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Mezzo-soprano Katherine Beck named winner of the 7th Annual Mildred Miller International Voice Competition

On Sunday, October 21, 2018 at The Frick Art and Historical Center's auditorium, mezzo-soprano Katherine Beck was named the winner of the 7th annual Mildred Miller International Voice Competition, hosted by Pittsburgh Festival Opera.

Following afternoon performances by 8 finalists, open to the public, Ms. Beck was selected by a panel of judges including Mildred Miller Posvar (Artist Lecturer in Voice, Carnegie Mellon University School of Music), Robert Chafin (Assistant Professor of Voice, West Virginia University School of Music), Dr. Robert Croan (former Professor and Chair of Voice/Opera Department at Duquesne University, and music critic/writer), Kenneth Shaw (Professor of Voice, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music), Maria Spacagana (Associate Professor of Voice, Carnegie Mellon University School of Music), and Pittsburgh Festival Opera's Artistic Director Jonathan Eaton. The previous afternoon, the judges panel heard performances by 20 semi-finalists, selecting 8 to proceed to the final round. In addition to Ms. Beck, the 2018 finalists included mezzo-soprano Jenni Bank, tenor Terrence Chin-Loy, soprano Ashley Fabian, soprano Kylene Parks, mezzo-soprano Kathleen Reveille, soprano Mikayla Sager, and tenor Robert Stahley. Upon presenting the competition's finalists on stage, Mrs. Posvar commented that "each year the talent gets better and better – and this year was the best yet."

Prior to her involvement with the Mildred Miller International Voice Competition, Katherine Beck had been recognized for her unique sound and honest performances throughout the United States. She recently won Third Place in the Met National Council's Western Region and created the role of Lisette in the world premiere of Gerald Cohen's *Steal a pencil for me* at Opera Colorado. This summer, she returned to the Tanglewood Music Center as a Vocal Arts fellow in art song and chamber music, a short drive from her hometown of Bennington, Vermont. Ms. Beck made her debut with the Boston Pops Orchestra last year at Tanglewood and Symphony Hall in Boston alongside Tony-winning artists in Lapine's *Sondheim on Sondheim*. This coming 2018-2019 season, she will be a member of the Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio in Phoenix, where she will perform Flora in *La Traviata*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Ms. Beck has previously performed with Pittsburgh Festival Opera as Sextus in the company's 2016 production of *Julius Caesar*. As winner of his year's Mildred Miller Voice Competition, Ms. Beck was awarded the First Prize of \$3000, made possible by Pittsburgh Festival Opera's Board of Directors, as well as a contract to perform in the company's upcoming 2019 Festival Season.

Receiving the Robert Chafin Third prize of \$1000 was tenor Terrence Chin-Loy. Soprano Kylene Parks received the Second Prize of \$2,000, made possible by Dr. Etsuro and Yoko Motoyama, as well as the Audience Favorite Prize of \$1000 made possible by Dr. Eugene N. and Barbara L. Myers. Each finalist received a Certificate of Commendation and an award of \$250, made possible by Hans and Leslie Fleischner.

The Mildred Miller International Voice Competition was founded in 2012 to identify and nurture talented young singers, and is named for Pittsburgh Festival Opera founder Mildred Miller Posvar, who sang for 26 illustrious seasons at the Metropolitan Opera and other world capitals. Miller's acclaimed recordings include Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with conductor Bruno Walter, Mozart's *Le Nozze de Figaro* with Erich Leinsdorf, and the commemorative concert and album celebrating the Boston Pops Orchestra 100th anniversary with Arthur Fiedler.

Pittsburgh Festival Opera, which hosts the International Voice Competition each year, is dedicated to presenting innovative opera, including American works, reinterpretations of older works, and new works, for the widest possible audience, focusing on diversity in programming and casting, crossing boundaries and bringing together talents from all the arts, encouraging new talent, and broadening audiences through outreach and education to create a body of work that is original, entertaining, contemporary and relevant. Pittsburgh Festival Opera will debut its 2019 Season in the Summer of 2019.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS

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PHOTO ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Robert Frankenberry, Music Director , Pittsburgh Festival Opera, mezzo-soprano Katherine Beck.
- 2) Mezzo-soprano Katherine Beck, Mildred Miller Posvar, Jonathan Eaton.

Photo credit: Terry Clark.