

JENSEN FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF NINTH ANNUAL VOICE COMPETITION

OVER \$35,000 AWARDED TO YOUNG OPERA AND CLASSICAL SINGERS

New York, May 2008 -- The Fritz & Lavinia Jensen Foundation is pleased to announce the winners of its Ninth Annual Voice Competition, held on May 17 in New York City. First prize has been awarded to soprano NaGuanda Nobles, who received a cash award of \$15,000 as well as an offer of an engagement with Opera Carolina in Charlotte.

Ms. Nobles, from Thomasville, Georgia, is a graduate of Florida State University. She has performed with the Pittsburgh Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Pensacola Opera, Mobile Opera, and with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in a performance of Wynton Marsalis' *All Rise* featuring the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra under the baton of Kurt Masur.

The Competition's second prize of \$10,000 was awarded to Jonathan Beyer, a baritone from Orland Park, IL. Coloratura soprano Audrey Elizabeth Luna took third prize of \$5,000, and countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo and soprano Valentina Fler received the Lendon Todd Munday Encouragement Award of \$2,000. The remaining eleven finalists were awarded \$300 each.

The Jensen Competition Finals were held in Engelman Recital Hall at the Baruch Performing Arts Center. The judges were Neal Goren, Artistic Director and Conductor of Gotham Chamber Opera; conductor Eugene Kohn; and Gianna Rolandi, Director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center.

The Jensen Foundation's mission is to foster the development of young opera and classical singers. While the centerpiece of these efforts is the annual competition, the Foundation has also contributed to young artist programs at companies such as Chicago Opera Theater, Central City Opera, Opera San Jose, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Established in Statesville, NC by Lavinia Jensen in honor of her husband Fritz, the Jensen Foundation held its first competition in New York in 2000; since then, it has provided over \$200,000 in support to young artists.

The Jensen Competition is open to any legal US resident between the ages of 25 and 35 who has not yet received an engagement from an Opera America Level I organization (or international equivalent), exclusive of cover, chorus, or young artist program roles.

More information about the Jensen Foundation and its programs may be found at www.jensenfoundation.org.

Halina Avery,
New York, NY

Kenneth R. Brown,
Charlotte, NC

Jane Pardue,
Statesville, NC

Danielle Munday,
Sutton, MA

Benjamin Leaptrott,
Atlanta, GA

Victoria Livengood,
Jacksonville, FL

Alexandra Paliyenko,
Matthews, NC

William Fred Scott,
Atlanta, GA

Oliver Worthington
Austin, TX

C. Barton Landess
*Foundation for the
Carolinas*

Ann Todd
Competition Director