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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## NASHVILLE OPERA INTRODUCES 2021 MARY RAGLAND EMERGING ARTISTS

**Nashville, TN**—Nashville Opera is pleased to announce the **2021 Mary Ragland Emerging Artists**: Rebekah Howell, soprano; Emily Cottam, mezzo-soprano; Frederick Schlick, tenor; Christopher Curcuruto, bass-baritone; and Sky Haneul Lee, pianist.

Selected from hundreds of applicants from across the country—and auditioned among the top 100 of those—the five Mary Ragland Emerging Artists are a select group of the best and brightest up-and-coming musicians. These young artists introduce opera to students in our education tour to Middle Tennessee schools, which in 2021 will be a virtual tour reaching schools all over the state. The education programs and tour are managed by Hannah Marcoe, who recently joined Nashville Opera as Education Programs Administrator.

Additionally, the Emerging Artists will gain valuable experience performing in the Opera's mainstage productions of *Rigoletto* and *Cinderella*. Their experience is also enriched through masterclasses where they improve their craft in acting, stage presence, vocal projection, and the business of making opera a career.

Praised for her bell-like and crisp tone, award winning American soprano **Rebekah Howell** is making her mark as a truly versatile artist. Howell received her Master of Music degree from Indiana University and has been seen as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* with Opera Colorado, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Chautauqua Opera and Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Louisiana.

Mezzo-soprano **Emily J. Cottam** holds a Master of Music degree from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Music Degree from Utah State University. Cottam was a Resident Artist with Tri-Cities Opera for their 2019-2020 season where she performed as Charlotte in *A Little Night Music*. She a two-time Emerging Artist with Seagle Music Colony, where she performed roles such as Prince Charmant in *Cendrillon* and *Livy Clemens* in *Harmony* (world premiere).

**Frederick Schlick** is a New York City based performer and a Master's in Opera Performance graduate of The Boston Conservatory. Schlick made his professional debut as Young Jim Thompson in Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied* with Pensacola Opera in the fall of 2016. Frederick reprised the same role with Tri-Cities Opera the next year. 2018 marked Frederick's NYC debut when he joined City Lyric Opera as Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and returned in 2019 to sing Don José in *La Tragédie de Carmen*.

**Christopher Curcuruto**, an emerging artist from Sydney, Australia, is currently completing a Graduate Artist Certificate in Opera at the University of North Texas. This past season Curcuruto was a Studio Artist with the Fort Worth Opera Company. In 2019 Christopher was a Resident Artist with the Meistersingers Program for Young Dramatic Voices under Jane Eaglen as part of the Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and from 2015 to 2017 was a Young Artist with the Pacific Opera Company (Australia).

Increasingly sought-after as a musical partner, pianist **Sky Haneul Lee** is rapidly building a reputation as a versatile and active collaborator in opera, vocal, choral, orchestral and instrumental music. As an opera pianist, Ms. Lee collaborated extensively with USC Thornton Opera as a rehearsal pianist for multiple productions, and Summer 2019 found Lee at the Musiktheater Bavaria in Germany as a collaborative piano fellow in opera studio. Lee holds degrees in Solo Piano Performance from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where she served as an Associate Instructor, and in Keyboard Collaborative Arts from University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.



From Left: Emily Cottam, Christopher Curcuruto, Rebekah Howell, Sky Haneul Lee, Frederick Schlick

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## **About Nashville Opera**

Nashville Opera, Tennessee's largest professional opera company, creates artistic experiences that elevate our world. Among the most successful regional companies in the country, Nashville Opera has presented three different world premiere operas since its inception in 1981. Mainstage performances are presented at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center and the Noah Liff Opera Center, playing to over 10,000 people annually. Each year, Nashville Opera's extensive education and outreach touring program reaches approximately 25,000 students throughout Middle Tennessee. Visit [nashvilleopera.org](http://nashvilleopera.org) for more information.