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## THE DALLAS OPERA ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF ITS NATIONAL VOCAL COMPETITION

**DALLAS, March 8, 2024**—The Dallas Opera (TDO) is pleased to announce the winners of the [2024 Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition](#), following their live performances tonight with The Dallas Opera Orchestra, led by Paolo Bressan.

**First Place: Navasard Hakobyan**, baritone

**Second Place: Jongwon Han**, bass-baritone

**Third Place (tie): Elisa Sunshine**, soprano and **Katerina Burton**, soprano

**Jonathan Pell People’s Choice Award** (determined by audience vote): **Lisa Marie Rogali**, mezzo-soprano

All prizewinners receive cash prizes, as well as the opportunity to perform with a major orchestra and a world-class conductor.

The final round of competition was held earlier this evening, **Friday, March 8, 2024** at the Winspear Opera House, with performances by eight finalists, and hosted by soprano Golda Schultz.

Winners were selected by a distinguished panel of judges: The Dallas Opera’s Artistic Consultant David Lomelí (Chair); Paul Hopper, Senior Director, Artistic Planning, LA Opera; Andreas Melinat, Vice President, Artistic Planning at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Nicole Paiement, The Martha R. and Preston A. Peak Principal Guest Conductor at The Dallas Opera and Founder and Artistic Director of Opera Parallèle; and Kristian Roberts, Director of Education at The Dallas Opera.

Finalists who also participated were soprano **Adia Evans**—who won TDO’s 2023 Lone Star Vocal Competition and automatically advanced to this final round, tenor **Matthew Cairns**, and baritone **Yeongtaek Yang**.

The Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition is sponsored by Bravo!, formerly The Dallas Opera Guild. The competition is open to applicants aged 18-34 from all U.S. states and territories, including international students attending American colleges, universities, and music conservatories. Also eligible were active members of any young artist program associated with an American opera company. Preliminary and semi-final rounds were held privately.

Previous prizewinners in The Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition have gone on to establish impressive careers, including sopranos Marjorie Owens (who appeared with The Dallas Opera this season in the title role of *Elektra*), Latonia Moore, Kecia Ashford, Katherine Bongfeldt, and Mary Dunleavy; mezzo sopranos J’Nai Bridges, Kelly Kimball, and Randalee Maddox; countertenors Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and John Holiday; tenors Clifton Forbis, Jesús Garcia, Scott Quinn, and Scott Scully; baritones Thomas Cannon, Christopher Holmes, Weston Hurt, Steven LaBrie, and Erik Nelson Werner; and bass Matthew Treviño, among many others.

### **ABOUT THE WINNERS**

#### **Navasard Hakobyan, BARITONE**

From: Garni, Armenia

Career highlights: A second-year artist in Houston Grand Opera’s Butler Studio, Navasard Hakobyan won first place at HGO’s 2022 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Roles at HGO include Sharpless in alternate-cast performances of *Madame Butterfly*, Baron Douphol in *La traviata*, Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Second Nazarene in *Salome*. He was a member of the young artist program of the National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Yerevan, Armenia, from 2018 to 2023. His roles there included Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Giorgio Germont in *La traviata*, and Belcore in a new production of *The Elixir of Love*. His competition wins include third prize in the 2023 Operalia Competition, first prize in the Premiere Opera Foundation International Vocal Competition, and third prize in the 2021 José Carreras Grand Prix.

#### **Jongwon Han, BASS-BARITONE**

From: Seoul, South Korea

Career highlights: Jongwon Han joined Santa Fe Opera as a 2022 Apprentice Artist, covering the role of Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. He then went to San Francisco Opera to begin his tenure in the Adler Fellowship Program, where he sang Colline in *Bohème* Out of the Box. His operatic roles include the title roles in *Don Giovanni* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, and Baron Douphol in *La traviata*. Having a deep connection to sacred music, Mr. Han has been featured in Bach’s Cantata BWV 140, Handel’s *Messiah*, Mozart’s Mass in C major (Sparrow Mass), and Haydn’s Mass in B flat major (Theresienmesse). Mr. Han won third prize in the 2022 Operalia Competition, was a Grand Finalist in the 2021 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, and won third place and Audience Choice in Houston Grand Opera’s Eleanor McCollum Competition.

**Elisa Sunshine, SOPRANO**

From: San Clemente, California

Career highlights: Celebrated for her “blend of vocal sparkle and theatrical charisma” by the San Francisco Chronicle, soprano Elisa Sunshine is a recent graduate of San Francisco Opera’s Adler Fellowship Program. Most recently, Ms. Sunshine returned to San Francisco Opera for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* under the baton of Sir Donald Runnicles and covered the title character of Marie in *La fille du régiment* with Lyric Opera of Chicago. She looks excitedly ahead to being an Apprentice Artist with the Santa Fe Opera in 2024, where she will make her company debut as Annina in *La traviata* and cover Sheila in the world premiere of *The Righteous*.

**Katerina Burton, SOPRANO**

From: Ocean City, Maryland

Career highlights: American vocalist Katerina Burton, acclaimed for her “rich and warm” singing (Opera Wire) is a recent graduate of the Cafritz Young Artist program at Washington National Opera, where she made a thrilling role debut as Micaëla in Francesca Zambello’s acclaimed production of *Carmen*. The 2023/2024 season features many role and company debuts, including her debut as Mimì in Puccini’s *La bohème* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the premiere of Adolphus Hailstork’s co-commissioned work *JFK: The Last Speech* with the National Symphony Orchestra featuring narration by Tony Award–winning actress and singer Phylicia Rashad.

**Lisa Marie Rogali, MEZZO-SOPRANO**

From: Hawley, Pennsylvania

Career highlights: Lisa Marie Rogali has been praised for her “nuanced voice” and “spontaneity” on the stage. She has been featured in roles on the stages of companies including Detroit Opera, Minnesota Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, North Carolina Opera, Opera Saratoga, and many more. A frequent participant in the competition circuit, Ms. Rogali has earned accolades from the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, Jensen Foundation, Giulio Gari Foundation, American Traditions Vocal Collection, and the Lotte Lenya Competition. Ms. Rogali received her master of music degree in vocal performance from The University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music and her bachelor of music education degree from The Pennsylvania State University.

**ABOUT THE DALLAS OPERA**

One of the leading opera companies in the country, The Dallas Opera has an extraordinary legacy of world-class productions and thrilling premieres featuring the greatest operatic artists of our time. Inaugurated in 1957 with a concert featuring the incomparable Maria Callas, TDO is known for the notable U.S. debuts of a host of legendary artists including Plácido Domingo, Dame Joan Sutherland, Jon Vickers, Franco Zeffirelli, and Sir David McVicar. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives including the Hart Institute for Women Conductors, free and low-cost digital streaming, public simulcasts, acclaimed art song recitals, the national vocal competition, special concerts, and outstanding family and award-winning education programs. TDO’s home is the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House in the Dallas Arts District. As one of the largest performing arts employers in North Texas, TDO is proudly committed to diversity, both onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region.

For more details, visit [dallasopera.org](https://dallasopera.org)

**2023/2024 Season Sponsor:** Mary Anne Cree, in memory of Rosine Smith Sammons

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