

Thursday, Feb 01, 2018

Young Artists Concert to feature student performers, Oakland Symphony Orchestra

Four of Oakland University's most promising music students will perform with the Oakland Symphony Orchestra (OSO) during the **21st Annual David Daniels Young Artists Concert**, which takes place at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 11 in Varner Recital Hall on OU's campus.

The students are the winners of the 2017-2018 Oakland University Concerto Competition and were selected to reprise their performance with the OSO.

"The concerto competition is always fiercely contested and all of this year's finalists demonstrated great maturity, poise and artistry," said **Dr. Gregory Cunningham**, music director of the OSO and professor of orchestral and wind conducting at OU.

The Young Artists Concert program will feature four solo student performances:

- **Jamie Blair** (mezzo soprano) – *Se Romeo t'uccise un figlio* from *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* (1830) by Vincenzo Bellini
- **Brant Ford** (alto saxophone) – *Prelude, Cadence et Finale* (1956) by Alfred Desenclos, orchestrated by Russell Peterson (1993)
- **Gillian Tackett** (soprano) – *Maritza's Aria* from *Countess Maritza* (1924) by Emmerich Kálmán
- **Luke Halkey** (piano) – *Piano Concerto in C Minor, op.37* (1800), I. Allegro con brio by Ludwig van Beethoven.

In addition, the OSO will perform *Capriccio italien* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and *Bolero* by Maurice Ravel.

Tickets for the Feb. 11 performance are \$20 general admission or \$10 for students, and can be purchased in advance without service fees at **Star Tickets** or by phone at (800) 585-37. They can also be purchased on OU's campus at the Varner Hall Box Office.

Directions and complete ticket information are available at www.oakland.edu/mtd/tickets.

For more information about Oakland University School of Music, Theatre and Dance programs and performances, call (248) 370-2030 or visit www.oakland.edu/mtd.

About the Artists

Mezzo soprano **Jamie Blair** is in her final semester of her master's degree in vocal performance at Oakland University, studying with Edith Diggory. Previously taught elementary and middle school general music and choir in Lima, Ohio. Blair holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Ohio Northern University where she studied voice with P. Lance Ashmore and saxophone with Vernon Neeley. Her opera credits include the choruses of *Carmen* and *I Pagiacci*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Nancy in *Martha*. She has also performed with the Lima Symphony Chorus, the Columbus Sympho Chorus, and Fior Angelico, an early music chamber ensemble.

From Henderson Ky., **Brant Ford** is currently in his first year at Oakland University, where he is studying saxophone performance with Dr. Jeffrey Heisler. Ford is a member of the VASH Saxophone Quartet, and with this group he has performed at several venues including the



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Jamie Blair

and he has performed in master classes with Timothy McAllister and Otis Murphy. Ford intends to continue his music education and pursue a master's degree.



Gillian Tackett

Gillian Tackett is a sophomore vocal performance major at Oakland University, studying with Alta Dantzler. Last winter she appeared as the First Lady in the university's production of *The Magic Flute*, and this January played the role of Martha in the university's production of *Martha*. In 2017, Tackett placed first at the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Michigan Chapter, in the Second-Year Women category. She plans to pursue a career in opera while teaching the next generation in her private studio.

Luke Halkey began formal piano study at age six with his father, who soon recognized his son's love for the instrument. Luke has been a diligent student ever since, studying with Rebecca Harding-Mayer, Faye Mao, and Christopher Brent. He has achieved High Awards for his distinct musicality, and Superior Ratings at venues such as NFMC in Oxford, MMTA/MTNA at Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, Albion College, Grand Valley State University, and American Guild of Music Contests, in Romulus and Troy, Mich. He is proud to be pursuing his passion as a piano performance major at Oakland University, where he has been studying with Dr. Tian Tian, a world-renowned concert pianist and assistant professor of music in piano.



Brant Ford

About the Oakland Symphony Orchestra

Now in its fifth decade of providing the OU community with outstanding live performances and symphonic repertoire, the OSO is comprised of professional musicians from throughout Southeastern Michigan and Northern Ohio, OU students, and OU faculty.

The OSO performs most of its concerts on the OU campus in Varner Hall, with its final annual performance held in Orchestra Hall in Detroit in collaboration with the Oakland University Symphony Chorus.