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THE 2022 GEORGE LONDON AWARD WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

Mezzo-soprano Megan Moore, Tenor Eric Ferring, and Baritones Blake Denson, Erik Grendahl, and Timothy Murray Each Win \$10,000 Top Award at the 50th George London Foundation Competition

New York, NY – February 25, 2022 – The winners of the 50th **George London Foundation Competition** for young American and Canadian opera singers were announced at the conclusion of the competition’s final round this evening, which took place at Gilder Lehrman Hall at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York City. While the event is usually held with in-person audience, this year’s audience was virtual. Susanna Phillips, international opera star and 2005 George London Award winner, was the livestream host.

The event is now available to watch on demand on [the George London Foundation’s YouTube channel](#).

A total of \$64,000 was given in awards. Of the singers heard over three days of semi-final rounds, 12 were selected as finalists to perform at the Morgan. Of these, five were selected as winners of **George London Awards** of \$10,000 each. The remaining seven singers were awarded George London Encouragement Awards of \$2,000 each.



Event host Susanna Phillips, third from right, with 2022 George London Award winners (left to right) Erik Grendahl, Timothy Murray, Blake Denson, Megan Moore, and Eric Ferring. Photo by Jennifer Taylor ([Click here to download hi-res version](#).)

The **George London Foundation** and **George London Awards** are named for the legendary Canadian-American bass-baritone (1920-1985), one of the great opera singers of 20th century, who devoted much of his time and energy in his later years to the support and nurturing of young singers.

The competition judges were soprano Harolyn Blackwell, mezzo-soprano Susan Quittmeyer, bass James Morris, and George London Foundation Executive Director John Hauser. Michael Fennelly was the competition's pianist.

GEORGE LONDON AWARDS (\$10,000 each):

Blake Denson, baritone (25, Paducah, KY), who sang "Carlos, écoute" from Verdi's *Don Carlos* – *George London Award in honor of Nora London, sponsored by Ene Riisna*

Eric Ferring, tenor (29, Dubuque, IA), who sang "Una furtiva lagrima" from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* – *George London Award in memory of Leonie Rysanek, sponsored by Thurmond Smithgall*

Erik Grendahl, baritone (28, Boydton, VA), who sang "Pierrot's Tanzlied" from Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* – *George London Award in memory of Mary Palumbo, sponsored by Donald Palumbo*

Megan Moore, mezzo-soprano (31, Cincinnati, OH), who sang "Air des lettres" from Massenet's *Werther* – *George London Award in memory of Lloyd E. Rigler and Lawrence E. Deutsch, sponsored by The Lloyd E. Rigler and Lawrence E. Deutsch Foundation, James D. Rigler, President*

Timothy Murray, baritone (29, Whitefish Bay, WI), who sang "Vi molte pisali ... Kogda bi zhizn" from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* – *George London Award in memory of Kirsten Flagstad, sponsored by the New York Community Trust*

GEORGE LONDON ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS (\$2,000 each):

Erika Baikoff, soprano (28, Brooklyn, NY) – *Award in memory of Jaclyn Rendall Elyn, sponsored by Mark Elyn*

Cody Bowers, countertenor (29, Newnan, GA) – *Award in memory of Louis D'Angelo, sponsored by Robert Lombardo*

Thomas Cilluffo, tenor (29, Traverse City, MI) – *Award sponsored by Irwin S. Scherzer Foundation and Meche Kroop*

Edwin Jhamal Davis, bass (29, Utica, MS) – *Award in memory of Dr. Herbert N. Appel, sponsored by Susan Appel*

Sophie Naubert, soprano (23, Gaitneau, Quebec, Canada) – *Award in memory of Herbert J. Frank, sponsored by David Shustak*

Christopher Oglesby, tenor (33, Woodstock, GA) – *Award sponsored by Barbara Brookes and the Miriam and Arthur Diamond Charitable Trust*

Joseph Parrish, bass-baritone (24, Baltimore, MD) – *Award in memory of Howard Solomon, sponsored by Sarah Billingham Solomon*

Since 1971, the annual competition of The George London Foundation for Singers 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 Christine Brewer, Joyce DiDonato, Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, Catherine Malfitano, James Morris, Matthew Polenzani, Sondra Radvanovsky, Neil Shicoff, and Dawn Upshaw. As The New York Times recently noted, “this prestigious competition ... can rightfully claim to act as a springboard for major careers in opera.”

In the production of Terence Blanchard’s opera *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* that opened the Metropolitan Opera’s 2021-22 season, six George London Award winners were featured in the cast: Will Liverman, Latonia Moore, Ryan Speedo Green, Norman Garrett, Donovan Singletary, and Errin Duane Brooks.

One of the oldest vocal competitions in the United States and Canada, the George London Foundation Competition offers among the most substantial awards. As is seldom the case in musical competitions, no fee is charged to the applicants or competitors, a pianist is provided for the competition rounds, and prizes are awarded immediately.

“I have known for three generations how difficult the career of an opera singer remains,” said George London Foundation President Nora London at the announcement of the 2020 George London Awards. “This all started because George wanted to help – and now we have been giving these awards for almost 50 years.”

See the full list of George London Award winners: www.georgelondon.org/competition

The second event in the George London Foundation’s season is a recital by **Aaron Blake, tenor, with Ken Noda, piano** on Sunday, April 24, 2022, at 4:00 pm at The Morgan. Aaron Blake, a 2017 George London Award winner, has received recent acclaim for performances in some of the opera world’s most prominent productions: the role of Timothy Laughlin in Gregory Spears’s *Fellow Travelers*; a New York City Opera debut as Louis in Peter Eötvös’ operatic adaptation of *Angels in America*; The High Priest of Amon in Philip Glass’s *Akhmaten* at the Metropolitan Opera; and Tamino in the Komische Oper Berlin production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.

2022 George London Award Winners

Blake Denson, baritone (25, Paducah, KY) Blake Denson is praised for his "captivating dramatic interpretations" with "a striking upper register" and "a sound that boomed to the back of the house" (Opera Wire). Recently, Mr. Denson was named a winner in the International Concours Tenor Viñas Competition and the winner in The Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition winning multiple awards in both. Mr. Denson was also a Grand Finalist winner of the 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. 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*. In the 2021-22 season he will make his company debut with Des Moines Metro Opera singing the role of Jake in a new production of *Porgy and Bess*. In the upcoming season Mr. Denson will perform with Sante Fe Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, English National Opera, Staatsoper Hamburg, Washington National Opera, Houston Symphony, and Paducah Symphony. Denson is an alumnus of Wolf Trap Opera, the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and the University of Kentucky. His awards include Winner of the Concours Tenor Viñas Competition, First Prize/Legacy Award in National Opera Association, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston, the Orpheus Vocal Competition, the Perfect Day

competition, the Pasadena Vocal Competition, Partners in Arts Vocal Competition, Annapolis Vocal Competition, Opera Ithaca Vocal Competition, and Opera Mississippi Opera Competition.

www.blakeadenson.com

Eric Ferring, tenor (29, Dubuque, IA), graduated from Drake University with his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and Boston Conservatory with his Master of Music in Opera Performance. He is a graduate of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center and the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program. Eric Ferring makes his Metropolitan Opera debut during the 2021-22 season, singing Pong in *Turandot*. Additionally, he performs the role of Tamino for holiday performances of *The Magic Flute*, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and a Royal Herald in *Don Carlos*. In the summer, he makes his debut at Santa Fe Opera, singing Fenton in Sir David McVicar's new production of *Falstaff*. Future seasons include returns to Opéra de Rouen and Santa Fe Opera, and debuts with the Opéra de Paris and Opéra national du Rhin. Mr. Ferring has received prizes at many competitions including the Glyndebourne Opera Cup, Gerda Lissner Foundation International Voice Competition, American Opera Society of Chicago, Dorothy Lincoln-Smith Classical Voice Competition through the National Society of Arts and Letters, the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, as well as receiving grants/awards from the Richard Tucker Foundation, Sullivan Foundation, Santa Fe Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Mr. Ferring is the Project Curator for the new independent classical music label Lexicon Classics. He will release his solo debut album, *No Choice but Love*, under the Delos Records label in the winter of 2022 and a chamber music album, *We have tomorrow*, also with Delos in the winter of 2023, both featuring his longtime duo partner, Madeline Slettedahl. www.ericferring.com

Erik Grendahl, baritone (28, Boydton, VA) Praised by Opera News for his "smooth, copper-hued baritone," Erik Grendahl is a second year Master of Music student at the Juilliard School, where he studies with Darrell Babidge. He recently appeared as Endimione/Caronte and Torquato Tasso in the Juilliard Opera productions of Rossi's *L'Orfeo* and *Flowers and Tears*. Erik's other roles include Escamillo in IN Series Opera's adaptation of *Carmen*, the Count in Bel Cantanti Opera's production of *Le nozze di Figaro* and Joseph De Rocher in James Madison University (JMU) Opera's production of *Dead Man Walking*. Later this season, Erik will join the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice program singing Steuermann in *Tristan und Isolde* and covering René Gallimard in the world premiere of *M. Butterfly*. He is a New York District Winner in the 2021 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and is also a winner of the 2022 Juilliard Vocal Arts Honors Recital where he will perform his program at Alice Tully Hall Erik graduated from James Madison University with degrees in music and statistics. www.erikgrendahl.com

Megan Moore, mezzo-soprano (31, Cincinnati, OH), is as an award-winning opera and concert singer. In the 2021-22 season Megan creates the role of Ino in the world premiere of Corigliano & Adamo's *Lord of Cries* at Santa Fe Opera and looks forward to her Metropolitan Opera debut in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*. She also appears as Claire in *On the Town* at Opera Naples with Ramon Tebar at the podium. Concert highlights this season include film projects with The English Concert under the direction of Harry Bicket, and a world premiere by Jessica Meyer at the Shriver Hall Concert Series in Baltimore, Maryland, in partnership with violist Jordan Bak. Megan appears in recital at both the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C and Merkin Hall in New York City with her duo partner, pianist Francesco Barfoed. Megan has taken home top honors from Young Concert Artist International Auditions and the Jensen Foundation Vocal Competition, among others, and recently completed an Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School. In 2015 she co-founded LYNX, an art song initiative whose *Amplify Series* has commissioned over four hours of new art song with texts by young people with non-verbal autism. www.meganmooremezzo.com

Timothy Murray, baritone (29, Whitefish Bay, WI) Heralded for his “firm, flexible baritone” (New York Times) and “swaggering, rakish” stage presence (Opera News), baritone Timothy Murray has won recognition in competitions from the Sullivan Foundation, the Loren. L. Zachary Society, the Glyndebourne Opera Cup, the Mario Lanza competition, and he was a Grand Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He is currently a member of the Adler Fellowship Program with San Francisco Opera with past and present assignments in *Tosca*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Dialogue des Carmélites*, *Dream of Red Chamber*, and *La Traviata*. As a participant in the 2019 Merola Opera Program, he performed the role of Paul in the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s opera *If I Were You*, and finished out the summer on the War Memorial Opera House stage singing the title role in a scene from Thomas’ *Hamlet* as part of the Merola Grand Finale. Recent highlights include Schaunard (*La bohème*) with North Carolina Opera and Il Conte (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Mercutio (*Roméo et Juliette*) with The Academy of Vocal Arts. He debuts with the San Francisco Symphony in *Carmina Burana* this spring. www.timmurraybaritone.com

The George London Foundation for Singers

Nora E. London, President

John Hauser, Executive Director

www.georgelondon.org