

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
ERIC AND DOMINIQUE LAFFONT COMPETITION

GRAND FINALS CONCERT

CONDUCTOR
Evan Rogister

HOST
Denyce Graves

GUEST ARTIST
Ryan Speedo Green

Metropolitan
Opera Orchestra

Sunday, March 17, 2024
3:00PM

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Throughout the 2023–24 season, the Met continues to honor Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.

The Metropolitan Opera

2023–24 SEASON

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
ERIC AND DOMINIQUE LAFFONT COMPETITION

GRAND FINALS CONCERT

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HOST

Denyce Graves

"Tu preparati a morire" from *Ariodante* (Handel)

Ruby Dibble, Mezzo-Soprano

"Quel trouble inconnu ... Salut! demeure chaste et pure" from
Faust (Gounod)

Daniel Espinal, Tenor

"Crudele? ... Non mi dir" from *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

Emily Richter, Soprano

"La fleur que tu m'avais jetée" from *Carmen* (Bizet)

Eric Taylor, Tenor

"O ma lyre immortelle" from *Sapho* (Gounod)

Meridian Prall, Mezzo-Soprano

"In quali eccessi ... Mi tradi" from *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

Tessa McQueen, Soprano

"Ah, la paterna mano" from *Macbeth* (Verdi)

Demetrious Sampson, Jr., Tenor

"O sainte médaille ... Avant de quitter ces lieux" from *Faust*
(Gounod)

Navasard Hakobyan, Baritone

"Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano" from *La Fanciulla del West*
(Puccini)

Nathan Bowles, Tenor

This performance
is being broadcast
live on the SiriusXM
app and streamed at
metopera.org.

Sunday, March 17, 2024, 3:00PM

Tatiana's Letter Scene from *Eugene Onegin* (Tchaikovsky)
Lydia Grindatto, Soprano

Intermission

"Lunge da lei ... De' miei bollenti spiriti" from *La Traviata*
(Verdi)

Daniel Espinal, Tenor

"Depuis le jour" from *Louise* (Charpentier)

Emily Richter, Soprano

"Parto, parto" from *La Clemenza di Tito* (Mozart)

Meridian Prall, Mezzo-Soprano

"Kuda, kuda, kuda vy udalilis" from *Eugene Onegin*
(Tchaikovsky)

Demetrious Sampson, Jr., Tenor

"Sein wir wieder gut" from *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Strauss)

Ruby Dibble, Mezzo-Soprano

"Ecco la casa Dio, che orrenda notte! ... Torna ai felici di"
from *Le Villi* (Puccini)

Eric Taylor, Tenor

"Ain't it a pretty night?" from *Susannah* (Floyd)

Tessa McQueen, Soprano

"Morgenlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein" from
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (Wagner)

Nathan Bowles, Tenor

"Ya vas lyublyu" from *The Queen of Spades* (Tchaikovsky)

Navasard Hakobyan, Baritone

"È strano! è strano! ... Ah fors'è lui ... Sempre libera degg'io"
from *La Traviata* (Verdi)

Lydia Grindatto, Soprano

GUEST ARTIST

"Die Frist ist um" from *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Wagner)

Ryan Speedo Green, Bass-Baritone

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GRAND FINALS WINNERS

Before the performance
begins, please switch off
any cell phones and any
other electronic devices.

Sunday, March 17, 2024, 3:00PM



The Met
ropolitan
Opera

2023-24 SEASON

A scene from Puccini's *Turandot*

The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute
Bank of America in recognition of its generous
support during the 2023-24 season.

BANK OF AMERICA 

PHOTO: EVAN ZIMMERMAN / MET OPERA

Meet the Artists



Nathan Bowles

TENOR (MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA)

AGE: 27

Nathan Bowles recently made his mainstage debut at the Dallas Opera as Benvolio in *Roméo et Juliette*. He has performed with the Dallas Opera outreach as Miguel in Offenbach's *Pépito* and as Dandini in *The Billy Goats Gruff*. With Southern Methodist University's Meadows Lyric Theatre, he has appeared as the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* and Judge Danforth in Ward's *The Crucible*, and with Western Plains Opera, he has sung Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, the Baker in *Into the Woods*, John Styx in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and Don José in *Carmen*. Concert performances include Vaughan Williams's *Hodie*, Adolphus Hailstork's *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*, and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Annual Gala. He is a graduate of Minot State University and holds a master's degree from Southern Methodist University. Gulf Coast Region.



Ruby Dibble

MEZZO-SOPRANO (KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)

AGE: 28

Ruby Dibble holds a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and Conservatory and a master's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music. She is working towards an artist diploma in opera studies at the Juilliard School. At Curtis, she sang Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and Elle in Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine*. She has also appeared at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in concerts under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, sung Flora in *La Traviata* at Wolf Trap Opera and Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and covered Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Santa Fe Opera. She was a semifinalist in the 2022 and 2023 Lotte Lenya Competitions and the second-place winner of the 2023 Cooper-Bing Competition. She spent this past summer at the Aspen Music Festival as a Renée Fleming Artist, singing Carmen in Jimmy López Bellido's *Bel Canto*. Upcoming roles include Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at Juilliard and covering the title role of Kevin Puts's *Elizabeth Cree* at the Glimmerglass Festival. Midwest Region.



Daniel Espinal

TENOR (SARASOTA, FLORIDA)

AGE: 24

Daniel Espinal is currently in his final year of his graduate degree at Yale University, having previously received a bachelor's degree from Manhattan School of Music (MSM). He was also a young artist in San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program during the 2022–23 season. He appeared as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, and the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Yale Opera and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, and the tenor soloist in Mozart's Requiem at MSM. In the coming season, he will join the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago as an apprentice artist. New England Region.



Lydia Grindatto

SOPRANO (TIJERAS, NEW MEXICO)

AGE: 28

Lydia Grindatto is currently a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA), where she recently sang the title role of *Anna Bolena*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*. Later this year, she will join San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico, where she began her musical training and performed several seasons with Opera Southwest, including in the choruses of *Norma* and *Tosca*, covering Violetta, and singing a Page in *Lohengrin*. In 2023, she made her debut at the Santa Fe Opera singing the Second Wood Sprite and covering the title role in *Rusalka*. She has won several prestigious competitions, including the Opera Index Vocal Competition, Loren L. Zachary Society Competition, and Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition, and earned the top prize in AVA's Giargiari Bel Canto Competition. She has appeared as a soloist in concerts with Antigua y Moderna, the University of New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, the AVA Orchestra, and Opera Italiana Is in the Air. Later this year, she will make debuts with Arizona Opera as Donna Anna and Columbus Opera as Tatiana. Midwest Region.



Navasard Hakobyan

BARITONE (YEREVAN, ARMENIA)

AGE: 25

Navasard Hakobyan won first prize in the Dallas Opera's 2024 National Vocal Competition and third prize and the Don Plácido Domingo Ferrer Prize of Zarzuela in the 2023 Operalia competition. He is in his second year as a Houston Grand Opera Butler Studio Artist. His 2023–24 season includes appearances as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera, his debut as Grégorio in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Dallas Opera, and his debut at Carnegie Hall in a concert dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Rachmaninoff's birth. Future seasons include a debut at the Semperoper Dresden and a solo concert in Prague. Additional recent appearances include Marcello in *La Bohème* at Music Academy of the West and Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the Second Nazarene in *Salome* at Houston Grand Opera. From 2018 to 2023, he was a member of the young artist program at the National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Yerevan, where his roles included Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. He received his master's degree at Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan and was named the 2019 winner of the President of the Republic of Armenia Youth Prize. Eastern Region.

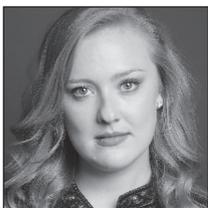


Tessa McQueen

SOPRANO (LOVELAND, COLORADO)

AGE: 26

Tessa McQueen is currently pursuing her master's degree at Rice University. This summer, she will join San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program, where she will cover Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Last summer, she joined Wolf Trap Opera as a studio artist and covered Marguerite in *Faust*. She was a studio artist at Central City Opera in 2022, singing Krystyna Żywulska in Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness: Two Remain*, and received the Young Artist of the Season Award and was a season-sponsored artist by the El Pomar Foundation. She also placed third in the Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition in 2023. On the concert stage, she has sung Mozart's *Great Mass in C Minor* with the Washington City Choir and John Rutter's *Requiem* with the Rice Chorale. She is an alumna of Oklahoma City University, Rocky Mountain Region.



Meridian Prall

MEZZO-SOPRANO (FORT WAYNE, INDIANA)

AGE: 28

Meridian Prall recently made her debut at the Santa Fe Opera as the Third Wood Sprite in *Rusalka*. In 2023, she was a Sullivan Award recipient and made additional house debuts as Meg Page in *Falstaff* at Palm Beach Opera and the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She was recently featured in the Hart Institute for Women Conductors Showcase Concert at the Dallas Opera, and later this year, she will appear at the Atlanta Opera as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* and the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and return to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*. She began her journey as an artist as a violinist and started taking voice lessons as a sophomore in high school. She followed her voice teacher, Denise Bernardini, to the University of Toledo and graduated in 2018. She continued her studies at the University of Michigan and graduated in 2020. After winning the University of Michigan Concerto Competition, she gave the United States premiere of Joseph Marx's song cycle *Verklärtes Jahr* with the University of Michigan's University Philharmonia Orchestra. Central Region.



Emily Richter

SOPRANO (ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA)

AGE: 26

Emily Richter is currently in her second year as a resident artist with Pittsburgh Opera, where her recent highlights include performances as the title character of *Iphigénie en Tauride* and Ginevra in *Ariodante*, as well as covering the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She has also sung Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* at McGill University, covered Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Santa Fe Opera, and made her debut with the Seattle Symphony as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah*. She has spent her summers as a young artist at the Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, and Seagle Festival. She graduated with her master's degree from McGill's Schulich

Meet the Artists CONTINUED

School of Music and her bachelor's degree from Lawrence University. She is a winner of the Wirth Vocal Prize and the Mildred Miller International Voice Competition. She will join the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago for the 2024–25 season. Great Lakes Region.

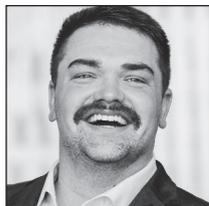


Demetrious Sampson, Jr.

TENOR (ATLANTA, GEORGIA)

AGE: 24

A 2022 alumnus of Houston Grand Opera's Young Artists Vocal Academy, Demetrious Sampson, Jr., finished his undergraduate studies at the Georgia State University School of Music in 2023, before joining the Sarah and Ernest Butler Houston Grand Opera Studio, where he sang the Third Esquire in *Parsifal* and appeared in the Studio Showcase and Giving Voice concert. Last summer, he joined San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program, and this summer, he makes debuts with Cincinnati Opera as Gastone in *La Traviata* and Wolf Trap Opera as the Kronprinz in Kevin Puts's *Silent Night*. This year, he also appears in concerts with the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra and Savannah Philharmonic. He was a second-place and Audience Choice winner in Houston Grand Opera's 35th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition in 2023, second-prize winner at the Opera Ebony Competition and Opera Grand Rapids Vander Laan Prize, and grand finalist in the Schmidt Vocal Arts Undergraduate Awards. Southeast Region.



Eric Taylor

TENOR (ST. GEORGE, UTAH)

AGE: 29

Eric Taylor's recent performances include Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Detroit Opera and Houston Grand Opera (HGO). In summer 2023, he was a Filene Artist with Wolf Trap Opera (WTO), where he sang the title role of *Faust*. He recently completed his time in the Sarah and Ernest Butler Houston Grand Opera Studio, and while at HGO, he appeared as Narraboth in *Salome* and Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* and covered Mark in Smyth's *The Wreckers*, the title role of *Werther*, Don José in *Carmen*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. He won first prize in the Eighth Annual Saengerbund Awards and second prize in HGO's 2021 Eleanor McCollum Competition. As an apprentice artist at the Santa Fe Opera in 2019 and 2022, he appeared as Melot in *Tristan und Isolde* and covered Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Don José. In 2021, he completed his master's degree at Rice University, where he appeared as Sam Polk in *Susannah* and Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito*. Later this year, he will sing Don José with the Jacksonville Symphony and return to WTO to appear as Rodolfo. Gulf Coast Region.

Meet the Special Guests



Evan Rogister

CONDUCTOR (RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA)

THIS SEASON The Eric and Dominique Laffont Grand Finals Concert and Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Met, *Die Zauberflöte* in Dresden, *Roméo et Juliette* at Washington National Opera, and concerts with the Badische Staatskapelle.

MET APPEARANCES *The Magic Flute* (debut, 2017).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is principal conductor of Washington National Opera and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. Between 2009 and 2011, he served as Kapellmeister at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. In recent seasons, he has appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Royal Swedish Opera, San Diego Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Dallas Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and Seattle Opera. He has also led performances with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, National Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Essen Philharmoniker, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.



Denyce Graves

HOST (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

THIS SEASON Sally in Kevin Puts's *The Hours*, Erda in *Das Rheingold* at Seattle Opera, and Damien Geter's *Cotton* at the 92nd Street Y. She also directs the world premiere of Geter's *Loving v. Virginia* at Virginia Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Sally, Auntie in *Peter Grimes*, Maria in *Porgy and Bess*, Marnie's Mother in Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, the title role of *Carmen* (debut, 1995), Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*, Federica in *Luisa Miller*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, and Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Mary Cardwell Dawson in the world premiere of Carlos Simon's *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* at the Glimmerglass Festival, the Old Lady in *Candide* and Mary Cardwell Dawson at Washington National Opera, Mrs. Patrick De Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at Minnesota Opera, and Grace in the world premiere of Daniel Sonenberg's *The Summer King* at Pittsburgh Opera. She has also appeared at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Houston Grand Opera, among others. She is the artistic director and founder of the Denyce Graves Foundation.

Meet the Special Guests CONTINUED



Ryan Speedo Green

BASS-BARITONE (SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA)

THIS SEASON Charles in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Met, Varlaam in *Boris Godunov* in Hamburg, King Heinrich in *Lohengrin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Bavarian State Opera, Wotan in *Das Rheingold* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Santa Fe Opera, and concerts with the Chicago Philharmonic Society and at Ausin Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2012 debut as the Mandarin in *Turandot*, he has sung more than 100 performances of 13 roles, including Young Emile Griffith in Blanchard's *Champion*, Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Uncle Paul in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In 2014, he became a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera. He has also appeared at Washington National Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and Houston Grand Opera. He was a 2011 Grand Finals winner of the Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition (formerly National Council Auditions) and is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. In 2021 and 2023, he received the Met's Beverly Sills Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

Judges

Melissa Wegner
Metropolitan Opera; Executive Director,
Lindemann Young Artist Development
Program and Laffont Competition

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Deutsche Oper Berlin;
Associate to the Artistic Director

Michael Heaston
Metropolitan Opera;
Assistant General Manager, Artistic

Thomas Lausmann
Metropolitan Opera;
Director of Music Administration

Roberto Mauro
Canadian Opera Company;
Director of Artistic Planning

Donald Palumbo
Metropolitan Opera;
C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master



From left: Priti Gandhi, Melissa Wegner, and
Natalie Burrows

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* Graduate of the Lindemann Young
Artist Development Program

2024 Regional Winners

Georgiana Adams
Soprano
Western

Lydia Grindatto
Soprano
Midwest

Meridian Prall
Mezzo-Soprano
Central

Nathan Bowles
Tenor
Gulf Coast

Navasard Hakobyan
Baritone
Eastern

Emily Richter
Soprano
Great Lakes

Michael Butler
Tenor
Eastern

Bethany Jelinek
Soprano
Upper Midwest

Demetrios Sampson, Jr.
Tenor
Southeast

Katherine DeYoung
Mezzo-Soprano
Central

Ani Kushyan
Mezzo-Soprano
Rocky Mountain

Eric Taylor
Tenor
Gulf Coast

Ruby Dibble
Mezzo-Soprano
Midwest

Qirong Liang
Mezzo-Soprano
Upper Midwest

Catherine Thornsley
Soprano
Northwest

Daniel Espinal
Tenor
New England

Tessa McQueen
Soprano
Rocky Mountain

Tessa Fackelmann
Mezzo-Soprano
Gulf Coast

Gemma Nha
Soprano
New England

Grand Finals Awards

Today's concert serves as the final round of this season's competition. Those who are selected as national winners are awarded \$20,000 each, and the remaining national finalists receive \$10,000 to further assist in their careers.

The Laffont Competition is grateful to its donors for prizes at the national level and to the Tobin Endowment for the Mrs. Edgar Tobin Award, given to each first-place region winner.

\$20,000 AWARDS

The Birgit Nilsson Award of the American-Scandinavian Foundation

Faith P. Geier Award

Dominique Laffont Award

Fernand Lamesch Award

Patricia Misslin Award

\$10,000 AWARDS

Ellie Caulkins Award

Pamela Craven Award

Judith Raskin Award

Anne de Richemont Smithers Award

Margaret M. Dyson Award

Semifinalist Awards

Those who are selected as national semifinalists are awarded \$5,000 each to further assist in their careers.

John J Pohanka Family Foundation

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The Laffont Competition would like to thank the following donors who have contributed to support the National Program and Education Fund.

(\$1,000 or more)

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The Laffont Competition is grateful to the nationwide network of volunteer personnel who organize and finance the district and regional auditions leading up to today's Grand Finals Concert.

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Tracy Cox
Ellie Dehn
Sylvia D'Eramo
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Raquel González
Wendy Bryn Harmer
Leah Hawkins
Karen Chia-Ling Ho
Jeni Houser
Mary-Hollis Hundley
Vanessa Isiguen
Magdalena Kuźma
Yunuet Laguna
Kathryn Lewek
Brittany Olivia Logan
Caitlin Lynch
Sydney Mancasola
Angela Meade
Felicia Moore
Latoria Moore
Whitney Morrison
Marielle Murphy
Kelli O'Hara
Lindsay Ohse
Lisette Oropesa
So Young Park
Ailyn Pérez
Emily Pogorelc
Liv Redpath
Abigail Rethwisch
Gabiella Reyes
Nadine Sierra
Elizabeth Sutphen
Brandie Sutton
Elena Villalón

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J'Nai Bridges
Raehann Bryce-Davis
Cierra Byrd
Maire Therese Carmack
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Jennifer Feinstein
Daryl Freedman
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Susan Graham
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Scott Scully
Derrek Stark
Andrew Stenson
Tony Stevenson
Jonathan Tetelman
Kyle van Schoonhoven
Todd Wilander

BARITONES

Michael Adams
Justin Austin
Michael Chioldi
Joshua Conyers
Eleomar Cuello
Blake Denson
Darren Drone
Alexander Birch Elliott
Anthony Clark Evans
Thomas Glass
John Hancock
Quinn Kelsey
Joseph Lim
Will Liverman
Donald Maxwell
Lucas Meacham
Brian Mulligan
David Pershall
Sean Michael Plumb
Daniel Rich
Benjamin Taylor
Ethan Vincent
Hyung Yun

BASS-BARITONES

Joseph Barron
Le Bu
Matthew Burns
Patrick Carfizzi
Brandon Cedel
Jeongcheol Cha

Craig Colclough
Paul Corona
David Crawford
Ryan Speedo Green
Calvin Griffin
Phillip Horst
Christopher Job
Kyle Ketelsen
Brian Kontes
Ryan McKinney
Nicholas Newton
Kevin Short
Daniel Sumegi
Michael Sumuel
Christian Van Horn
Alfred Walker

BASSES

Matthew Anchel
Richard Bernstein
Scott Conner
Rocky Eugenio Sellars
Benjamin Sieverding
William Guanbo Su
Samuel Weiser