on the international stage and created some of the most indelible interpretations of prominent bass-baritone roles. In his later years, he devoted much of his time and energy to the support and nurturing of young singers, in partnership with his wife, Nora. Since 1971, the foundation’s annual competition has given more than 300 awards, and a total of more than \$2 million, to an outstanding roster of young American and Canadian opera singers who have gone on to international stardom – the list of past winners includes Joyce DiDonato, Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, Ryan Speedo Green, Catherine Malfitano, James Morris, Eric Owens, Matthew Polenzani, Sondra Radvanovsky, Neil Shicoff, Dawn Upshaw, and Willard White.

In addition to the annual competition, the George and Nora London Foundation also presents a recital series to give grantees exposure and experience, and, in many cases, a New York recital debut. The foundation also awards scholarships to promising high school students attending the pre-college program of The Juilliard School, a program now in its 12th year.

www.georgeandnorahouston.org

Lindsay Kate Brown, mezzo-soprano (2020 George London Award winner, Waterloo, NY), joined The Metropolitan Opera in 2021-22 to cover roles in Stephen Wadsworth’s production of Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*, Matthew Aucoin’s *Eurydice*, and the famous Richard Eyre production of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. Of her 2021 engagement as Hippolyta in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Santa Fe Opera, Opera Today said, “Theseus (Cory McGee) and Hippolyta (Lindsey Kate Brown) had little stage time, but when they did, they shone. ... Ms. Brown’s generous dramatic mezzo was throbbing with vitality.”

During her time as an artist with the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Ms. Brown sang the role of Giovanna in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Zweite Dame in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*. During a recent summer at Wolf Trap Opera as a Filene Artist, she made her debut as Komponist in Strauss’ *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Ms. Brown is a recipient of a number of awards and honors, and was a finalist in the 2020 Metropolitan National Council Auditions a week after her George London Award win. Ms. Brown graduated in 2018 from Rice University with an Artist Diploma in Opera Performance, and in 2016 received a degree in Opera Performance from Binghamton University. In 2013, Ms. Brown graduated from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania with degrees in both Music Performance and Music Education. An advocate for education in the arts, Ms. Brown founded the non-profit organization United in Opera in December 2020, with the goal of providing access to information, resources, and mentorship to young members of the opera community. www.lindsaykatebrown.com

Blake Denson, baritone (2022 *George London Award winner, Paducah, KY*), is praised for his "captivating dramatic interpretations" with "a striking upper register" and "a sound that boomed to the back of the house" (OperaWire). In the 2022-23 season, Denson made his German debut in *La fanciulla del West* with the Bayerische Staatsoper singing the role of Larkens; performed at Staatsoper Hamburg, making his house debut in a new production of *Carmen* singing the role of Morales; and made his debut with English National Opera as Donner in a new production of *Das Rheingold*. He also sang the role of Schaunard in Washington National Opera's production of *La bohème*, and sang Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Paducah Symphony. This summer he makes his debut with Santa Fe Opera, as Angelotti in *Tosca* and Plutone in *Orfeo*.

Mr. Denson was a winner of a 2022 Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, the 2022 Zenith Competition, and the 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Other competition wins include multiple awards in both the International Concours Tenor Viñas Competition and the Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition. His roles and appearances in his first years in Houston Grand Opera included Peter in *Hansel und Gretel*, Soloist in *Giving Voice*, Soloist in *Suite Español*, and Daddy/Tim in the world premiere of *The Snowy Day*. Blake Denson is an alumnus of Wolf Trap Opera, the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and the University of Kentucky.

www.blakeadenson.com

George and Nora London Foundation for Singers 2023-24 Season

Sunday, October 22, 2023, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

George and Nora London Foundation Recital

LINDSAY KATE BROWN, Mezzo-soprano

Alex Munger, piano

Works by Alma Mahler, Joseph Marx, Samuel Barber, and others

Tickets: \$55

Friday, February 16, 2024, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

52nd ANNUAL GEORGE AND NORA LONDON FOUNDATION COMPETITION

Final Round and Awards Announcement

Tickets: \$55

Sunday, April 28, 2024, at 4:00 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

George and Nora London Foundation Recital

BLAKE DENSON, Baritone

Kevin Miller, piano

Works by Francesco Santoliquido, Shawn E. Okpebholo, Franz Schubert, and Johannes Brahms

Tickets: \$55

Tickets and information: info@georgeandnoralondon.org

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John Hauser, President

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