

Tenor Anthony León, NEC '21 MM Wins the 2023 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition

- **Finalists participated in the Grand Finals Concert, accompanied by the Met Orchestra led by Maestro Michele Gamba and hosted by soprano Latonia Moore on Sunday, April 23**
- **León to receive a cash prize of \$20,000 and vital exposure in the opera world**

Boston, MA (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)—Tenor and NEC alum Anthony León '21 MM is one of six winners of the 2023 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, following last week's semifinal competition. The finalists competed on the Met stage in New York City on Sunday, April 23, at 3:00 pm ET, hosted by **Latonia Moore**, the 2000 Grand Finals-winning soprano and star of the Met's new production of Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

Chosen by a panel of opera administrators from the Met and other companies, each finalist performed two arias accompanied by the Met Orchestra, conducted by **Michele Gamba**. The winners received individual cash prizes of \$20,000.

While earning his Master of Music in Vocal Performance at NEC, Anthony studied with Voice Department Chair **Bradley Williams** and received the noted **Wendy Shattuck '75 Presidential Scholarship Fund for Vocal Studies**.

The teacher-student relationship Anthony and Bradley shared was pivotal to Anthony's career as a rising tenor.

"... I realized that the best teacher and the best program with the people that cared for me the most was going to be at NEC. Not only do we get amazing training—perhaps the best training around—but the teachers really care. They're thinking about you as the artist; you as the artist in training. I'm so grateful for how generous they've been with me," said León.

Williams added, “*Anthony is going to go on and have a very long, fruitful, and lucrative international career singing opera, concerts, and crossover. He’s the quintessential 21st-century artist who has developed the skill sets to leverage technology to his advantage and adapt to ever-changing conditions in the industry. Anthony is a model for how to succeed in today’s music world. He has the talent, but even more importantly, he has done the work necessary to achieve his goals, and he loves the process.*”

Opera Studies at NEC is a trailblazing program preparing young musicians for successful music careers through a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum taught by world-class faculty members and a multitude of performance opportunities.

NEC also congratulates tenor and alum Yuntong Han ‘21, student of Maryann McCormick, for advancing to the finals of the 2023 Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, and Hyungjin Son ‘24 MM, student of Bradley Williams, for advancing to the semi-finals.

Full biographies of each singer are below.

About the Competition

The Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, formerly known since its founding in 1954 as the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, is now in its 69th season. The Met’s vocal competition is a career-making opportunity for aspiring opera singers, given the reach of the auditions, the number of applicants, and the program’s long tradition. The competition has been crucial in introducing many of today’s best-known opera stars, including **Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Eric Owens, Stephanie Blythe, Hei-Kyung Hong, Sondra Radvanovsky, Lawrence Brownlee, Michael Fabiano, Latonia Moore, Lisette Oropesa, Jamie Barton, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Ryan Speedo Green, and Nadine Sierra.**

The Laffont Competition is open to singers from the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as other international entrants training or residing in those countries. This season, the competition had more than 1,200 applicants, with more than 900 singers qualifying to participate in 36 districts. Of the 137 singers in the regional rounds, 20 were named semifinalists.

The Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition is operated at the District and Region level by hundreds of dedicated volunteers and donors from across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. More than \$300,000 in prize money has already been awarded in the district and regional rounds.

The competition gained international acclaim with the release of the 2008 feature-length documentary *The Audition*, directed by award-winning filmmaker Susan Froemke, which chronicled the 2007 National Council Auditions season and Grand Finals Concert.

Finalist Biographies

Tenor **Anthony León** has appeared at the Santa Fe Opera, Carnegie Hall, Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Geneva's Victoria Hall, and Metz's Arsenal Concert Hall, among others. During the 2022–23 season, he is a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at LA Opera, where he has sung Roderigo in Verdi's *Otello*, Don Curzio in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Male Chorus in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, Spoletta in Puccini's *Tosca*, and Normanno in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He is scheduled to appear at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Salzburg Festival, sing Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at LA Opera, and can be heard on a recording of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* with the ensemble I Gemelli. Last year, he earned first prize and the Don Plácido Domingo Ferrer Zarzuela Prize at the Operalia competition.

Having earned bachelor's degrees from New England Conservatory of Music and China's Northwestern Polytechnical University, tenor **Yuntong Han** is currently pursuing his master's degree at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. At Indiana University, he has appeared as Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Ruggero in Puccini's *La Rondine*, and Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. He was also a recent singer fellow at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute and sang Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème*, and Lucano in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at New England Conservatory of Music. He is also active as a concert and oratorio soloist, performing in Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, and the New England Conservatory Song and Verse art-song series.

Hyungjin Son, a baritone from Seoul, South Korea, is pursuing a master's degree at NEC under the tutelage of Bradley Williams. He earned a bachelor of music in vocal performance from Seoul National University and a graduate certificate from the Opera Institute of Boston University at BU. Mr. Son has performed as Don Alfonso in 'Cosi fan Tutte,' Mr. Putnam in 'If I were you,' "Pa" Zegner in 'Proving Up' and Sir. Thomas in 'Mansfield Park'. Also, He performed as a soloist for Brahms: Ein deutsches Requiem with the BU Symphony Orchestra at the Symphony Hall. As a studio artist at Aspen Music Festival, he covered the role of Ford in 'Falstaff' with international bass-baritone Bryn Terfel in the title role. He covered the title role in 'Don Giovanni' as well. He was named an encouragement winner in 2020, a district winner in 2022 in the Boston district, and a regional winner in 2023 in the New England Region of The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.