



Music Academy of the West is creating a new wave of entrepreneurial, classically trained musicians as it unveils the

2020 ALUMNI ENTERPRISE AWARD WINNERS

\$220,000 has been awarded to 21 alumni in three years – in 2020, eight winners will receive a total of \$70,000

2020 Alumni Projects and Innovation Award winners incorporate technology, engage audiences in new concert experiences and venues, and provide opportunities for wellness and dialogue about socially relevant issues

Winners are immersed in a unique skill-building curriculum through second annual Innovation Residential

Music Academy of the West champions its outstanding alumni, announcing Alumni Enterprise Awards for four projects, and two Innovation Awards

Santa Barbara, CA — A pioneer of thought leadership in music and the arts, Music Academy of the West announces the winners of its third annual Alumni Enterprise Awards. Over \$70,000 in cash prizes will be shared among eight alumni, funding four winning projects and two Innovation Awards.

Alumni Enterprise Award Projects

- Tenor and non-profit founder of *Opera4Kids* **Bernardo Bermudez ('11)** will use digital platforms to bring opera to young people through his program *Musical Make Believe*.
- Violinist **Clara Lyon ('03, '04)** and violist **Doyle Armbrust ('01, '03)** of the Spektral Quartet (pictured above), will record and release a commissioned work, *Enigma*, with a 360-degree video screened in planetariums and viewed on VR headsets.
- Cellist **John Popham ('05, '06)** of Longleash will create a meditative, active listening podcast, *States of Listening*.
- Tenor **Andy Zimmermann ('19)** will bring opera to Broadway with *Opera Jukebox*, a concept that will reinvent popular arias for a wide audience.

Innovation Awards

- **Innovation Awards** are being presented to flutist **Sasha Launer ('11)**, co-founder of *One Found Sound*, and co-awarded to mezzo-soprano **Jenny Rivera ('95, '96)**, executive director and CEO, and bass-baritone **Derrell Acon ('09)**, Director of Engagement & Equity of Long Beach Opera.

All 7,000-plus Music Academy alumni are eligible to apply for the Award. Project proposals were vetted by members of the **Music Academy Board of Directors, National Advisory Council**, and administration, including **President and CEO Scott Reed**. Representing the Board were former executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Exelon and past chair of the Joffrey Ballet and Ravinia Festival **Pamela Strobel**, and Director, Strategy & Business Development for Disney Theatrical Group **Clive Chang**.

“The quality and creativity of the Award proposals were inspiring. Alumni continue to lead us to new thinking about how music is presented and how to reach new audiences.”

— Music Academy President & CEO Scott Reed

“Each winner participates in our Innovation Residential to expand their professional networks and to develop their approach to entrepreneurship and strategic application. Our overarching goal is to give as many of our fellows and alumni the tools they need to help launch their careers.”

— Director of Innovation and Program Development Kevin Kwan Loucks

About the Innovation Residential

Taught by leading industry professionals, the Music Academy Innovation Residential supplies Award-winners with the tools to sharpen their business skills and workshop their business plans. Hosted at the Music Academy in March 2020, it is the only intensive of its kind offered by a top-tier performing arts organization. Curriculum will include:

- Design Thinking and Organizational Behavior
- Developing a Successful Business Model
- Strategy for Growth and Performance
- Industry and Competitor Analysis
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship ·
- Marketing and Brand Management
- Organizational Management
- Partnerships and Networking

About the 2020 Award-Winning Projects

Alumni Enterprise Award Projects



Bernardo Bermudez *tenor* ('11)

Award: \$20,000

Musical Make Believe

The founder of the educational non-profit organization *Opera4Kids* will launch the *Musical Make Believe* digital program; using classical music, guest musicians, characters, puppetry, and animation to tell stories about music, musical instruments, and the performing arts with the potential to reach millions. The first 10 episodes of programming will be streaming online via YouTube. *Musical Make Believe* will also promote *The Enchanted Tail* and other *Opera4Kids* productions, encouraging kids and their families to attend live performances. [LEARN MORE](#)



Andy Zimmermann *tenor* ('19)

Award: \$20,000

Opera Jukebox

An opera jukebox musical will showcase opera's greatest hits in a medium better suited to the 21st century audience. A new musical will be created with the greatest hits of opera. 60 minutes of music with a nine-piece band will be presented at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City. While the famous melodies will be taken from opera classics, the lyrics will be in English and the arrangements will be brand-new. All cast members are leaders in their respective industries of Broadway, modern dance, and opera. Andy Zimmermann will be hosting the evening to help guide the audience through a new musical experience.

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Clara Lyon *violin* ('03, '04)

Doyle Armbrust *viola* ('01, '03)

Award: \$20,000

Enigma



Spektral Quartet will record and release an immersive, 360-degree format visual album of *Enigma* by composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir and video artist Sigurdur Gudjonsson. A 360-degree dome video will be adapted for personal viewing devices such as a VR headset, released in November 2020 as a visual album, corresponding with a New York City premiere featuring this work. [LEARN MORE](#)



John Popham *cello* ('05, '06)

Award: \$5,000

States of Listening

The production of five pilot episodes of *States of Listening*, a music podcast that offers a guided listening experience through mindfulness practices, each featuring a musical work conducive to a specific mindfulness practice. An introductory conversation between a musician and a meditation, spirituality, or music therapy expert will prepare the listener to experience the musical work in full, guiding their engagement through listening strategies and mindfulness practices. The musical content and guests featured on *States of Listening* will be curated by Longleash, a critically acclaimed trio with expertise in progressive yet accessible programming. [LEARN MORE](#)

Innovation Awards



Sasha Launer *flute* ('11)

Award: \$2,500

Sasha Launer is a co-founder of *One Found Sound* (OFS), a conductorless, collaborative chamber orchestra on a mission to revolutionize live classical music performances. Focused on building strong, inspired communities, OFS is on a mission to harness the unifying power of classical music by cultivating modern and relatable performance environments. OFS performs standing up, without a stage, and in unconventional open-plan venues where listeners are invited to sit or stand without any barriers to the music. They encourage the use of smartphones and audience vocalization and invite guests to chat with members after each performance. Their workshop series, *OFS Presents*, provides community members with unique interdisciplinary events that relate classical music with yoga, mindfulness, meditation, psychology, and neuroscience. [LEARN MORE](#)



Jennifer Rivera
soprano ('95, '96)

Derrell Acon
bass baritone ('09)

Award: \$2,500

Executive Director and CEO Jennifer Rivera and Derrell Acon, Director of Engagement & Equity, Long Beach Opera, are creating a series of Community Engagement events that will present art as a catalyst for connecting communities through both conversation and performance. The series will focus on relevant topics featuring community leaders, activists, artists and change-makers, catalyzed by artistic performances that will be incorporated into the event. These conversations will address topics from the operas Long Beach Opera will perform as they relate to a contemporary audience – issues like immigration, equity and diversity in the arts, female empowerment, and artists as purveyors of social change. The conversations will conclude with a Q & A between the speakers, panelists, artists, and audience members. [LEARN MORE](#)

ABOUT THE ALUMNI ENTERPRISE AWARDS

The Alumni Enterprise Awards, now in its third year, is open to all alumni of the Academy's Summer Festival, and funds innovative ideas in areas including artistic expression, audience development, education, community engagement, social justice, and technology. The Music Academy has now invested a total of \$220,000 in our alumni-innovated projects since 2018.

The winners were selected by the Academy's senior management and members of the Board of Directors in collaboration with its distinguished [National Advisory Council](#).

The Alumni Enterprise Awards are generously supported by **Regina and Rick Roney** and the **Ladera Foundation**.

ABOUT MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST

Music Academy of the West advances the development of 21st century classically trained musicians and cultivates discerning, appreciative, and adventurous audiences. Founded in 1947, the Academy operates on a 10-acre, ocean-side campus in Santa Barbara, California. Music Academy of the West's world-renowned eight-week Summer Festival offers nearly 200 public events. Programs comprise voice, vocal piano, collaborative piano, instrumental, and solo piano. The Academy began a four-year partnership with the London Symphony Orchestra in 2018 focused on education and performance on both continents. An Innovation Institute supports alumni entrepreneurship with the Alumni Enterprise Awards and an annual residential. In the local community 200 young people participate in the Academy's expanding choral program, *Sing!*. For more information, visit musicacademy.org.

photos courtesy of the artists

Released: January 23, 2020

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