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Tombaugh '07 Wins Mildred C. Miller International Vocal Competition

Dec. 4, 2020

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — [Kate Tombaugh](#), a 2007 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University, recently won the 10th annual [Mildred C. Miller International Vocal Competition](#) and \$3,000 prize in an all-mezzo-soprano edition that began with 155 applicants and 13 finalists.

A Streator, Illinois native, Tombaugh was the only finalist representing the Midwest in the event hosted by Pittsburgh Festival Opera. Applicants submitted preliminary audition videos and a list of five arias for repertoire considerations, and the five member all-star panel of mezzo-soprano judges requested that Tombaugh present *Nobles Seigneurs, salut!* from Gioacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and *Things Change, Jo* from Mark Adamo's *Little Women*.

Careful steps were taken by Pittsburgh Festival Opera to ensure safe recording amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Sound and video recording devices were mailed to each finalist to ensure a more level playing field for everyone competing from home, as well as a chance to work with the pianist creating the accompaniment tracks. The Mildred Miller International Voice Competition was founded in 2011 to identify and nurture talented young singers. The competition is named for Pittsburgh Festival Opera founder Mildred Miller Posvar.

Tombaugh has performed professionally for a decade throughout the U.S. in works that range the gamut of classical and musical theater repertoire. Her most recent engagements include singing with Chicago Opera Theater in the world premiere of *Freedom Ride*, an American opera by Dan Shore celebrating the hundreds of young volunteers who risked their lives to desegregate interstate travel in 1961.

Since graduating from Illinois Wesleyan, some of Tombaugh's career highlights have included performing as a soloist at CarnegieHall upon winning the Barry Alexander International Vocal Competition, winning the Harold Haugh Light Opera Vocal Competition, placing second in the Nicholas Z. Loren Vocal Competition, hosted by the Holland Chorale, and being awarded the "Grace Keagy Award" by NYC-based Kurt Weill Foundation in their annual Lotte Lenya Foundation.

Tombaugh holds a master's degree in voice from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music (CCM), and dual undergraduate degrees in [English literature](#) and [vocal performance](#) from Illinois Wesleyan.



Kate Tombaugh '07