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**Opera Columbus Hosts “Olympics of Opera”**

***Annual Cooper-Bing Competition Offers Vocalists Opportunity to Win $10,000***

(Columbus, OH) – Opera Columbus’ annual Cooper-Bing Competition, an operatic vocal competition that draws top vocalists from around the world to Columbus to compete for a grand prize of $10,000, will stream from the Southern Theatre, May 16 at 3pm. This year’s competition attracted 234 contestants, with five selected as finalists.

Julia Noulin-Mérat, Opera Columbus’ General Director + CEO since January, refers to the Cooper-Bing Competition as the “Olympics of Opera.”

“This competition, providing emerging vocalists with the opportunity to showcase their talents, is something I always admired about Opera Columbus, and I am beyond excited to welcome this year’s finalists to Columbus to share their voices.”

The finalists who will travel to Columbus to compete this year are:

**Alice Chung**, mezzo-soprano, Loma Linda, CA  
**Matheus Luduwig Coura**, countertenor, Vila Velha, Brazil  
**Edwin Jhamal Davis**, bass, Utica, MS (NYC)  
**Adia Evans**, soprano, Baltimore, MD **Joseph Leppek**, tenor, Novi, MI   
  
“Each finalist will present two songs to this year’s panel of judges,” said Noulin-Mérat. “This year, patrons will have the unique opportunity to hear the judges’ evaluation following each performance.”

Judges for this year’s Cooper-Bing Competition are **Barbara Lynne Jamison**, General Director/CEO Kentucky Opera; **Kelly Kuo**, Artistic Director, Oregon Mozart Players and Associate Artistic Director, American Lyric Theatre; and **Evans Mirageas,**Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director, Cincinnati Opera.

“The annual Cooper-Bing Competition aligns perfectly with Opera Columbus’ mission to celebrate young operatic talent,” said Noulin-Mérat. “I encourage anyone who appreciates operatic singing to join us in recognizing the next generation of opera stars.”

The cost to purchase a ticket to view the 2021 Cooper-Bing Competition (virtual) is $15.58. Tickets are available at [www.OperaColumbus.org](http://www.operacolumbus.org/).

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**About the Cooper-Bing Competition**

Opera Columbus launched the first Cooper-Bing Competition in 1983 under the leadership of Irma M. Cooper, two years after the company was founded. The vocal competition aims to celebrate and support young operatic talent by providing exposure and constructive feedback from esteemed professionals within the opera industry. The competition has helped to launch the careers of world-renowned opera singers such as Denyce Graves, Dina Kuznetsova, Richard Paul Fink, Lucas Meachem, Nicole Heaston, Richard Zeller, Susan Foster, and Alyson Cambridge. The competition has been hosted in several of Columbus’ performance venues, including the Palace Theatre, the Ohio Theatre, Mees Hall at Capital University’s Conservatory of Music, Weigel Hall Auditorium at The Ohio State University, and the Southern Theatre. Annual donations for the competition made by Arthur and Hetty Bing ensure the sustainability of the program.

**About Opera Columbus**

Under the vision of General Director + CEO, Julia Noulin-Mérat, Opera Columbus is redefining and reimagining the concept of regional opera with world-class productions that celebrate extraordinary talent and artistic partnerships, engaging a new, diverse audience for this most magnificent of artforms. From groundbreaking collaborations to innovative and breathtaking productions, Opera Columbus is passionate about creating artistic moments for each and every patron. Opera Columbus’s slogan, “Make It Yours,” demonstrates the company’s commitment to inclusivity, and invites everyone in the community to join with us.

For more information, visit [www.OperaColumbus.org](http://www.operacolumbus.org/)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/OperaColumbus](http://www.facebook.com/OperaColumbus)  
Instagram: @Opera.Columbus   
Twitter: @OperaColumbus

Join the conversation by using #CooperBingCompetition #MakeItYours  
  
Support for Opera Columbus’ 2020-2021 season is provided by the Cardinal Health, The Columbus Foundation, Greater Columbus Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Nationwide, Ohio Arts Council, the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, Voice Center, and PNC Arts Alive.

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