



Opera Columbus' Cooper-Bing Competition Announces Finalists, Return to Live Audience

Five Young Artists Will Compete to Win \$10,000 in Annual "Olympics of Opera"

(Columbus, OH) – Five outstanding young artists have been selected to participate in Opera Columbus' annual Cooper-Bing Competition. The operatic vocal competition drew a record-breaking pool of 270 submissions, attracting talent from around the world to compete for the grand prize of \$10,000.

The competition's final round takes place at the Southern Theatre on May 15, 2022 at 3:00pm, and will be featured as part of the 40 Days of Opera festival, celebrating Opera Columbus' 40th anniversary. Clare Burovac (General Director, New Orleans Opera), Kathleen Kelly (Conductor, Pianist, Educator and Writer), and Dr. Everett McCorvey (Director of Opera Theatre, Lexington Opera Society Endowed Chair in Opera Studies, Professor of Ensemble Directors, University of Kentucky) serve as judges for the competition, with longtime accompanist Ed Bak returning to the piano. Christopher Purdy (Classical Host, Classical 101) and Adia Evans (Opera Columbus Capital University Resident Artist and 2021 Cooper-Bing Competition Finalist) will emcee.

"I have the great pleasure of judging many competitions throughout the country and I am very excited when I hear exciting young talent," says Dr. McCorvey, who joins the judges' panel for the first time this year. "In order for our profession to continue to produce top young singers, we need to have competitions like the Cooper-Bing Competition to offer support to the next generation of opera stars."

The finalists who will compete in Columbus this year are:

Aaron Crouch, Tenor, Waldorf, MD
Alex DeSocio, Baritone, Aurora, CO
Sophie Michaux, Mezzo-Soprano, Conway, MA
Nicole Woodward, Soprano, Quincy, FL
Wooyoung Yoon, Tenor, New York, NY

"I have always admired Opera Columbus' dedication to providing emerging vocalists with an opportunity to showcase their talent, and couldn't be happier that we are able to open the doors of the Southern to a live audience this year," remarked Opera Columbus' General Director + CEO, Julia Noulin-Mérat. "Nothing can match the energy of full house ready to hear new talent. I can't wait to hear our finalists this year."

Immediately following the competition, The Winner's Circle reception will toast the artists, with light refreshments provided. The Winner's Circle will be co-hosted by Gretta Goodbottom.

Winner's Circle tickets are \$40, and include both the competition and reception. Standard tickets to the competition are \$18.50. Tickets go on sale Tuesday, April 19. Visit www.OperaColumbus.org for more information.

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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 Noulín-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

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Join the conversation by using #CooperBingCompetition #MakeItYours

Support for Opera Columbus' 2021-2022 season is provided by Bath and Body Works, Cardinal Health, The Columbus Foundation, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Nationwide, Ohio Arts Council, and the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, Voice Center.

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