



THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

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Announcing the 2021 Lotte Lenya Competition Semifinalists

31 performers selected from a pool of 500 international contestants to compete for a chance to win top prizes of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000; total prizes to exceed \$75,000; star-studded panels of musical theatre and opera experts and previous Competition prizewinners to adjudicate the semifinals and finals.

NEW YORK (March 10, 2021) — Kim H. Kowalke, President and CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation, is pleased to announce the semifinalists for the 2021 Lotte Lenya Competition.

Gan-ya Ben-gur Akselrod (Israel, 33)
Julie Benko (USA, 31)
Adelaide Boedecker (USA, 32)
Avery Boettcher (USA, 28)
Angela Bonello (USA, 21)
Benjamin Camenzuli (Canada, 28)
Max Chernin (USA, 30)
Joshua Conyers (USA, 32)
Tychiko Cox (Bahamas, 32)
Blake Denson (USA, 25)
Monica Dewey (USA, 31)
Taylor-Alexis DuPont (USA, 30)
Charles Eaton (USA, 30)
Nicole Fernandez-Coffaro (USA, 28)
Kaden Forsberg (Canada, 29)
Daniella Friesen (Canada, 32)

Katrina Galka (USA, 31)
Dylan Glenn (USA, 27)
Richard Glöckner (Germany, 26)
Sarah Goodman (USA, 26)
Matthew Hill (USA, 30)
Rebekah Howell (USA, 29)
Helen Zhibing Huang (China, 28)
Lauren Joyanne Morris (United Kingdom, 30)
Victoria Okafor (USA, 25)
Andrew Polec (USA, 32)
Katherine Riddle (USA, 29)
Kaileigh Riess (USA, 26)
Luke Sikora (USA, 32)
Sacha Smith (Canada, 26)
Ryan Wolfe (USA, 24)

In addition to the semifinalists, eight applicants received Emerging Talent Awards with a cash prize of \$500 each: Haley Dortch (USA, 19), Nicole Goldstein (USA, 23), Lydia Graham (USA, 22), Brandon Roth (USA, 22), Eric Sebek (USA, 19), Ruby Shadley (USA, 23), Ayaka Shimada (Japan, 22) and David Young (USA, 22). The recipient of the Grace Keagy Award for Outstanding Vocal Talent in the amount of \$500 is Katherine Beck (USA, 30).

The 2021 competition received a staggering 500 applications, shattering previous year records, with submissions from twenty-nine countries and 39 U.S. states. Each applicant submitted a video performance of four contrasting song selections including musical theater, opera, and Kurt Weill repertoire.

The semifinal round will take place via video audition and online coaching sessions in mid-April. For the first time in the competition's 23-year history, two previous top prizewinners will return as judges: Broadway mainstay **Analisa Leaming** (2007), and opera and musical theater globetrotter **Zachary James** (2009), will join Broadway and opera star and four-time Lenya Competition judge **Lisa Vroman** to complete the trio of semifinal coach/adjudicators. The semifinalists will compete for a spot in the 2021 finals, which will take place live and in-person on **29 May**, or, should circumstances not allow for that date, in late August, in either Rochester, NY or New York City. Leading artists from theater, opera, television, and film make up the star-studded panel of finals judges: Tony Award-winning actress, singer, and director **Victoria Clark**, renowned Broadway music director and conductor **Andy Einhorn**, and Obie Award-winning actress and singer, **Mary Beth Peil**, who launched her career as the winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. The final round will be live-streamed on the Lenya Competition website (<https://www.kwf.org/pages/lotte-lenya-competition.html>) and available as a broadcast on OperaVision shortly after the finals date (<https://operavision.eu/en>).

In addition to the top prizes of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000, discretionary awards ranging from \$3,500 to \$5,000 recognize outstanding finals performances of individual numbers or particular aspects of performances. Also this year, finals judges may choose to bestow the inaugural Rebecca Luker Award, for an outstanding performance of a selection from the Golden Age of American musical theater. The award was established by the Kurt Weill Foundation in honor of Broadway star and six-time Lenya Competition judge **Rebecca Luker**, who passed away late last year due to complications caused by ALS. All semifinalists who do not advance to the finals will receive an award of \$500. Total prizes will exceed \$75,000.

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About the Lotte Lenya Competition

More than a vocal competition, the Lotte Lenya Competition recognizes talented young singer/actors who are dramatically and musically convincing in repertoire ranging from opera/opera to contemporary Broadway scores, with a focus on the works of Kurt Weill. Since its inception in 1998, the Lotte Lenya Competition has grown into an internationally recognized leader in identifying and nurturing the next generation of "total-package performers" (*Opera News*) and rising stars in both the opera and musical theater worlds. The roster of prizewinners has likewise grown to over 100, many of whom have gone on to major performing careers.

About the Kurt Weill Foundation

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. (<http://www.kwf.org>) is dedicated to promoting understanding of the life and works of composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) and preserving the legacies of Weill and his wife, actress-singer Lotte Lenya (1898-1981). The Foundation administers the Weill-Lenya Research Center, a Grant Program, the Kurt Weill Book Prize and the Lotte Lenya Competition, and publishes the Kurt Weill Edition and the Kurt Weill Newsletter.