



Oratorio Society of New York

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ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 40TH ANNUAL LYNDON WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION:

First Place: JOSHUA BLUE, Tenor

Second Place: JOSEPH BEUTEL, Bass-baritone

Third Place: ISAIAH BELL, Tenor



Joshua Blue receiving his First Place award from Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Chairwoman Janet Plucknett, and in performance (photos by Tim Dwight)

April 10, 2017 – New York, NY – The tenor **Joshua Blue** is the First Place winner of the Oratorio Society of New York (OSNY)'s 2017 **Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition**. The award was presented following a performance by eight finalists in Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall on Saturday, April 8. The Oratorio-Solo Competition, the only competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing and now in its 40th year. The full list of finalists and prizes is:

- **Joshua Blue**, tenor: Ellen Lopin Blair Award for **First Place**, \$7,000
- **Joseph Beutel**, bass-baritone: Stanley C. Meyerson Award for **Second Place**, \$5,000
- **Isaiah Bell**, tenor: Docia Goodwin Franklin Award for **Third Place**, \$2,500
- **Hélène Brunet**, soprano: Johannes Somary Award, \$2,500
- **Sarah Mesko**, mezzo-soprano: Frances MacEachron Award, \$1,500
- **Marjorie Maltais**, mezzo-soprano: Lyndon Woodside Encouragement Award, \$1,000
- **Heather Petrie**, contralto: Robert & Winifred Connelly Green Award, \$1,000
- **Melissa Kornacki**, mezzo-soprano: Leopold Damrosch Award, \$1,000

Joshua Blue, a first-year Master's student at The Juilliard School, sang "Jesu, Maria" from Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and "Ev'ry valley shall be exalted" from Handel's *Messiah* to win the top prize.

The panel of judges for the finals consisted of **Julianne Baird**, soprano, Baroque performance authority and Distinguished Professor of Music at Rutgers; **Steven Fox**, Artistic Director of the Clarion Orchestra and the Clarion Choir, and founder of Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg in Russia; **Frank Nemhauser**, Music Director of Berkshire Choral International, Director of Vocal Studies and Associate Professor at Mannes School of Music, and Music Director of the Westchester Choral Society; **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 **Julian Wachner**, Director of Music and the Arts at New York's Trinity Church Wall Street, and the principal conductor of NOVUS NY, the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street.

The finals accompanist was Linda Hall, an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera.

This year's competition honored OSNY board member Alfred Hubay for his 25th anniversary on the board and as a Oratorio-Solo Competition judge. A longtime administrator at the Metropolitan Opera and member of the Met's radio broadcast Opera Quiz, Mr. Hubay has served on the boards of many of New York's musical organizations, and has also been a judge for the competitions of the George London Foundation and the Gulio Gari Voice Competition.

This year the Competition had 159 applicants from around the world – as far afield as Mexico, England, and Germany – and the eight finalists came from across the U.S. and Canada.

"As one of the panel of five judges, I know I can speak for my colleagues when I say that the level of singing this year was the highest in our experience," said OSNY Music Director Kent Tritle. "This in turn made our decision-making very difficult! But we were thrilled to have the opportunity to award prizes to all participants, and look forward to watching their careers grow and develop in this very special repertoire."

Joshua Blue, tenor, is from England and Chicago, and is now a first year Master's student at The Juilliard School, pursuing a degree in vocal performance under the tutelage of Dr. Robert White. Blue was recently a Gerdine Young Artist with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and will return to the company in the summer of 2017 as a Gaddes Festival Artist, singing the role of Guard 1(Franz)/Block/Offstage Voice in the U.S. premiere of Philip Glass's *The Trial*; he will also sing Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* with Music Academy of the West. Joshua graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory with a B.M. in vocal performance in 2016 and anticipates graduating from the Juilliard School with a M.M. in vocal performance in 2018. He was also a student of Jennifer Barnickel-Fitch at Waubonsie Valley High School, a Grammy Signature school located in Aurora, Illinois. www.joshuabluetenor.com

Joseph Beutel, bass-baritone, from Ft. Wayne, IN, will perform the role of Peter in Elgar's *The Apostles* with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Brahms Requiem with Musica Viva, and the Mozart Requiem with the Hudson Chorale. www.josephbeutel.com

Isaiah Bell, tenor, of Victoria, BC, performed the role of the Madwoman in Britten's Curlew River at BAM, with the Toronto Symphony in Benjamin's Written on Skin and Messiah, and with the Edinburgh Festival, the Seattle Symphony, Opera in Metz, and at Tanglewood. www.isaiahbell.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 OSNY, New York's 200-voice avocational chorus, has become the city's standard for grand, joyous choral performance. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org
