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VANCOUVER OPERA ANNOUNCES PARTICIPANTS OF 2020–2021 YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

VANCOUVER OPERA WELCOMES SIX PARTICIPANTS TO THE 2020–2021 YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

AUGUST 6, 2020, VANCOUVER, B.C. – Vancouver Opera is proud to welcome Ian Cleary, Dana Fradkin, Luka Kawabata, Amy Seulky Lee, Jonelle Sills, and Amanda Weatherall to this seasons' Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program.

This residency program is a bridge between formal educational programs and the professional opera world and provides singers, pianists and stage directors unique opportunities to train with industry leaders and receive hands-on experience. Made possible through a generous donation by the family of Yulanda M. Faris, artists receive one-on-one coaching, attend masterclasses and are provided performance opportunities where possible.

"The experience participants receive through our residence program is instrumental in preparing them for a successful professional career in opera," says Leslie Dala, Program Director.

"We are extremely proud to be able to offer this program again this year and are thrilled that these six artists have accepted our invitation to join our distinguished program. The re-envisioned 2020–2021 season ahead may look a little different but will still provide high calibre training and mentorship as well as unique opportunities for performance experience," says Tom Wright, Vancouver Opera General Director. "We look forward to showcasing their work at the end of the season. Details to be announced soon," adds Wright.

The participants of the 2020-2021 Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program are:



Jonelle Sills, Soprano

Toronto soprano Jonelle Sills is a Dora Award winner for outstanding performance of an Ensemble in Vivier's *Kopernikus* with Against the Grain Theatre. Jonelle has an Artist Diploma in Voice Performance/Opera from The Glenn Gould School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, Specialized Honours in Music from York University. Jonelle has recently been named as one of CBC Music's classical "30 under 30" performers for 2020.

Jonelle has studied and worked with Stephanie Bogle and Rachel Andrist and performed in masterclasses with Gerald Finley, Liz Upchurch, Adrianne Pieczonka, Tim Noble, Martin Katz, Catherine Robbin, Dawn Upshaw and Joan Dornemann.



Amanda Weatherall, Mezzo-Soprano

Cranbrook native and mezzo-soprano Amanda Weatherall has a Bachelor of Music Honours in Performance Voice and a Master of Music in Literature and Performance Voice from Western University.

Amanda has studied and worked with Laura Tucker, Simone Luti, Todd Wieczorek, Frédérique Vezina, John Hess, and Janelle Scharringa. She has also participated in masterclasses with Liz Upchurch, Judith Forst, Kathleen Kelly, Joan Patenaude-Yarnell, and Richard Margison.



Ian Cleary, Tenor

Originally from Chatham, tenor Ian Cleary recently completed an Opera Diploma at the University of British Columbia and has a Bachelor of Music from Wilfred Laurier University.

He has studied and worked with J. Patrick Raftery, Kimberley Barber, Richard Epp, Leslie Dala, Raffi Armenian, Rosemary Thompson, Nancy Hermiston, Anna Theodosakis, Brian Deedrick and Rob Herriot.



Luka Kawabata, Baritone

Vancouver baritone Luka Kawabata holds a Master of Music in Opera Performance from the University of British Columbia.

Last season, Luka understudied the role of Owl in Vancouver Opera In Schools' production of *The Flight of the Hummingbird*.

He has studied with Peter Barcza and worked with prominent names including Carol Isaac, David Agler, Bramwell Tovey, Russell Braun, Eric Owens, and Luca Pisaroni.



Amy Seulky Lee, Pianist

Vancouver-based pianist Amy Seulky Lee holds a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano from the University of Toronto, where she studied with Professor Steven Philcox, and a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of British Columbia where she studied with Dr. Terence Dawson.

Amy has participated in masterclasses with notable clinicians including Martin Katz, Soile Isokoski, Warren Jones, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Graham Johnson, Katherine Chi, André Laplante, Alain Lefèvre, Leon Fleisher, Christopher Taylor and Lydia Artymiw.



Dana Fradkin, Stage Director

Toronto-based stage director Dana Fradkin is a graduate of the George Brown Theatre School, Second City Conservatory and completed an Opera Director Residency at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

Dana is also an award-winning actor, writer, and is co-founder of the Dora Award winning theatre company, Keystone Theatre. She has also written and produced four short films which have toured film festivals around the world.

ABOUT THE YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

In 2012, Vancouver Opera launched the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program. Made possible through a gift from the family of Yulanda M. Faris, the program engages, enriches, mentors and trains rising young Canadian opera artists and offers a bridge between formal academic educational programs and the professional world in a supportive and encouraging environment. The program is led by Program Director, Leslie Dala; Principal Coach, Kinza Tyrrell; Coach, Tina Chang and the continued guidance of Vancouver Opera Music Director Emeritus, Jonathan Darlington. The Young Artists Program provides artists – singers, pianists and stage directors – with the opportunity to train with industry leaders through master classes, one-on-one coaching and performance opportunities as part of a residency program.

ABOUT VANCOUVER OPERA

Vancouver Opera creates extraordinary experiences that engage, inspire and entertain the community through voice, music and theatre. Vancouver Opera is the second largest professional opera company in Canada and is regarded worldwide for its fine mainstage productions, country-leading education programs and innovative community programs. Learn more at www.vancouveropera.ca.

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