

# A Celebration of American Composers

AVA  
ACADEMY OF  
VOCAL ARTS

February 6, 2021

Music Director and Pianist: Luke Housner

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*The Spring Virtual Season is generously sponsored by the Gray Charitable Trust*



# Program

**Selections from Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson  
by Aaron Copland (1900-1990)  
Chelsea Laggan, mezzo soprano**

Why do they shut me out of heaven?  
The world feels dusty  
Heart, we will forget him  
When they come back  
I felt a funeral in my brain  
I've heard an organ talk sometimes

**Songs by Charles Ives (1874-1954)  
Eric Delagrangé, bass**

In the alley  
An Old Flame  
Charlie Rutlage  
Songs my mother taught me  
The Children's Hour  
Circus Band

**Five Songs by Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007)  
Aubry Ballarò, soprano**

The Eternal Prisoner  
The Idle Gift  
The Longest Wait  
My Ghost  
The Swing

**Selected Ballads**  
**Titus Muzi, baritone**

Blue Mountain Ballads by Paul Bowles (1910-1999)

Heavenly Grass

Lonesome Man

Cabin

Sugar in the Cane

Sweet Suffolk Owl by Richard Hundley (1931-2018)

The Nightingale by Clifford Shaw (1895-1957)

Holding Each Other by Gene Scheer (b. 1958)

**Three Songs, op. 45 by Samuel Barber (1910-1981)**  
**Kara Mulder, soprano**

Now have I fed and eaten up the rose

A Green Lowland of Pianos

O Boundless, Boundless Evening

# LUKE HOUSNER

## AVA Master Vocal Coach Pianist and Music Director



Mr. Luke Housner has maintained a balanced schedule with a combination of opera assembling, music direction, vocal coaching and extensive concertizing.

In January 2019, Mr. Housner served as music director, principal coach and performance pianist for a fully staged production of Dvorak's *Rusalka* as part of the Academy of Vocal Arts 2018-2019 season. This was Mr. Housner's tenth production in this capacity at AVA, having done the same with Debussy's *Pelleas et Mélisande*, Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*, Barber's *Vanessa*, Massenet's *Werther*, Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (twice) and Strauss's *Arabella*, *Capriccio* and *Elektra*.

For the past ten consecutive summers, Mr. Housner has musically directed and performed complete operatic works of Mozart, Humperdinck, Dvorak and Wagner in opera workshops held in Vancouver, BC, Portland, OR, Toronto, ON and Bloomington, IN.

Starting in the summer of 2019, the two Canadian workshops will be relocating to Minneapolis, MN and Austin, TX. From 2007-2010, Mr Housner was principal coach and performance pianist for Astoria Music Festival in Oregon and then went on to coach and musically direct a production of *Così fan tutte* and *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Lyric Opera Studio of Weimar in Germany. Mr. Housner has served as assistant conductor, vocal coach and accompanist at the Central City Opera Festival, Portland Opera, Utah Opera Festival, Brevard Music Festival and at the Hong Kong's Academy of Performing Arts.

For twenty years as accompanist of the Philadelphia Singers, Mr. Housner performed on various subscription series concerts as pianist, organist and harpsichordist, served as rehearsal pianist and vocal coach for soloists and played under the batons of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Andrew Davis and Kurt Masur.

Native of Western Massachusetts, Mr. Housner earned a Master's Degree of Music in Vocal Accompanying and Coaching from University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana with instruction from internationally acclaimed vocal coach John Wustman. Previously, he received a Bachelor's Degree of Music, with a double major in Piano Performance and Vocal Accompanying from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.



**Aubry Ballarò (soprano, third-year)** is from Bryan, Ohio. She attended Oberlin Conservatory where she earned her B.M. in Voice Performance. Aubry was a winner with honorable mention of the 2019 Bologna International Vocal Competition, an Encouragement Award winner of the 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and was a four-year recipient of the Oberlin Conservatory Dean's Scholarship Award. Previous role highlights include Lisette in *La Rondine*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Miss Wordsworth in *Albert Herring*, and Queen in the world premiere of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. At AVA, Aubry has sung Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, 1st Wood Sprite in *Rusalka*, and Suor Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica*.



**Kara Mulder (soprano, third-year)** is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She attended The Eastman School of Music for her undergraduate degree, followed by the University of Michigan for her Master's degree. In 2014 Kara performed as the soprano soloist in Bach's Magnificat with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. She also appeared as the soloist in Mahler's 2nd Symphony with The University of Michigan Symphonic Orchestra. In December of 2017, Kara was the first place recipient of the Kennett Symphony of Chester County Competition in 2018 as well as the Grand Prize Winner of the Barry Alexander International Voice Competition in 2019. Leading operatic roles she has performed include the title role in *Rusalka*, Anna in *Le Villi*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, Conception in *L'heure Espagnole*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. Last summer Kara competed in the Bologna International Opera Competition where she was a Special Prize Winner. She is the 2020 First Prize Winner of the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition.



**Chelsea Laggan (mezzo-soprano, third-year)** is from Holland, Pennsylvania. She earned a B.S. in Vocal Performance, and an M.S. in Education from Hofstra University. In 2021 she is a District Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She has performed a number of roles with regional companies in the tri-state area, including Flora in *La traviata*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, as well as bringing to life the leading ladies of Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Bradamante in *Alcina* with Hofstra Opera Theatre. At AVA, she has sung Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Stéphano in *Roméo et Juliette*, Jezibaba in *Rusalka*, and La Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica*.



**Titus Muzi, (baritone, second-year)** is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He attended the Florida State University where he earned a B.M in Vocal Performance. Mr. Muzi is a recipient of multiple awards at FSU, including the Hanna J. Beaulieu Career Development Award in Opera, as well as the Presser Foundation Scholarship Award. Recently, he also won an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan National Council Auditions (2020). Mr. Muzi has recently engaged with various summer programs in the United States including Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy (2019) and the Music Academy of the West (2019). At MAW, Mr. Muzi performed the roles of Monroe and Pangle in West Coast premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain*. He performed the role of Schaunard in Florida State University's production of *La bohème* (2018). Also, while at FSU, he performed several mainstage roles including Mr. Gobineau in Menotti's *The Medium* (2018), Melisso in Handel's *Alcina* (2018), Hyde in the scholastic premiere of Carlisle Floyd's *Prince of Players* (2017) and Marchese d'Obigny in *La traviata* (2016).



**Eric Delagrangé (bass, third-year)** is from Buffalo, New York. He earned a B.M. from Mercyhurst University, and M.M. from DePaul University. He is a winner of the Special Judges Award and Audience Choice Award from the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, Cynthia Vernardakis Award from The Orpheus Vocal Competition, and is a recipient of the American Opera Society of Chicago Award. Previous roles include Hermit in *Der Freischütz* with Heartbeat Opera, Gideon March/Mr. Dashwood in *Little Women* with Opera in the Heights; Pistola in *Falstaff*, and Dr. Grenvil in *La traviata* with Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance; Kochubey in *Mazepa*, King Rene in *Iolanta*, and Thibaut d'Arc in *The Maid of Orleans* with Russian Opera Workshop. At AVA, he has sung Vodnik in *Rusalka*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Le Duc in *Roméo et Juliette*, and Balthazar in *La favorite*.

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