

Lissner *Notes*

Celebrating the next generation of vocal artists

Issue No. 2 Summer Art Song 2026

The Official Newsletter Of The Gerda Lissner Foundation

Dear Classical Music Lovers,

This summer edition of Lissner Notes is dedicated to song — an intimate, profound, and deeply human art form that has found an ever more important place at the heart of our mission.

You will meet last season's Art Song Competition winners, now carrying their artistry to stages across the country and around the world. You will hear about our collaborative pianists —Arlene Shrut and Francesco Barfoed — who live and breathe this repertoire every day. You will meet The Gerda Lissner Foundation's 2027 Winners Concert honorees — two artists who have devoted much of their lives and careers to the art of song. And you will learn about an exciting increase in prize money for art song this season and an extremely generous gift of sponsorship for our Greene Space Recital Series at New York Public Radio.

As we look forward to this season's Art Song Competition (**Note: Application Deadline is August 11, 2026 - Click [HERE](#) for more information**) we invite you to share in the excitement and pride we take in watching these remarkable young artists flourish.

Until next time, thank you for being part of this community.

Warmly,

Midge Woolsey

President and Co-Artistic Director, The Gerda Lissner Foundation



Celebrating Last Season's Art Song Competition Winners!

✦ **Three Lissner Artists at Wolf Trap Opera This Summer** ✦

"The concert in April was spectacular! Nothing makes a dad happier than watching his child live her dream," Thomas Robinson, Father of Jennifer Robinson (April 29, 2026)



2025 First Prize Winner



2025 Second Prize Winner



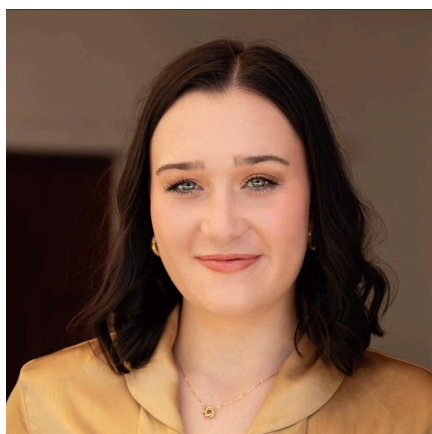
2025 Third Prize Winner

Finn Sagal, *baritone*

Finn heads into a thrilling summer season that showcases his warm lyric baritone and expressive artistry. Fresh from his top prize win in our 2025 Art Song Competition and his performance at our Winners Concert at Carnegie Hall, Finn brings his artistry to Wolf Trap Opera — one of the premier young artist programs in the country.

Upcoming Engagements

Title Role in *Eugene Onegin* — The Barns at Wolf Trap Opera · July 17, 19, 23 & 25, 2026

**Magdalena Kuźma**, *soprano*

Magdalena continues to build an impressive performance profile with notable appearances both in New York and around the country. As a rising young artist and a 2025 prize winner, she joins Wolf Trap Opera this summer alongside fellow Lissner winners Finn Sagal and Angela Yam.

Upcoming Engagements

Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* — The Barns at Wolf Trap Opera · July 17, 19, 23 & 25, 2026

Jennifer Robinson, *soprano*

Praised for her radiant tone and expressive musicality, Jennifer continues to gain momentum as a young artist on the rise. This summer she heads to the prestigious Merola Opera Program in San Francisco for a debut engagement.

Upcoming Engagements

Naiade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* — Merola Opera Program – Late July/Early August 2026

**2025 Judges' Special Prize Winners****Anna Thompson**, *soprano*

Anna is having a landmark year. This summer she joins the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco, and next season she takes one of the most coveted steps in a young singer's career: her Metropolitan Opera debut as part of the prestigious Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Upcoming Engagements

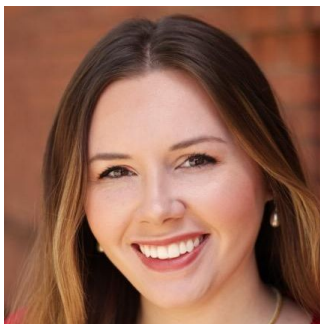
Micaëla in *La Tragédie de Carmen* — Merola Opera Program · Summer 2026
The High Priestess in *Aida* - The Metropolitan Opera 2026-2027

Samuel Kidd, *baritone*

Samuel is preparing for an exciting chapter as he relocates from San Francisco to Chicago — a move that signals the next phase of a growing career. Though his summer is focused on the transition, New York audiences will have a chance to hear him this fall when he appears in a recital with the New York Festival of Song on October 20th. Details to be announced.

Upcoming Engagements

Recital — New York Festival of Song · October 20, 2026



2025 Grant Winners

Alexandra Rose Hotz, *soprano*

Praised for her musicianship and shimmering tone, Alexandra Rose is equally at home on the opera, concert, and recital stage. This summer she returns to the Aspen Music Festival as a Vocal Fellow, singing Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and covering Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This fall, she joins violist Tatjana Masurenko for a recital in Colburn's *Viola Plus* series.

Upcoming Engagement

Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* — Aspen Music Festival Opera: Klein Music Tent · August 21 & 23, 2026

Cole McIlquham, *tenor*

Cole heads to San Francisco this summer to join the prestigious Merola Opera Program, where he takes on multiple roles and recitals that showcase his versatility and artistry. This fall he returns to the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia.

Upcoming Engagements

Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* — Merola Opera Program

L'Anima Napoletana — Recital of Neapolitan Art Songs — Merola Opera Program

Merola *Grand Finale Concert* — San Francisco

Academy of Vocal Arts — Philadelphia, Fall 2026

Angela Yam, *soprano*

Angela heads into an exciting summer and fall season with back-to-back engagements at two of America's premier young artist programs — Wolf Trap Opera this summer, followed by a strong fall season at Boston Lyric Opera.

Upcoming Engagements

Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* — Wolf Trap Opera, June 18–27

Salon Series Recital — Wolf Trap Opera, July 20

Mathilde (cover) in *Guillaume Tell*, Boston Lyric Opera, Sept 25–Oct 4

Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Boston Lyric Opera, Nov 5–8

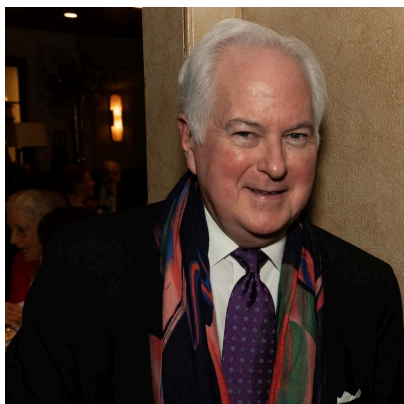
Exciting news for this season's Art Song Competition

The Gerda Lissner Foundation is pleased to announce an **increase in prize money** for the 2026 Art Song Competition. Up to two top prizes of \$12,000 will be awarded, and all finalists will receive a \$2,000 grant. Competition dates: **October 13-16, 2026**

Application Deadline August 11, 2026 - Click [HERE](#) for more information

The 2026 Art Song Competition Judging Team

Dr. Alison d'Amato, Associate Professor of Vocal Coaching at Eastman School of Music and **Michael Benchetritt**, President of Minerva Artists join collaborative pianist Francesco Barfoed and Foundation Trustees F. Paul Driscoll and Midge Woolsey to judge our October 13-16 Art Song Competition.



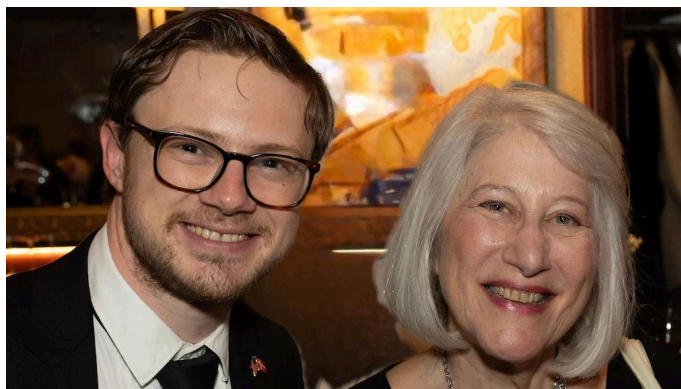
Welcome Our Newest Trustee to the Team

F. Paul Driscoll

The Gerda Lissner Foundation is delighted to welcome F. Paul Driscoll to its Board of Trustees, succeeding Michael A. Fornabaio, who retired from the Board on June 30 after nineteen years of devoted service. A longtime friend of the Foundation — competition judge, Honoree Tribute speaker at last spring's Winners Concert, and one of the most influential voices in American operatic life as Editor in Chief of *Opera News* for two decades — Mr. Driscoll brings extraordinary knowledge and passion to his new role. **[Read Full Bio](#)**

Our Collaborative Pianists this Summer

We are proud to shine a spotlight on the two collaborative artists who bring our Winners Concerts to life at Zankel Hall — and who are keeping busy in the most exciting ways this summer!





Arlene Shrut

Our Vice President and Co-Artistic Director, was the backbone of this year's competitions, serving as collaborative pianist for both the Art Song and International Vocal Competitions, and performing the opera portion of our Zankel Hall Concert. This summer she turns her attention to one of the most distinctive song festivals in the country:

The 13th Annual Source Song Festival (SSF) August 2-7 in Minneapolis. Arlene is excited to celebrate her 12th year on the artist faculty of this mid-western jewel. SSF has become a beloved pilgrimage for lovers of the magical blend of poetry set to music in both historic art songs and new works.



Arlene's focus in past summers at SSF has included being both a featured performer plus mentoring singer-pianist teams, guiding composers in creating evocative verbal introductions for their works and offering feedback on presentation skills for participant scholars' lectures. This year she is also curating Hugo Wolf's 46 song miniatures set *Das Italienisches Liederbuch* as a highlight of the festival. The performers will range from 8 singer-pianist teams whom Arlene will coach and the SSF staff (Clara Osowski, Mezzo-soprano and SSF Founder and Artistic Director; Dr. Shari Feldman, Soprano and Operations Director; Dr. Juan Carlos Mendoza, Tenor and SSF Education Director; Dr. Stephen Swanson, baritone and SSF faculty coach) in collaboration with Arlene at the piano.



Song Fest - The Nordic Project

This exciting project explores the beauty and cultural richness of Nordic art song, introducing vocal repertoire from Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark. Coached by Kathleen Roland-Silverstein and Francesco Barfoed, participants will explore repertoire rooted in folk traditions and trace its evolution into works now heard on international concert stages. A basic introduction to Scandinavian diction will be



Francesco Barfoed, served as our Art Song Collaborative Pianist at this spring's Winners Concert at Zankel Hall, and his summer is already off to a remarkable start. On June 20th he gave the world premiere of *Songs of Resilience*, a new song cycle by composer Sheila Silver — a testament to his

provided along with resources for continued study — no prior knowledge of the languages required.

Summer Highlights

World Premiere: *Songs of Resilience* by Sheila Silver

June 20, 2026

The Nordic Project

July 12 & July 13 at 3 p.m.

dedication to bringing new vocal music to life. He then heads to SongFest in South Carolina, where he joins the faculty as a performer and lecturer, sharing his deep expertise in Danish music and Scandinavian song repertoire with the next generation of collaborative pianists and singers.



The Greene Space Recital Series at NY Public Radio

Each year the Foundation invites three conservatories from around the country to pair established vocal artists with emerging young artists in performance at The Greene Space at New York Public Radio. Performances are live-streamed internationally and highlights are broadcast on WQXR's *The Young Artists Showcase*. This season, we are pleased to welcome artists from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

A Generous Gift of Sponsorship for the Series

The Gerda Lissner Foundation is thrilled to announce a generous gift of full sponsorship for this season's Greene Space Recital Series at New York Public Radio given *in honor of the Rauch siblings and their spouses — Phil and Louise Rauch, Louis and Ruth Rauch, and Lucy and George Henning — lifelong supporters of opera and emerging artists.*

The Gerda Lissner Foundation

is pleased to announce our

2027 Winners Concert Honorees

Collaborative pianist **Brian Zeger** and composer **Ben Moore**

"a remarkable artistic partnership in music and in life"

Together they represent the art of song at its finest, and the Foundation is honored to celebrate them at the **Annual Winners Concert on April 29, 2027, at Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall.**



Brian Zeger is the Artistic Director of the Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts at The Juilliard School and one of the leading collaborative pianists of our time, having performed and recorded with many of the world's greatest singers — from Marilyn Horne and Deborah Voigt to Joyce DiDonato and Anna Netrebko — on the premier stages of the United States and abroad.

Ben Moore is an American composer whose work spans art song, opera, musical theatre, and cabaret, praised by the New York Times as "brilliant" and "gorgeously lyrical," with his songs recorded and performed by Deborah Voigt, Susan Graham, Frederica von Stade, Lawrence Brownlee, and Audra McDonald. Fittingly, Brian and Ben have collaborated closely themselves — most notably on *Dear Theo*, a song cycle recorded on Delos.

What's Ahead | 2026-2027 Season Calendar



- **Aug 11, 2026** Application **Deadline** for 2026 Art Song Competition - click [**HERE**](#) for more information
- **Oct 13–16, 2026** Art Song Competition — Up to two prizes of \$12,000; finalist grants of \$2,000
- **Nov, 2026** The GLF Recital Series: Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music at The Greene Space at NYPR
- **Dec 29, 2026** Application Deadline for 2026 — 2027 International Vocal Competition
- **March 23, 2027** The GLF Recital Series: Jacobs School of Music Indiana University at The Greene Space at New York Public Radio
- **Mar 8–12, 2027** International Vocal Competition
- **Apr 29, 2027** Annual Winners Concert — Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall ★ Honoring Brian Zeger & Ben Moore

Special Thanks to our Partners



The Kosciuszko Foundation

We host our competitions at the beautiful Kosciuszko Foundation and thank their team for their continued support!



The Liederkranz Foundation

For over ten years The Gerda Lissner Foundation has presented the annual Winners Concert in association with our friends at The Liederkranz Foundation. Their generous support helps underwrite our cash prizes, reflecting our shared commitment to nurturing young singers at pivotal moments in their careers.

Please share this newsletter with friends who love beautiful music. The more voices in our community, the richer the chorus.

THE
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