



**THE WILLARD J. HINES SCHOLARSHIP FUND
AWARDED TO 2 VOCAL STUDENTS IN 2021**

BRITTNEY B. BURGESS AND BRANDON BELL

***The Scholarship is Now Open to all Musicians Nationwide
At the High School, College, Master's Degree and Professional Levels
With 4 Categories Established for Vocal & Piano Talent***

In its second year, the Willard J. Hines Scholarship has awarded two \$1,000. scholarships in the newly titled, *Courville Concert Choir* and *We Can Make A Difference Award*. The eligibility for the award is now open to vocal students nationwide. Originally, the scholarship focused on Detroit area high school seniors who intended to study voice at any college or university, and now the local Detroit award is in a separate category. The purpose of all Hines scholarships is to encourage musical leaders of tomorrow by helping with school fees, voice programs, and performance costs.

The voice scholarship recipients for the year 2021 are Lyric Soprano **Brittney B. Burgess**.



Brittney B. Burgess hails from New York City and is pursuing her Master's degree in Vocal Performance and Literature at The Eastman School of Music. She is a recent graduate of Nazareth College where she earned a Bachelors of Music in Music Education and Vocal Performance. Mr. Bell, originally from Suffolk, Virginia is currently a member of Artist in Residence with the Utah Opera. Bell holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Additionally, he is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Hines Voice Scholarship President, Clayton G. Williams stated, “We made it to the second year of the awards program despite the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The winners this year submitted exquisite vocal pieces and are both inspirational in their dedication to their vocal craft. We will be following their careers closely and with the Hines annual scholarship continue to support vocal artists of color pursuing music in the classical space.”

Already proving her artistic skills, Ms. Burgess has performed in multiple venues including at *Nazareth College Linehan Chapel and The Callahan Theatre, Kilbourn Hall, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and The Chautauqua Amphitheater*. She made her orchestral solo debut with Genesee Symphony Orchestra in 2020 performing Urlicht from Mahler's Symphony No.2. and made her operatic debut in the Nazareth College Opera production of *The Old Maid and the Thief by Menotti*, playing the title role of Laetitia. In the professional arena, Ms. Burgess has performed as backup vocalist for Josh Groban's Tours for the past 3 years throughout Upstate, NY. Brittney also was chosen to do a voiceover for a new character on the nationally syndicated show *Sesame Street*. She is now a part of the Sesame Street Alumni Group.

Baritone **Brandon Bell** is well on his way to a vibrant professional career.



Originally from Suffolk, VA, Mr. Bell is appearing in the 2021 season with the Utah Opera as Montague Somers in *Gentleman's Island*, the Steward in *Flight*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, and Samuel in *Pirates of Penzance*. Mr. Bell also joins the Utah Symphony as the baritone soloist for their performances of Fauré's *Requiem*. Engagements during the 2019-20 season, included Mr. Bell's house debut with Utah Opera, appearing in their production of *Silent Night* as the British Major and *La Traviata* as Dr. Grenvil. Other notable engagements include Mr. Bell's portrayal of Terry in West Edge Opera's production of Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves*, role and house debut as Colline in West Bay Opera's production of *La bohème*; the Corporal in *La fille du régiment*, as a Festival Artist with Opera Saratoga; as well as performances as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* and Mr. Bigbad in John Davies' *Little Red's Most Unusual Day*, as a member of Des Moines Metro Opera's OPERA Iowa program. Mr. Bell is also an alumnus of the

prestigious Wolf Trap Opera Studio Artist program; where in the summer of 2015, he had roles in *The Ghosts of Versailles* and *Madama Butterfly*. In 2017, Bell returned to Wolf Trap Opera to appear in the world premiere of the mini-opera for children, *Listen, Wilhelmina!* Mr. Bell is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where under the tutelage of César Ulloa, he received a Postgraduate Diploma in Vocal Performance. He additionally holds a Master of Vocal Performance from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

The deadline for 2022 applicants is June 24th, 2022.

Scholarship submission requires an official transcript of grades with a minimum GPA of 3.0, a 400-word essay describing their musical goals and aspirations, 2 letters of recommendation from school, church, or teacher, and present 4 contrasting musical selections of any genre: Opera, Musical theatre, Jazz, Spirituals, gospel or Pop through audio/video submission (Mp3 audio files/quality, "private" YouTube or other video links are accepted.) Finally, a headshot, resume, and bio.

All details can be found here <https://www.thewjhscholarshipfund.com>



ABOUT WILLARD J. HINES

Willard J. Hines, pianist, teacher, vocal coach, mentor, leader, activist, and father figure to countless students, a native of Paducah, KY was known affectionately as the Mozart of his time while studying at Kentucky State University. In 1966, he ventured to Detroit, MI. His journey soon began at Butzel Jr. High School and then transitioned to Martin Luther King, Jr. High School. While teaching in Detroit Public Schools, he began building

his network by working with local and professional recording groups such as “*The Dramatics*”, “*The Jones Girls*”, “*The Quickest Way Out*”, “*The Enchantments*”. He soon formed his own group *The Willard Hines Ensemble* and performed at the famed Apollo theatre. He returned to teaching at Courville Elementary School and during his tenure, he made such an impression on young singers that he noticed his students stayed musically connected with him after they matriculated. Thus, the Courville Concert Choir was formed with singers of all ages and has been a Detroit educational institution ever since. Courville Concert Choir has toured the U.S. and performed on a professional level in great concert halls, stages with legends such as gospel singer *Oleta Adams*, singer *Donny Osmond*, *Melba Moore*, *Stephanie Mills*, country singer *Lorrie Morgan* and many more. He spent over 24 years at Courville instilling in his students that they are the leaders of tomorrow, and they can make a world of difference!

ABOUT THE WILLARD J. HINES SCHOLARSHIPS

The mission of this committee, comprised of his former students, is to make a world of difference by annually awarding 4 music scholarships, each in the amount of \$1,000., to young aspiring musicians. Mr. Hines has utilized music not only to educate, discipline, and inspire but to spread a positive narrative for the youth. It is our wish that these scholarships will inspire future performers, and music educators to perpetuate Hines' legacy of teaching, love of music, love of children, and commitment to community service. *"To financially assist the young leaders of tomorrow and better their education through music."*

The four scholarship categories are the following:

1. The Summer Dreams Award (Detroit, MI High School Seniors Only)
2. We Can Make a World of Difference Award (Nationwide students currently in undergraduate or graduate music programs)
3. The Willard J. Hines “Black Mozart” Piano Award (Nationwide Piano Students currently in undergraduate or graduate music programs)
4. The Courville Concert Choir Award (All 25 – 30-year-old Vocal Artists of ANY style Classical, Broadway Jazz or Pop)

For more information about all 4 available scholarships visit <https://www.thewjhscholarshipfund.com/scholarship-awards>

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