

13 | THE THIRTEEN

CHOIR & ORCHESTRA | MATTHEW ROBERTSON ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2024

Contact: Gilbert Spencer

Phone: 202-990-7679

Email: Gilbert@TheThirteenChoir.org

Acclaimed Professional Vocal Ensemble The Thirteen Announces 2024 Vocal Fellows *Vocal Fellows Program seeks to Increase Diversity in the Professional Choral/Oratorio Field*

The Thirteen is thrilled to announce our 2024 Vocal Fellows: Kyu Yim Lee, Veronica Mak, Nicholas Ottersberg-Enriquez, and Rohan Ramanan. The Thirteen's Vocal Fellowships are awarded to early career choral/oratorio singers from significantly underrepresented demographics with the goal of diversifying our field and playing a formative role in the fellows' careers. Our Board of Trustees began working on this initiative in 2019 and we experienced great success with our inaugural class in 2022. Former fellows Denique Isaac and Shaina Martinez describe their fellowship as "an exhilarating and thrilling experience" that gave them the opportunity to work with a "top-tier ensemble of professionals."

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to partner with these young professionals and we are confident that their talent, work ethic, and dedication will lead them to great success. As we look to the future, we are excited to present our 2023 Vocal Fellows:

Kyuyim Lee, a versatile soprano, musicologist, and dedicated educator originally from Seoul, South Korea, is currently a doctoral candidate in the voice program at the University of North Texas, specializing in early music, highlighting her dedication to exploring diverse musical styles.

Kyuyim's artistic journey began at an early age when she won singing competitions, attracting the attention of a judge and voice professor who offered free training for four years. This led to her acceptance as a voice student at Ewha Womans University. Kyuyim continued her pursuit of a professional singer, eventually leading her to the California Institute of the Arts, known as the "Walt Disney School." During her master's program, Kyuyim had numerous opportunities to give lectures and lessons, and collaborate with others. She was offered a teaching position by voice professors at the same school. Because of this, she was inspired to be an educator and decided to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts.

Kyuyim's recent performances include *The Creation* with Lafayette Musicians in 2024, and early music concerts at Duke University Chapel in 2023 underscore her dedication to sharing her musical talents. She premiered Opera *Stateside* by Rachel Whelan and performed as an invited Korean representative singer at

Festival Corée d'ici. She has given a Western music lecture-concert series, worked as a radio host about Western music for the Korea Broadcast System, and as a music director for a theater club at Samsung Electronics. Of the Vocal Fellows Program, Lee says: "I'm thrilled to be part of this upcoming music project with The Thirteen. The limitless possibilities of crafting music together and the rich experiences it promises amplify my excitement for this endeavor."

Chinese-American **soprano Veronica Mak** is based in New York City. Her previous operatic credits include Gilda from *Rigoletto*, Monica from *The Medium*, Nancy from *Albert Herring*, Lauretta from *Gianni Schicchi*, and the title role of *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Ms. Mak has also been featured in concert solo works of Mozart *Requiem*, Brahms *Requiem*, and abridgment of Haydn's *The Creation* (sung in English). Ms. Mak is also a regular performer for Regina Opera's seasonal concerts as well as Fresh Squeezed Opera's showcases. Outside of her solo engagements, she is a recurring ensemble member of EnsembleNYC, under the direction of Ronnie Oliver Jr. She is also a regular Soprano ringer at St. Joseph's in Greenwich Village in New York City. Ms. Mak received her Masters of Music & Bachelor of Music degrees from the Manhattan School of Music for Classical Voice/Opera under the tutelage of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell. Of the Vocal Fellows Program, Mak shares: "I am looking forward to sharing this experience with such acclaimed professionals, whom I can learn from immensely. I hope to utilize this mentorship to guide me through my future musical endeavors."

Baritone Nicholas Ottersberg-Enriquez is a fourth year undergraduate vocal performance major at the New England Conservatory of Music. Originally from Santa Fe, New Mexico, he grew up performing with local mariachi groups while also performing in several opera productions with The Santa Fe Opera. This past summer Nicholas performed as a member of the chorus in the Santa Fe Opera production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. After returning to Boston, Nicholas made his Jordan Hall solo debut performing the world premiere of *Three Portraits* by Elena Firsova with the NEC Symphonic Winds. Following this successful performance, Nicholas debuted as the Wolf in the opera version of *Little Red Riding Hood* which toured throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island, holding performances for hundreds of elementary school children. Most recently he performed scenes from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* as Figaro, and was a soloist in a *Messiah* concert with conductor Kevin Leong in Lexington, MA. When Nicholas is not at NEC studying classical singing he continues preserving his cultural roots teaching mariachi at the VROCC non-profit in East Boston. Of the Vocal Fellows Program, Nicholas shares: "I'm most excited to perform alongside a variety of emerging singers that like me are on this path of building a career through harnessing our own unique foundations. All the while bringing a piece to life that I feel is a perfect embodiment of a story where people from diverse backgrounds come together to share a journey toward a common goal."

Tenor Rohan Ramanan is an Orange County/Los Angeles-based tenor with a diverse musical background and expansive range. He has studied both Western and Indian classical voice for over two decades, and has been immersed in many styles of commercial music, world genres, and fusion work. Rohan is super honored to be one of the Thirteen's Vocal Fellows for 2024!

Rohan performs with ensembles throughout Southern California (Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Choral Lab, Tonality, Pacific Chorale, Catalyst Ensemble, Long Beach Camerata, Choral Arts Initiative, Street Symphony, Laude, etc.) as a chorister and soloist (AGMA). He also sings for film, television, & video game studio sessions as a member of SAG-AFTRA. His voice can be heard in scores and recordings for Disney, Marvel, & National Geographic, and he has performed live with Thirty Seconds to Mars @iHeartRadio, Tiësto, Michael Giacchino, Kronos Quartet, LA Philharmonic, & for Björk as part of the USA 'Cornucopia' tour. He made his operatic debut in Houston Grand Opera's premiere work 'Another City' as Manoj Mukherjee, where his "ethereal phrases [...] offered a lightness and sweetness" (Texas Classical Review).

Rohan is also an accomplished Hindustani vocal soloist and young artist throughout the United States and internationally. He served as Vice President of Avartan, a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to Indian classical music education, exposure, and enrichment for future generations of diaspora. Ramanan comments: “I am super excited to perform Talbot’s *Path of Miracles* for the first time, meet and work with many new colleagues, and hopefully make some lasting connections and friendships! And to experience a proper winter outside of Southern California!”

The Thirteen is a professional choir and orchestra celebrated for reimagining the potential of vocal music from many periods. Praised for performing with “striking color and richness” that “transfigures the listener” (The Washington Post) and “a tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (American Record Guide), for a decade the ensemble has been at the forefront of invigorating performances of masterworks ranging from early chant to world premieres and the centuries in between.

The Thirteen’s growing discography includes “Monteverdi Vespers of 1610,” which premiered in May 2023, “Truth and Fable,” “Voice Eternal,” which was pre-nominated for a Grammy® award, the critically-acclaimed Christmas album “Snow on Snow,” “RADIANT DARK,” which features the finest works of the late Tudor period and reached #28 on the iTunes Classical Charts, as well as The Thirteen’s debut recording “...to St. Cecilia.”

In past seasons, The Thirteen has performed and been in residency at Yale University, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Illinois University, the University of Central Oklahoma, York College, The University of Tampa, Virginia Wesleyan University, St. Ambrose University, Southern Illinois University – Carbondale, Guilford College, as well as concerts at colleges and concert series throughout the United States. In 2018 The Thirteen was awarded the Greater Washington Area Choral Excellence award for Most Creative Programming.

The Thirteen is committed to educating and inspiring the next generation of musicians, and frequently coaches students at the high school and collegiate levels in masterclass, workshop and collaborative performance sessions.

###

For more information about The Thirteen and our Vocal Fellows Program please visit www.thethirteenchoir.org or contact interim Production & Communications Coordinator Gilbert Spencer at Gilbert@TheThirteenChoir.org