



NEWS RELEASE
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FORT WORTH OPERA GREEN ROOM PROUDLY PRESENTS
MUSIC SPEAKS: THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY & LIBRETTI WORKSHOP SERIES,
LED BY INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED OPERA COACHES LUCY YATES, J.J. PENNA, AND RACHELLE JONCK

FWO WILL HOST A FREE, FIVE-WEEK LANGUAGE INTENSIVE WORKSHOP SERIES FOR VOICE STUDENTS AND OPERA LOVERS ACROSS THE GLOBE, FOCUSING ON GERMAN LIEDER, ITALIAN AND FRENCH ART SONGS AND ARIAS.

FORT WORTH, TX — Fort Worth Opera (FWO) is pleased to announce today that the company will kick off the New Year with *Music Speaks: The Language of Poetry and Libretti Workshop Series*, led by distinguished opera coaches Lucy Yates, J.J. Penna, and Rachelle Jonck. Part of the new digital initiative FWO Green Room, this free, five-week language intensive will be held on Zoom, **January 7, 9, 16, 23, and 30, and February 6, 2021**, from **2:00-3:30 p.m. EST**, and streamed live to the company's official Facebook page. Conceived by General Director Afton Battle and Artistic Director Joe Illick, Fort Worth Opera's innovative virtual series will present a unique educational experience for voice students to hone their craft and continue developing their language skills, as they pursue careers on the operatic stage.

Beginning the second week of January, the company's talented **Lesley Resident Artists and select graduate-level voice students** from across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex will receive unparalleled access to three of the opera world's top language specialists. On January 7 and 9, **Lucy Yates**, pianist, conductor, librettist, Italian grammar and poetry teacher, and Lecturer in Opera in the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA, will hold seminars on Italian art songs and arias. Additionally, she will provide an online poetry game for Zoom audiences to play together, with instructions and a link to be provided when auditors register.

On January 16, highly sought-after collaborative pianist and Juilliard School vocal literature professor **J.J. Penna** will guide students through the performance of French art songs and arias. On January 23, he will return to explore German Lieder and arias - from Schubert, Heine, and Schumann, to Wagner, Strauss, and Meyerbeer. The series will continue on January 30 and conclude on February 6 with two additional workshops led by South African-born, New York City-based opera coach, pianist, and acclaimed conductor **Rachelle Jonck**, concentrating on Italian art song literature and arias. This exciting workshop series will give classical music lovers an exclusive insider's look into the anatomy of art songs and arias. FWO's **Music Speaks** will also offer emerging local singers an opportunity to perform their audition repertoire in front of a virtual audience and be guided by some of the opera industry's leading coaches and language experts.

FWO Green Room presents *Music Speaks: The Language of Poetry & Libretti Workshop Series*

featuring renowned operatic coaches Lucy Yates, J.J. Penna, and Rachelle Jonck.

January 7 – February 6, 2021 at 2:00-3.30 p.m. EST | <https://www.fwopera.org/music-speaks>

- Italian Art Songs and Arias (January 7 & 9) — **Lucy Yates**
- French Art Songs and Arias (January 16) — **J.J. Penna**
- German Lieder and Arias (January 23) — **J.J. Penna**
- Italian Art Songs and Arias (January 30 and February 6) — **Rachelle Jonck**

ARTIST BIOS

Lucy Yates, Italian Literature

Lucy Yates made her conducting debut in 2018 as *maestro al cembalo* at Seattle Opera with the “extremely inventive” *O+E* (Gluck and Calzabigi’s 1762 *Orfeo ed Euridice*), in an “elegantly poetic” English version she created for that production. She made her Rossini Opera Festival debut in 2014 as assistant conductor and onstage continuo fortepianist in Mario Martone’s staging of *Aureliano in Palmira*. Miss Yates first drew international attention as Violetta in a 2002 Franco Zeffirelli/Plácido Domingo production of *La traviata* (Teatro Verdi di Busseto) and was immediately engaged by Gian Carlo Menotti for Spoleto (Monica in *The Medium*, under his direction) and Francesco Maria Colombo for the Orchestra Verdi di Milano. Critics called her Gilda “perfect” (Piedmont), her Beatrice di Tenda “dazzling” (Fletcher), and her Fiordiligi “deliciously feminine” (Aldeburgh). She appeared as Nedda in *Pagliacci* at Sarasota Opera and as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Opera Company of North Carolina.

Through twenty years of playing and coaching for Bel Canto at Caramoor—now triumphantly reestablished as Teatro Nuovo—with Will Crutchfield, Miss Yates has emerged as a cogent and lyrical translator and teacher of Italian grammar and poetry. She has also taught over a decade for dell’Arte Opera Ensemble under Christopher Fecteau. She has served as dramaturg, titlist, and coach for the New York City Opera, and panelist on the Metropolitan Opera Radio Quiz. Since 2017 Miss Yates is a Lecturer in Opera in the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA and a guest lecturer in the Thornton School of Music at USC. In spring 2020 she joined The Industry on keyboards for *Sweet Land*, with music by Du Yun and Raven Chacon, directed by Yuval Sharon and Cannupahanska Luger, and was made a company member. In 2021 her articles on Mozart and Britten will appear in *Crescendo*, the magazine of the Santa Fe Opera. She is also preparing the Italian version of Ricky Ian Gordon and Michael Korie’s *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*. www.lucyates.com

J.J. Penna, French and German Literature

J.J. Penna has performed extensively with a variety of eminent singers, including Kathleen Battle, Harolyn Blackwell, Measha Brueggergosman, David Daniels, Denyce Graves, Ying Huang, Susan Narucki, Roberta Peters, Florence Quivar, and Andreas Scholl. He has held fellowships at the Tanglewood Music Center, Banff Center, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, and San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program. He received his training under Martin Katz, Margo Garrett, and Diane Richardson. Devoted to the teaching of classical song literature, he has been on the faculties of the Yale University School of Music, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Bowdoin Festival, Westminster Choir College, and Vancouver International Song Institute. He currently teaches at the Juilliard School, the Steans Institute of the Ravinia Festival, the Renee Fleming Song Studio at Carnegie Hall, and the New England Conservatory of Music.

Rachelle Jonck, Italian Literature

Rachelle Jonck received her musical training at the Conservatory of the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa where she focused on vocal accompaniment. Simultaneously nurturing an interest in musicology, she received her degree majoring in both piano and musicology. In her native country she was awarded a FNB/Vita award for her contribution to opera in South Africa with special mention of her work with the State Theater Opera Chorus. In 1998 Ms Jonck received the Nederburg Opera Prize – South Africa’s premier opera award. In 1998 Rachelle moved to New York City as Head Vocal Coach and Assistant Conductor of Bel Canto at Caramoor. She is the Principal Coach of Teatro Nuovo, and teaches at Westminster Choir College. Most recently she lead performances of Rossini’s *La gazza ladra* (Teatro Nuovo) and Donizetti’s *Anna Bolena* (Baltimore Concert Opera).

Rachelle’s 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. She has made a name for herself in New York City as a specialist Italian style coach - Handel, Mozart and the bel canto masters, including Verdi. 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. In March 2020 Rachelle founded Bel Canto Boot Camp with long time partner Derrick Goff. BCBC’s signature Vaccai Project inspired hundreds of singers and teachers all over the world in three sessions between March and November. It runs again in Summer 2021. In November they unveiled The Gym Floor - an ever-growing research-based, skill-focused technical training space for singers, teachers, coaches, and opera lovers alike. www.rachellejonck.com & www.belcantobootcamp.com

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is poised to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2021. For the last fifteen years, FWO has become one of the leading American companies dedicated to nurturing and performing new opera, in addition to producing traditional repertoire with rising American stars. Our acclaimed *Frontiers* program was held online this fall with our first digital Libretto Workshop. The company’s Children’s Opera Theatre typically reaches about 60,000 students across North Texas each season with live, interactive performances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FWO has created online educational curriculum for local music students to supplement their in-school studies, and COT can also now serve entire families and communities beyond the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Fort Worth Opera is committed to celebrating all North Texans, and through our ongoing *Noches de Opera* program, the company offers exciting community-driven events and powerful operas that represent the diverse cultures of all of the Americas.

Fort Worth Opera is sponsored in part by awards from The Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County, The City of Fort Worth, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and OPERA America. Additional Fort Worth Opera sponsors include: the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; The Burnett Foundation; the Amon G. Carter Foundation; the Sid W. Richardson Foundation; Visit Fort Worth; Adeline & George McQueen Foundation, J.P. Morgan, Trustee; Smallwood Foundation, J.P. Morgan, Trustee; Hattie Mae Lesley Foundation, Bank of America, Trustee; Virginia Hobbs Charitable Trust, Simmons Bank, Trustee; Garvey Texas Foundation; Mary Potishman Laird Trust; Fifth Avenue Foundation; The Thomas M. Helen McKee and John P. Ryan Foundation; R4 Foundation; Red Oak Foundation; The Rea Charitable Trust, Wells Fargo Trustee; Wells Fargo Foundation; and Autobahn. The **FWO Green Room** is sponsored by Haltom’s Jewelers, UNT Health Science Center, The Kimbell Art Museum, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Kardaras Insurance Agency, and The Trew Barry Real Estate Group.

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