

GUILD HALL

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Interviews available on request

Guild Hall and Bel Canto Boot Camp Announce a New Resident Artist Program in Support of the Next Generation of Opera Singers



Jack Swanson. Photo: Lily Lancaster ©2022

April 28, 2022—East Hampton, NY — The most impactful learning is accomplished when artists have dedicated time to solely focus on their craft with the support and guidance of seasoned professionals. Inspired by this, Guild Hall (158 Main Street, East Hampton) announced today a new direction in their ongoing partnership with Bel Canto Boot Camp (BCBC) after successful collaborations during COVID-19 with *BCBC Sunday Matinéés*, *Bel Canto 101 & Terminology for Opera Lovers*, and *Behind the Screen with BCBC* prior to each “MET Live in HD” broadcast. With the shared values of creative authenticity, artistic development, and community engagement, the series, which has been generously sponsored by the V. Atkins Foundation, will support an emerging generation of opera singers while bringing operatic performances and community engagement programs to the East End.

The Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp Resident Artist Program will award paid week-long residencies in the Hamptons to emerging artists identified by an application and audition process. The program will offer each singer individualized training with BCBC coaches, providing time and space for role preparation and scene study on site in East Hampton. Guest artists at the height of international singing careers are invited to join resident artists as both

mentors in masterclasses and colleagues in concerts – a unique training and performance collaboration between operatic superstars, established professional singers, and promising singers still on the verge of an international career. Baritenor **Michael Spyres** and tenor **Jack Swanson** join Bel Canto Boot Camp at Guild Hall for the 2022 launch season. Soprano **Lisette Oropesa** is slated for August 2023.

By inviting audiences into select rehearsals and master classes, Guild Hall and BCBC will provide an insider's view into the singer's process – affirming an ever-increasing love and appreciation for the finesse and power of the unamplified voice. Resident artists will engage with the Guild Hall Teen Arts Council, among other education and arts organizations in the communities of the Hamptons. Bel Canto Boot Camp will offer audience education events before recitals and as separate events.

Auditions have been announced for this season's summer and fall residencies. Information can be found at belcantobootcamp.com/residencyauditions/. In line with Guild Hall and BCBC's priorities of inclusivity and equity, no cost is incurred to the auditionee to apply or audition, and virtual options are on offer for singers not based in New York.

Of the program, BCBC co-founders Derrick Goff and Rachele Jonck said, "When Guild Hall of East Hampton reached out to us to support their opera audience during COVID, we immediately realized that we had found in them the perfect partner. Their website states: '*Guild Hall Education strives to create experiences for all our communities to think like an artist: to see and respect a world of various colors and shapes, to experiment with harmony and dissonance, and to value process over product.*' We found people who speak our language – well, they found us! After multiple successful collaborations during the pandemic, we put our heads together once more to find ways to serve our respective communities. The **Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp Resident Artist Series** was born to create training and performance opportunities for emerging artists and to bring live unamplified singing to East Hampton. We're thrilled to make music together."

"There is a unique love of Opera here in East Hampton," says Anthony Madonna, Guild Hall's Patti Kenner Senior Associate for Learning + Public Engagement. "Guild Hall patrons filled the theater each time a *Met Live in HD* broadcast was presented. Not only was it a way for them to experience the opera in their own backyard, but to gather weekly with friends and family. Over the pandemic, when sitting in a theater was not possible, we saw a different side to, and built new relationships with, our opera patrons. Through the many virtual collaborations with Bel Canto Boot Camp, we learned both what our community loves about the opera - their favorite characters and beloved voices, and what they strive to learn more about. The Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist Series is an exciting step forward in building our audiences love and knowledge for opera and the live unamplified voice. Through experiencing artists at both the turning points and heights of their careers, we all - audience, coaches, and performers - will continue to learn together and build upon our love of opera."

Friday, May 20 at 7PM

Beautiful Singing: The Roots and Fruits of the Bel Canto Style
with Jack Swanson and Katherine Henly
Rachele Jonck and Derrick Goff, pianists

Guild Hall and Bel Canto Boot Camp's new Resident Artist Series kicks off with tenor Jack Swanson, soprano Katherine Henly, and BCBC's Rachele Jonck and Derrick Goff at the piano, in a program of opera, film, musical theater, and song.

The recital features a solid dose of bel canto classics, including excerpts from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and *Don Pasquale* as well as songs by Rossini and Bellini. Gilbert and Sullivan offer a stroll through bel canto in English with excerpts from their much beloved *Pirates of Penzance*. We explore the use of the classically trained voice in music from the 40s and 50s by visiting American opera (Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*), music theater (*Kiss Me, Kate* and *My Fair Lady*) and cinema (*The Toast of New Orleans*).

With a wide range of repertoire, this program is sure to please lovers of coloratura and crooning alike, while emphasizing the application of the bel canto style of singing in various genres – encouraging us all to tune our ears to the finesse and power of the unamplified voice which the Italians aptly call "beautiful singing."

Saturday, July 30 at 7PM

The Potions of Love: Bel Canto Arias and Ensembles
with *Brittany Smith, Juan Hernandez, and other Resident Artists*
Rachelle Jonck and Derrick Goff, pianists

Five emerging artists join Bel Canto Boot Camp for an evening of beloved Bel Canto Scenes & Arias. Selections from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* ground the recital with performances by South African soprano Brittany Smith and Puerto Rican tenor Juan Hernandez.

Brittany Smith and Juan Hernandez come to the summer residency through the joint efforts of Guild Hall and Bel Canto Boot Camp. Prior to their arrival in East Hampton, they will participate in BCBC's training program in New York City in preparation for their role debuts of Adina and Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. Following their residency at Guild Hall and the East Hampton recital they leave for Cape Town where they will rehearse with the rest of the local *L'elisir d'amore* cast before embarking on a 10 city tour of South Africa. The summer residency marks Miss Smith's first visit to and performances in the U.S.A. Cape Town Opera presents Mr Hernandez in South Africa for the first time.

Derrick Goff and Rachelle Jonck of BCBC shared, "During our work in South Africa at Cape Town Opera in January we met a wonderful young soprano, Brittany Smith. We immediately knew that we would like to play a role in building her budding career. Our collaboration with Guild Hall made it possible to invite her to join us in the States to study and perform during our training weeks both in New York City and East Hampton. We were as excited to make the call as she was to receive it! We will never forget Guild Hall's Anthony Madonna sharing with us his joy in being part of affording a young singer an opportunity of a lifetime. We found a meeting of minds and hearts in this relationship with Guild Hall of East Hampton and we are inspired by a future working with them to create similar opportunities for many young singers like Brittany."

They continued, "Cape Town Opera asked us to help connect emerging American artists with the stage in South Africa. First request was a Nemorino for their Adina (**Brittany Smith**) in the upcoming production of *L'elisir d'amore*. We had met **Juan Hernandez** at Palm Beach Opera and were impressed with the young singer's voice and poise. We knew the Cape Town team would love him. Since Miss Smith was already joining us, The Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp summer residency presents the perfect opportunity to introduce Nemorino to Adina in New York before sending them off to Cape Town! How thrilled we are that we get to work on these bread-and-butter roles with two young blossoming artists. And what a treat for the East Hampton audience this summer to preview the beautiful duets between Adina and Nemorino in their own backyard."

Saturday, October 15 at 7PM

Michael Spyres & Bel Canto Boot Camp: A Bel Canto Journey
with *Resident Artists*
Rachelle Jonck and Derrick Goff, pianists

Michael Spyres joins Bel Canto Boot Camp in a journey through his favorite bel canto repertoire including opera and song. As a tenor with an extraordinary range (traditionally called a baritenor), the world of repertoire for the non-treble voice is his proverbial oyster! A voice like this does not come along all that often - you won't want to miss it. Joining Mr. Spyres in concert will be emerging artists who will spend a week in residence at Guild Hall training with Bel Canto Boot Camp.

Recitals are \$55 (\$49.50 for Guild Hall members). Reservations can be made at guildhall.org.

Principal Sponsor: V. Atkins Foundation

Additional support: Dr. Ralph Gibson, in memory of Andy Jacobyansky, who generously shared his passion, knowledge, and support for the opera

Learning & Public Engagement programming is supported by The Patti Kenner Arts Education Fellowship, The Hearthland Foundation, Stephen Meringoff, Susan and Stephen Scherr, and funding from the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Endowment Fund, and The Melville Straus Family Endowment.

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ABOUT BEL CANTO BOOT CAMP

Bel Canto Boot Camp was born during the pandemic when we reached out to singers around the world – singers who had no place and seemingly no reason to sing. To be honest, we needed to find a way to feed our own souls as well while we were cut off from music making – something we never even considered could possibly happen. We created The Vaccai Project – a unique online training course for singers. Just short of two thousand singers from America to South Africa, from Colombia to Russia practiced together for the day when stages would be open to them again and theaters would be filled with audiences. We discovered a beautiful new way to support singers – beautiful in its inclusivity, its expansion of the richness of the New York opera community to artists all over the world, the breaking of often prohibitive barriers of distance, cost, time and audition-only programs. Now, as the world continues to emerge from Covid-19, Bel Canto Boot Camp strives to support artists in the physical world as we did (and continue to do) virtually. Our ability to work in person with singers is now supported by an online platform allowing us to stay in contact when we cannot be there physically. Additionally BCBC allows singers, teachers, and presenters to network effectively with each other in the ever-growing BCBC community. www.belcantobootcamp.com. @belcantobootcamp

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall, one of the first multidisciplinary centers in the country to combine a museum, theater, and education space under one roof, was established in 1931 as a gathering place for community where an appreciation for the arts would serve to encourage greater civic participation. For nine decades, Guild Hall has embraced this open-minded vision and provided a welcoming environment for the public to engage with art exhibitions, performances, and educational offerings. Art and artists have long been the engine of Guild Hall's activities and the institution continues to find innovative ways to support creativity in everyone.

For more information about this and other programs, visit www.guildhall.org.

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ARTIST BIOS

KATHERINE HENLY (Resident Artist)

Praised worldwide for her captivating and affecting portrayals in genres ranging from opera to musical theater, jazz, and pop, American soprano **Katherine Henly** has performed with Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, The Muscat Royal Opera House, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Charlottesville Opera, Virginia Opera, The New York Musical Theatre Festival, The New York International Fringe Festival, and The O'Neill National Music Theater Conference. For her eleventh-hour debut with Oper Köln in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* Resmusica raved "Finally, in Sam Kaplan and Rose Maurrant, we discover two of the most promising American singers... Radiant physically and vocally, very moving also in the farewell scene, Katherine Henly is not to be outdone in that of her beloved - a performance all the more impressive under the circumstances. The very young American soprano, passing through Cologne, had indeed replaced at the last minute a suffering colleague during several rehearsals - without having yet sung the role on stage before. The Cologne Opera thanked her with a performance that marked both her European debut and her acting debut. A career definitely to follow."

In the current season, Ms. Henly debuts the role of Musetta in Peter Rothstein's critically acclaimed production of *La bohème* with Theater Latté Da in Minneapolis, with performances running through February 2022. This summer, she returns to Charlottesville Opera as Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*. The 2020-2021 season saw her role debut as Clorinda in Rossini's *La cenerentola*, conducted by Gavriel Heine for the Northern Lights Music Festival. In the fall of 2020, Ms. Henly performed as a soloist in *Preludes: Lyrics & Lyricists*, a five-part online series filmed on the historic stage of the 92nd Street Y.

Additional recent performances include the world premiere of Maria Thomson Corley's *The Sky Where You Are* commissioned by An Opera Theatre and streaming online as a part of Decameron Opera Coalition's *Tales From A*

Safe Distance; and as a soloist in *Glad Jul*, a holiday concert produced by Motarbeider, the Støttet av Kulturrådet Norsk kulturfund, and the Nord-Odal Kommune, filmed in the historic Sand Kirke in Nord-Odal, Norway, December of 2020. She made her off-Broadway debut as Elsa in Sheldon Harnick's musical *Dragons* at The York Theatre Company, and can be heard on the studio recording with Tony Award-winner Michael Cerveris. Ms. Henly has also seen solo performances with Utah Lyric Opera, Utah Valley Symphony Orchestra, Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra, The Ramsey Wind Symphony, Palisades Virtuosi, Worcester Symphony Orchestra, Camerata New York, and in concert at Mechanics Hall and Carnegie Hall.

Ms. Henly has completed Young Artist residencies with Utah Festival Opera, Charlottesville Opera, and The Glimmerglass Festival. She is a graduate of Ithaca College (B.M.) and Brigham Young University (M.M.).
www.katherinehenly.com

JUAN HERNÁNDEZ (Resident Artist)

Puerto Rican Tenor Juan Hernández Mercado began his professional singing career with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra in 2012 and has since been part of many local and international productions in the US and abroad. In the 2019 season, he was selected to be a Bailey Apprentice Artist at Palm Beach Opera and a Young Artist at Opera Saratoga. Role credits include: Corentin in *Dinorah* (Amore Opera), Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Accademia Lirica Uberto Giordano), Gastone in *La traviata* (Accademia Lirica Umberto Giordano), Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* (International Festival Il Ponte), L'arithmétique in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Opera on the Avalon), Goffredo in *Rinaldo* (Vocalpedia's Vozarteum), Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* (Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico).

Recent awards include: Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions District Encouragement Award (2019), NATS NYC District Competition First Place (2019), Opera on the Avalon Audience Choice Award (2015).

He began his music studies at the Escuela Libre de Música Ernesto Ramos Antonini, *alma mater* of some of the most recognized Puerto Rican artists. After graduating with honors, he continued his training in Vocal Performance at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of the late William Woodruff. Juan is currently a voice student of Raymon Geis. <https://www.juanhernandeztenor.com/>

BRITTANY SMITH (Resident Artist)

Cape Town Opera soloist Brittany Smith holds a BMus in Opera from the South African College of Music at the University of Cape Town. Under the tutelage of Professor Virginia Davids, she started her solo singing career at the university in the role of Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* (2016) followed by Adele in AGL Opera's production of *Die Fledermaus*. Brittany's awards include the 2013 Ruth Ormond Prize for the Most Promising First Year UCT Female Opera Student, the 2016 Schock Foundation Opera Competition Female Classical Winner, and a nomination for the 2017 Fleur du Cap Award for Best Female Opera Singer for her Pamina in Cape Town Opera's production of *The Magic Flute*. Brittany joined the Cape Town Opera Young Artist Program in 2018, and premiered as Norina in *Don Pasquale*, a collaboration between Cape Town Opera and the UCT Opera School. In May 2019, she sang the role of Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and in 2020, Despina in *Così fan tutte*. In 2021 at Artscape Opera House she sang Gretel in Cape Town Opera's *Hänsel und Gretel* for which she received a Fleur du Cap nomination, Leïla in *The Pearl Fishers*, and Magda in *La rondine*. 2022 will see her perform the role of Susanna in Cape Town Opera's *Le nozze di Figaro*.

MICHAEL SPYRES (Guest Artist)

Michael Spyres was born and raised in the Ozarks and grew up in an extremely musical family. Mr. Spyres is one of the most sought-after tenors of his generation with 8 DVD's and 25 cd's to his name. He has been celebrated at the world's most prestigious international opera houses, festivals, and concert halls. Accomplished and acclaimed in the widest range of repertoire, his unique career has taken him from every genre from Baroque to Classical to 20th century, while firmly establishing himself as an expert within the Bel Canto repertoire, and French Grand Opera.

The 2021/2022 season saw Michael's solo album debut, *BariTenor*, for Warners/Erato with the Strasbourg Philharmonie under the baton of Marko Letonja as well as his return to the stage in an incredibly wide range of repertoire from Lieder to Bel Canto and Wagner to French Grand Opera and Verismo. This exciting season will see his return as Florestan in *Fidelio* with Raphael Pichon and Ensemble Pygmalion at Opera Comique de Paris, his role debut as Wagner's *Tristan* in a concert version of Act 2 with Opera de Lyon, his role debut as Canio in Leoncavalli's *Pagliacci* with the OLOpera, his return as Romeo to the Houston Grand Opera, as well as his anticipated debut in

the title role of Mozart's *Idomeneo* at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. He also returns to the Houston Grand Opera as Gounod's Roméo, as well as to the Aix-en-Provence Festival in the title role of Idomeneo and as Pollione in *Norma*. In addition to the opera stage he made his recital debut with Mathieu Pordoy in Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing, appeared at the Theatre du Capital Toulouse, Festival Les Volques, and sang two separate recitals in Paris. On the concert stage Michael will star with the Ravello Festival, Opera Philadelphia, Strasbourg Philharmonie, Warsaw Philharmonia, Liceu Barcelona, Theater an der Wien, Theatre des Champs Elysées, and Teatro alla Scala.

In his meteoric rise Michael has quickly established himself as one of the greatest singers of his generation and has sung at many of the world's most prestigious opera houses, concert halls and festivals such as the Teatro alla Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Paris Opéra National, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Teatro Real Madrid, Liceu Barcelona, Lyric Opera Chicago, La Monnaie Brussels, Dutch National Opera, Semperoper Dresden, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées of Paris, Carnegie Hall, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Bunka Kaikan Hall Tokyo, Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro, the Edinburgh Festival and the BBC Proms.

Since 2015 Michael has had the honor to be not just a performer but also an impresario. Mr. Spyres has been the Artistic Director of his hometown opera company, the Ozarks Lyric Opera and has been involved in every aspect of the renaissance of his regional company. In addition to being the active Artistic Director he has translated libretti and actively teaches masterclasses while guiding young artists careers. The last years have seen him produce numerous events as well as 5 operas and gala concerts. For the 2019/2020 season Michael wrote/produced the 40th anniversary gala as well as an original pastiche on the life of Handel.

Michael has worked with some of the world's most renowned conductors such as Davis, Elder, Gardiner, Gardner, Gergiev, Haïm, Luisi, Mariotti, Muti, Nézet-Séguin, Petrenko, Pidò, Rousset, Young and Zedda.
<https://www.michaelspyres.com/>

JACK SWANSON (Guest Artist)

Stillwater, Minnesota native **Jack Swanson** is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after young tenors in the opera world. His distinctive high lyric voice is known for singing the acrobatic arias of Rossini and the legato melodies of Donizetti.

This season, Jack Swanson will debut with a number of European companies: first with the Teatro Regio in Torino as Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, then with the Opéra National de Lorraine in Nancy as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* (a role debut) and finally at the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (a role he will have just debuted in his return to the Oper Frankfurt). He will sing a concert of Mozart, bel canto, and romantic Italian songs in Beirut, Lebanon. Future engagements include a stage debut with the Houston Grand Opera and returns to the Santa Fe and the Minnesota Operas.

Also known for his concert work, Mr. Swanson's credits include Handel's *Messiah*, Dubois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ*, Mozart's Requiem and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Other engagements include *Holiday Favorites* with the Arizona Opera and Birmingham Opera, and the Houston Grand Opera's 60th anniversary gala where Mr. Swanson performed alongside HGO's studio artists and world-renowned mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato. Swanson made his Kennedy Center debut singing selections from Schumann's *Dichterliebe*.

Mr. Swanson is the competition winner and recipient of several prestigious awards including first place in Florida Grand Opera's Young Patroness Competition, The San Antonio Music Club Competition, The National Opera Association Competition and The Hal Leonard Art Song Competition. He twice received the Richard Tucker Memorial award from the Santa Fe Opera. He was a finalist in both Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum competition and Fort Worth Opera's McCammon Competition. Recently, Mr. Swanson was featured on National Public Radio's Young Artist in Residence program, *Performance Today*.

<https://www.jackswansontenor.com/>

DERRICK GOFF (Coach/BCBC Co-Founder)

Derrick Goff is an alumnus of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and a current member of the MET music staff. He has enjoyed many years of collaboration at Teatro Nuovo, a continuation of the young artist program of Bel Canto at Caramoor, where he is resident as a coach, chorus master,

and Italian teacher. In addition to his work as a pianist, coach, and conductor, Derrick holds degrees in organ and voice from Westminster Choir College. www.derrickgoff.com

RACHELLE JONCK (Coach/BCBC Co-Founder)

Rachelle Jonck received her musical training at the Conservatory of the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. In her native country she was awarded a FNB/Vita award for her contribution to opera in South Africa and the Nederburg Opera Prize – South Africa’s premier opera award.

Rachelle moved to New York City as Head Vocal Coach and Assistant Conductor of Bel Canto at Caramoor. Her private coaching studio includes established professionals whose careers take them to the largest opera houses of the world, and younger singers still on the verge of a professional career. Her master class topics, while related to her main study field of bel canto, explore the wider application of the bel canto way of singing. rachelejonck.com