



BBC Cardiff Singer of the World BBC Canwr y Byd Caerdydd

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Patron : Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC
Noddwr : Y Fonesig Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2011

BBC CARDIFF SINGER OF THE WORLD 2011 PRESS INFORMATION

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OPERA SINGERS SELECTED FOR BBC CARDIFF SINGER OF THE WORLD 2011

Opera singers from across the globe have been selected to compete in this year's *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World*. The names and nationalities of the 20 successful competitors were announced today (Thursday, March 3) at the Commonwealth Club, London.

This year's competitors, who will perform in Cardiff from Sunday 12 June - Sunday 19 June 2011, will have the added distinction of performing in front of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, the internationally renowned singer, who takes up her role as Patron of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World for the first time.

A strong supporter and mentor to a new generation of singers, as founder of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and the founding artistic director of the Solti Te Kanawa Accademia di Bel Canto, she will now be passing on her invaluable experiences for the first time as a jury member and Patron.

From Baku to Brussels and San Francisco to Shanghai, auditions have taken place across the world, seeking 20 outstanding singers to take part in *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World*. Six hundred opera and concert singers at the start of their careers auditioned for a place in the competition, hoping the prestige and exposure to large audiences, both in Cardiff and across the BBC's television, radio and online services, will give a unique boost to their careers.

The winner will receive £15,000 and the Cardiff Trophy. All the singers are also eligible to take part in the Song Prize competition which carries a £5,000 prize and a trophy. The Song Prize winner is also eligible to join BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists Scheme.

An important and significant date in the classical music diary, Adrian Davies, Acting Head of Programmes, English Language, BBC Cymru Wales, explains why the competition is a highlight for those watching live in St David's Hall in Cardiff and for viewers at home.

Adrian Davies, Acting Head of Programmes, English Language, BBC Cymru Wales, notes why the competition is a highlight for the competitors and for the audiences in Cardiff and at home.

"The inspirational BBC Cardiff Singer of the World represents a unique opportunity for young singers at the start of their career. By performing in this world-renowned competition, they have the opportunity to be widely heard on a variety of platforms - television, radio and online - as well as that of the concert hall. Having the chance to

perform for such distinguished jury members will truly raise their profiles at an international level.

"The coverage provided by BBC Cymru Wales will guide the viewers through each round, with comprehensive analysis from expert guests."

Each competitor will perform their choice of opera and concert repertoire in front of a distinguished jury and enthusiastic audience at St David's Hall. They also have the option of entering the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Song Prize in recitals of Lieder and Art Song at the New Theatre, Cardiff, with the final at St David's Hall.

Established in 1983 by BBC Cymru Wales, past winners of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World include Karita Mattila, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and the 2009 winner Ekaterina Scherbachenko.

BBC Cardiff Singer of the World is organised by BBC Cymru Wales in association with Welsh National Opera and supported by the City and Council of Cardiff.

A booking form to download, and details about BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, can be found at bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger

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Pictures of the 20 singers and jury members are available at www.bbcpictures.com

Notes to Editor

The successful candidates who will compete in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Sunday 12-Sunday 19 June 2011, are:

Country	Name	Voice	Age
Armenia	Vazgen Ghazaryan	Bass	32
Australia	Helen Sherman	Mezzo-soprano	29
Bulgaria	Maria Radoeva	Soprano	26
Canada	Sasha Djihanian	Soprano	25
Chile	Marcela González	Soprano	24
China	Wang Lifu	Baritone	24
England	Meeta Raval	Soprano	28
Germany	Susanne Braunsteffer	Soprano	31
Ireland	Máire Flavin	Mezzo-soprano	28
Italy	Davide Bartolucci	Baritone	24
Moldova	Valentina Naforniță	Soprano	23
New Zealand	Anna Leese	Soprano	30
Poland	Żymon Komasa	Baritone	25
Romania	Șerban Vasile	Baritone	25
Russia	Olesya Petrova	Mezzo-soprano	28
South Korea	Hye Jung Lee	Soprano	27
Ukraine	Andrei Bondarenko	Baritone	24
USA	Leah Crocetto	Soprano	31



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Uruguay	Enzo Romano	
Bass-baritone		31
Wales	John Pierce	
Tenor		28

THE JURY

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa joins the jury for BBC Cardiff Singer of the World for the first time, and other newcomers to the jury's table are conductor Alexander Polianichko and Palermo Opera House Artistic Director Lorenzo Mariani. Marilyn Horne returns for her fifth visit, and Dennis O'Neill and Håkan Hagegård both appear for the second time.

Marilyn Horne and Håkan Hagegård also serve on the Song Prize jury, where they are joined by the eminent Swedish pianist Bengt Forsberg, making his first appearance at the competition. BBC Radio 3's Adam Gatehouse returns to the jury for the third time.

Both juries are chaired by John Fisher, former chief executive and artistic director of Welsh National Opera, who takes the chair for the third time.

For biographies, see pages 17-21

THE PATRONS - PAST AND PRESENT

As well as serving on the jury, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa becomes the second Patron of the competition following the death last year of Dame Joan Sutherland. Dame Kiri is a passionate believer in nurturing young singing talent.

"It is a thrill and honour to be asked to be Patron and jury member for this year's BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition," said Dame Kiri.

"The event is of great significance to the opera world, giving young talented singers the opportunity to perform in the beautiful St David's Hall in Cardiff, where they will be heard on BBC radio as well as viewed by millions on television.

"From my own early experiences of studying at the London Opera Centre in what is now the National Opera Studio, I understand how essential it is to be given such a chance as this at the outset of one's career. The 20 singers will have a unique opportunity to be assessed by professionals from the world of music during the week, with each event presenting high standards of singing.

“It is an occasion which will reveal the finest qualities of the singers and I am very pleased to be a part of this extraordinary competition.”

THE PRIZES

The winner of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World will receive £15,000; and the Song Prize winner £5,000. Each will also receive a trophy. The Song Prize winner also has the chance to join BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme.

DAME JOAN SUTHERLAND AUDIENCE PRIZE

The hugely popular Audience Prize, worth £2,000, is renamed in memory of the legendary soprano and in recognition of her long association with the competition. For the first time the Dame Joan Sutherland trophy will be awarded.

Bryn Terfel says of Dame Joan:

"She was a favourite with Cardiff Singer audiences, mainly because of her down-to-earth attitude. With her death came a great loss to the operatic world and to young singers coming through BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, but hers was a talent that will always be cherished."

Full details about BBC Cardiff Singer of the World can be found at bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger



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ADDITIONAL QUOTES

BRYN TERFEL: ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, who was a finalist and Song Prize winner in 1989 and went on to become a household name, explains how taking part in the competition can shape an opera singer's career:

“For an emerging opera singer, BBC Cardiff Singer of the World is a priceless opportunity. It is three steps up the ladder of that professional career you are striving for. It opens doors. I know for myself: two of the opera houses I later sang in - the Vienna Staatsoper and the Munich Opera House - saw the competition I was in and invited me to audition for them. It's such an important platform - and then, of course, there is the fact you are representing your country. Without doubt, BBC Cardiff Singer of the World is one of the most important competitions in the world.

“As a past competitor, who didn't win the competition, I know that even if you don't win - but you are in that Final - it is still something of huge significance.”

JOHN FISHER: ABOUT THE JURY

With a wide selection of renowned artists on the jury this year, with musical talent, vocal technique and stage presence at the forefront of their requirements, John Fisher, chairman of both juries, said:

“I'm delighted that we have such a distinguished and expert jury for the 2011 competition. They are esteemed around the world, but also hugely dedicated to the nurturing of young talent - one couldn't ask for a more perfect team.”



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MESSAGE FROM EKATERINA SCHERBACHENKO, WINNER OF BBC CARDIFF SINGER OF THE WORLD 2009

“The exposure gained from competing in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2009 was priceless. My career only properly got under way following the competition. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but the advice I would give to this year’s competitors is to choose the right repertoire. I now have a great agent, with offers from opera houses around Europe, and to be honest the competition was the turning point in my career.

“In the first round I wasn’t nervous. I was just happy and proud to be there, to sing in the great hall and in front of so many people. When the final night came, my nerves very much kicked in. When John Fisher announced me as winner, it was an unbelievable feeling.

“The people who supported me during the competition were incredible, from the conductors, pianists, and organisers to the backstage staff. I also received one-to-one advice from members of the jury afterwards. The main advice was to think about every step in my career and to choose my repertoire very carefully. For me, being in Cardiff was the most valuable experience I’ve had; all aspects of my visit were memorable.

“This season, I will make my debut as Liù in a new production of Turandot at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich under the direction of Zubin Mehta. I will also debut at the Metropolitan Opera (Micaela), the Monte Carlo Opera (Tatyana), the Glyndebourne Festival (Mimi) and the Teatro alla Scala (Liù). I would not have had these opportunities without BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.”

Pictures of Ekaterina Scherbachenko are available at www.bbcpictures.com

BIOGRAPHIES: THE COMPETITORS

ARMENIA Vazgen Ghazaryan (bass) Age 32	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 1: Monday 13 June
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Vazgen Ghazaryan won the 2004 Young Opera Singers' Competition in Yerevan, Armenia, and in 2010 won the Aurio Tomicich bass prize at the Concorso Internazionale di Musica Viotti in Italy. Now in his fourth season at Theater Erfurt, roles performed there include: the title role in Boito's *Mefistofele*, Titirel *Parsifal*, Bartolo *Le nozze di Figaro*, Banquo *Macbeth*, Basilio *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Colline *La bohème*. Vazgen has sung Sarastro *Die Zauberflöte* at venues throughout Europe, including Genoa, Stresa, Erfurt and with the Armenian State Opera.

In 2007, Vazgen sang *Zaccaria Nabucco* at the Opera Classica Festival in Bad Schwalbach and returned the following year to sing Ramfis *Aida*, a role he has also sung in Craiova, Romania. In 2006 he sang in Shostakovich's *The Nose* at Teatro São Carlos, Lisbon. Vazgen's concert repertoire includes the bass solos in Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*. Solo recital repertoire includes Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* and Shostakovich's *Songs of our Days*.

His 2010/11 engagements include Hunding *Die Walküre* with the Russian National Orchestra in Moscow with Kent Nagano and Vodnik *Rusalka* at the Mikhailovsky Theatre in St Petersburg. In his spare time, Vazgen enjoys tennis, rock music and computers.

AUSTRALIA Helen Sherman (mezzo-soprano) Age 29	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 3: Wednesday 15 June Song Prize Recital 3: Monday 13 June
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Helen Sherman graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010, studying with Peter Alexander Wilson, and received the RNCM International Artists Diploma in opera studies. Previously she had studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, graduating in 2006. She won the International Opera Productions prize in the 2007 Australian Singing Competition and in 2009 was selected for representation by the Young Concert Artists Trust. At the RNCM Helen sang Varvava *Katya Kabanova*, The Old Lady *Candide*, Prince Orlofsky *Die Fledermaus*, Hélène *La belle Hélène*, Sesto *La clemenza di Tito* and Cyrus *Belshazzar*.

In Australia, roles included Rosina *The Barber of Seville*, Lisetta *Il mondo della luna* and Third Lady *The Magic Flute*. Over the last year, Helen has given debut concerts at the Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, Bridgewater Hall and the Royal Albert Hall and appeared with Roger Vignoles in Cambridge. In April she broadcast a recital for ABC Classic FM in Australia. Last summer Helen performed Suzuki *Madama Butterfly* and covered Clairon *Capriccio* for Grange Park Opera.

Future engagements include concerts at the City of London Festival and a performance of Wagner's *Wesendonck* Lieder with the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra. Helen enjoys baking, gardening and watching Kath and Kim.

BULGARIA Maria Radoeva (soprano) Age 26	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 1: Monday 13 June Song Prize Recital 1: Sunday 12 June
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Maria Radoeva was born in Sofia. At the National Music Academy of Sofia between 2003-2006, she studied with Liyudmila Hadjieva and Plamen Beykov, and continues her studies in Modena with Raina Kabaivanska. Maria's competition successes include special prizes at the Georgi Zlatev-Cherkin competition in 2005 and the Golden Prize at the 2005 Spring Festival of Arts, Korea. She has taken part in master classes with Gustav Kuhn, Francisco Araiza, Siegfried Jerusalem and Katia Ricciarelli.

After her operatic debut in Ruse as Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, she focused on baroque and bel canto operas, on Mozart roles (Susanna, Despina, Pamina, Fiordiligi), and on oratorio repertoire, including *Messiah* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. Maria has collaborated with the period instruments ensemble Concerto Antico in works by Bach, Handel and Vivaldi. In 2008 she was selected by Christophe Rousset for his Monteverdi project in Siena and has performed with Les Talents Lyriques. Also, Maria has performed modern works, including Shostakovich's *Seven Romances on Poems of Alexander Blok* with Ensemble Risognanze. In December she made her debut at Sofia Opera House as Musetta *La bohème*. She recently recorded Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*.

Future engagements include Mahler's *Second Symphony* with the Orchestre National de Pays de la Loire. Maria enjoys painting, reading, fashion and spending time with her family.

CANADA Sasha Djihanian (soprano) Age 25	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 2: Tuesday 14 June Song Prize Recital 1: Sunday 12 June
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Sasha Djihanian graduated from the Montreal Music Conservatory with First Prize with great distinction. In the summers of 2008-2010 she attended the Chautauqua Music Festival (New York) where she worked with Craig Rutenberg, Brian Zieger and Neil Shicoff among others. A Jacqueline Desmarais Grant Holder and the recipient of several scholarships, Sasha studies with Marlena Malas. She was awarded the Bohuslav Martinů prize at the Czech and Slovak International Voice Competition in 2009 and received First Prize in the District and Regional rounds of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2010 and 2011.

In 2009, Sasha had her debut with the Opéra de Montréal as Second Boy *Die Zauberflöte*. Her operatic repertoire includes Musetta *La bohème*, Suor Infermiera *Suor Angelica*, Thérèse *Les mamelles de Tirésias*, Concepcion *L'heure Espagnole*, the Fire and the Squirrel *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and the Cook *Rossignol*. Since 2007, she has participated in several children's operas for Opéra-Théâtre Voxpopuli.

Concert performances include Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms's *German Requiem*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, and Saint-Saëns's *Christmas Oratorio*. Sasha's future engagements include Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Vivaldi's Gloria* and a recital at Maison Trestler, Quebec. In her spare time, Sasha enjoys cooking, reading and yoga.

CHILE Marcela González (soprano) Age 24	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 2: Tuesday 14 June Song Prize Recital 2: Sunday 13 June
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Marcela González was born in Santiago de Chile, and her early teachers were Waldo Aránguiz Thompson and Myriam Matus. She performed as member of a choir and as soloist in concerts and festivals at a national level. She studied clarinet at the University of Chile and lyrical interpretation with teacher Carmen Luisa Letelier and pianist Alfredo Saavedra. Marcela has been awarded an annual scholarship by the Corporación de Amigos del Teatro Municipal de Santiago since 2009.

In early 2010 Marcela attended classes with Bruno Pola in Cali, Colombia, where she performed as soloist in *Carmina Burana*. In July the same year she made her debut in the Teatro Municipal de Santiago as Oberto in Handel's *Alcina* and in September she represented Chile at the Competizione dell'Opera in Dresden.

Marcela is currently developing her repertoire with teacher Hilda Cabezas-Gräbner. Her repertoire includes Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, Adina *L'elisir d'amore*, Norina *Don Pasquale*, Oscar *Un ballo in maschera*, Adele *Die Fledermaus* and Musetta *La bohème*. In July this year she will perform in the Teatro Municipal de Santiago as Xenia *Boris Godunov*. In her free time, Marcela likes to play sports, read, go to the opera, watch movies and spend time with her family and friends.

CHINA Wang Lifu (baritone) Age 24	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 2: Tuesday 14 June Song Prize Recital 2: Sunday 12 June
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Wang Lifu comes from Shandong Province and is currently a member of the master's programme at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, having received his bachelor's degree there in 2010. His main teacher is Professor Chen Xing and he is also coached by Jin Ling. He was also a member of the Zhou Xiaoyan International Opera Centre in Shanghai in 2008. Lifu was awarded the first prize in the Higher Education Operatic Competition in China in 2007 and a Special Award, Excellent Art Talents in Shanghai in 2008.

Lifu has participated in master classes given by Andreas Schmidt and Renato Bruson (in Shanghai), Robert Holl and Rudolf Piernay (in Vienna) and Edith Bers (in Hong Kong). He has also taken part in the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in Germany.

He has performed the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Qiu Hu in the Chinese opera *Wild Land* and has recently sung the baritone solo in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* in Shanghai. Operatic roles in preparation include Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* and the title roles in *Giulio Cesare* and *Don Giovanni*. Lifu enjoys watching films and listening to music.

ENGLAND Meeta Raval (soprano) Age 28	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 2: Tuesday 14 June Song Prize Recital 2: Sunday 12 June
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Meeta Raval attended Wells Cathedral School and was the first Head Girl Chorister in the country. She graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with a first class honours degree and was awarded a Diploma of Distinction by Royal Academy Opera. Meeta won the Dame Eva Turner Prize and the Royal Academy of Music Pavarotti Prize. She has participated in master classes with Dame Ann Murray and Mirella Freni, and completed her studies at the National Opera Studio in 2010.

Operatic roles include Contessa *Le nozze di Figaro*, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*, Micaela *Carmen*, Magda *La rondine*, Mimì *La bohème*, Liù *Turandot*, The Witch *Hänsel und Gretel* and the title role *Suor Angelica*. Meeta's operatic debut at English National Opera was as First Flower Maiden *Parsifal*. On the concert stage, Meeta has sung the Bach *Mass in B Minor* and *Johannes Passion*; Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*; Bruckner's *Te Deum*; Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*; Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* and Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*. Broadcasts include Contessa in *Discovering Figaro* and Soprano in Janáček's *Diary of One who Disappeared*, both for BBC Radio 3, and Teresa *Das Wundertheater* by Henze for RAI.

Future plans include a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* later this year. Meeta enjoys shopping, travel, cinema, dancing and all kinds of music.

GERMANY Susanne Braunsteffer (soprano) Age 31	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 3: Wednesday 15 June Song Prize Recital 3: Monday 13 June
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Susanne Braunsteffer studied with Kjellaug Tesaker at the Mozarteum Salzburg. After gaining a first class Bachelor's degree in 2008 she joined the Opera Studio at the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg, where she performed Contessa *Le nozze di Figaro* and Gretel *Hänsel und Gretel*, whilst continuing her Lieder and oratorio studies with Wolfgang Holzmaier and Thérèse Lindquist at the Mozarteum. In 2009, Susanne joined the Accademia Teatro alla Scala in Milan, where she works with singers including Mirella Freni, Luciana Serra, Renato Bruson, Luigi Alva and Lella Cuberli. She has taken master classes with artists including Barbara Bonney, Sylvie Valayre and Helmut Deutsch.

Susanne has collaborated with directors including Philippe Arlaud, Jean-Philippe Clarac, Olivier Deloeuil and François de Carpentries and with conductors including Emmanuel Joel-Hornak, Marco Guidarini and Daniele Rustioni. She has performed in concerts throughout Europe and taken part in the Festival MiTo in Milan, in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. In the summer of 2010 she made her debut as Micaela *Carmen* touring Belgium.

Future engagements include performing at the Puccini Festival in Lucca this summer and her debut as A Milliner *Der Rosenkavalier* at La Scala in October. In her spare time, Susanne enjoys reading, cooking and long country walks.

IRELAND Máire Flavin (mezzo-soprano) Age 28	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 4: Thursday 16 June Song Prize Recital 4: Tuesday 14 June
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Máire Flavin was born in Dublin and is studying with Janice Chapman at the National Opera Studio, having completed the opera course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she received a Masters in Music Performance with distinction. Previously, Máire studied with Irene Sandford at Queen's University in Belfast and Colette McGahon-Tosh at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin. She received the concerto prize at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and in 2010 she won the Thelma King award and the Harold Rosenthal Prize on leaving GSMD.

Engagements include cover Nerone *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for Glyndebourne on Tour; Tisbe *La Cenerentola* for Clonter Opera; Nancy *Albert Herring*; title role Massenet's *Chérubin*; Aurelio *L'assedio di Calais*; Queen of England *The King goes forth to France*, all for GSMD; and Cathleen *Riders to the Sea* for the Anna Livia Fringe festival. Máire is an alumna of both the Opera Theatre Company and Britten-Pears Young Artist programmes.

On the recital stage, Máire has performed at the Estoril Music Festival, the Rose Street Recital Series in Belfast and has taken part in the Songmakers' Almanac master classes. Future engagements include Kate Pinkerton *Madama Butterfly* for Mid Wales Opera later this year. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, baking and yoga.

ITALY Davide Bartolucci (baritone) Age 24	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 4: Thursday 16 June Song Prize Recital 4: Tuesday 14 June
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Davide Bartolucci studied with Doriana Giuliodoro at the GB Pergolesi Conservatoire, Ancona, the Academy at the Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro, the Teatro Real Opera Studio, Madrid and the Opera School of Bologna. In 2008 he won a prize in the international AsLiCo competition singing the role of Dr Malatesta *Don Pasquale*. In the same year he was a prizewinner at the international Beniamino Gigli competition in Porto Recanati, Italy.

Davide's repertoire includes Don Alvaro *Il viaggio a Reims*, Fabrizio *La gazza ladra*, Rabastens *Pomme d'api*, Rambaldo *La rondine*, Schaunard *La bohème* and Tracollo *Livietta e Tracollo*. His debut was in 2006 in the role of Uberto *La serva padrona*. He has also sung as soloist in sacred works by Carissimi, Scarlatti, Charpentier, Britten, Mozart, Haydn, Franck and Schubert. Davide has worked with conductors Michele Mariotti, Ryuichiro Sonoda, Leonardo Vordoni, José Cura, Daniele Rustioni, Massimiliano Caldi and directors Damiano Michieletto, Emilio Sagi, Alfonso Antoniozzi, Rosetta Cucchi and Walter Le Moli. Opera houses where Davide has appeared include Teatro Rossini in Pesaro, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Real in Madrid and Teatro San Carlo in Naples.

Future plans include Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* in Tenerife and Belcore *L'elisir d'amore* in Murcia. Davide enjoys studying musicology, art and literature.

MOLDOVA Valentina Nafornită (soprano) Age 24	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 3: Wednesday 15 June Song Prize Recital 3: Monday 13 June
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Valentina Nafornită was born in Glodeni, Republic of Moldova. She graduated from the Stefan Neaga Music College in Kishinev in 2006 and continued her training in Romania, at the voice department of the National University of Music in Bucharest, where she studied with sopranos Maria Slatinaru-Nistor and Eleonora Enăchescu. The latter is teaching her on the MA programme at present. In addition, she has taken master classes with soprano Mariana Nicolesco and conductor Christian Badea.

Valentina has participated in numerous competitions. Recent prizes include the Orange Prize for Young Musicians, Romania in 2009 and the second prize in the Hariclea Darclée Voice Competition in 2010. She has appeared in concerts and recitals on the great music stages in Romania, including the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest, and has also collaborated with the George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra.

Roles performed at the Opera Studio of the university include Norina *Don Pasquale*, Adina *L'elisir d'amore*, Mimì *La bohème* and Lauretta *Gianni Schicchi*. In 2008 she performed in the chorus of the Romanian National Opera and later this year she will sing Norina *Don Pasquale* with them at the Bucharest National Opera House. Valentina enjoys reading, travelling, ballet dancing and swimming.

NEW ZEALAND Anna Leese (soprano) Age 30	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 1: Monday 13 June
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Anna Leese is a graduate of the University of Otago, the Royal College of Music and the Benjamin Britten International Opera School. Her awards include the 2004 Royal Overseas League Competition and the 2005 Richard Tauber Prize.

Anna made her Royal Opera House debut in 2006 as Tamiri *Il rè pastore*, returning for Musetta *La bohème*, Micaela *Carmen*, First Lady *Die Zauberflöte*, Arminda *La finta giardiniera* and Echo *Ariadne auf Naxos*. For New Zealand Opera, she has sung Ilia *Idomeneo*, Cleopatra *Giulio Cesare* and Tatyana *Eugene Onegin*. She sang Antonia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* for Cologne Opera, Tatyana for Flanders Opera and Musetta *La bohème* with the Canadian Opera Company. Anna is an Associate Artist of the Classical Opera Company. Concerts have included Mahler's *Second Symphony* with Bernard Haitink and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with Carlo Rizzi. Her BBC Proms debut was with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Sir Roger Norrington. Anna has appeared in gala concerts with José Carreras. Recordings include a recital with Graham Johnson and a Haydn disc. She is a member of the Prince Consort.

Future engagements include Suzel *L'amico Fritz* and Tatyana *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Holland Park, and Freia *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra. Anna enjoys running, netball, cooking and art.

POLAND Szymon Komasa (baritone) Age 25	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 2: Tuesday 14 June Song Prize Recital 2: Sunday 12 June
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Szymon Komasa was born in Poznań and studied at the Academy of Music in Łódź, from which he graduated with honours in 2009 in both cello and vocal studies. His teachers include Włodzimierz Zalewski and Ewa Irzykowska. Szymon has also taken part in master classes, including with Helena Łazarska in Vienna and Salzburg and with Rudolf Piernay, with whom he is currently studying opera at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

He has won awards in international singing competitions, including the third prize at the Ada Sari Vocal Art Competition in Nowy Sącz in Poland, first prize at the Puccini International Singing Competition in Verona and first prize at the Halina Halska-Fijałkowska Vocal Competition in Wrocław.

Szymon's opera performances include Slook in Rossini's *La cambiale di matrimonio*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* and Figaro *Le nozze di Figaro*, all at Teatr Wielki in Łódź, and Schaunard *La bohème* at Teatro Filharmonico in Verona. His repertoire also includes Mityukha *Boris Godunov*. Szymon will sing Marullo *Rigoletto* at Teatr Wielki in Warsaw for Polish National Opera. Szymon's interests include travel and fashion.

ROMANIA Şerban Vasile (baritone) Age 26	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 1: Monday 13 June
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Şerban Vasile was born in Bucharest and graduated from the George Enescu Music High School, Bucharest. He continued his academic studies in the Singing Department of the National University of Music under the guidance of soprano Eleonora Enăchescu, graduating in 2009. In 2008 Şerban won second prize in the International Singing Competition in Spoleto, Italy. In 2009 he won the *Maeştrii Artei Lirice* competition in Bucharest and went on to debut as Marcello *La bohème* in Burgas, Bulgaria. His success at the 2010 AsLiCo Competition resulted in his debut in the contemporary opera *Lupus in fabula* by Raffaele Sargenti and the role of Dandini *La Cenerentola* at AsLiCo and Teatro di Piacenza. Also in 2010, Şerban won second prize in the Salicedoro International Singing Competition.

He has appeared throughout Romania with orchestras including the George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of the National Opera House, Bucharest. Şerban has worked with conductors including Cristian Badea and Ludovic Bács and singers including Alfonso Antoniozzi, Mariella Devia, Eduard Tumagian, Luciana Serra, Nelly Miricioiu, Tiziana Fabbricini and George Crăsnaru.

This year he will take part in an Opera Domani project taking *Nabucco* to twenty Italian cities. In October he takes his final exams for his MA. Şerban is interested in all aspects of acting and he enjoys travelling.

RUSSIA Olesya Petrova (mezzo-soprano) Age 28	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 1: Monday 13 June Song Prize Recital 1: Sunday 12 June
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Olesya Petrova was born in St Petersburg. She graduated from the Rimsky-Korsakov St Petersburg State Conservatoire in 2008 where she had studied with Professor Irina Bogacheva. She has been a soloist with the St Petersburg Conservatoire Opera Theatre since 2007. Olesya won second prize at the first International Galina Vishnevskaya competition in Moscow in 2006 and second prize in the XI11 International Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow in 2007.

She has performed Lyubasha *The Tsar's Bride* for Perm Opera and Novosibirsk Opera and Amneris *Aida* in Bangkok. Olesya's repertoire also includes Marfa *Khovanshchina*; Lel *The Snow Maiden*; Carmen *Carmen*; Olga *Eugene Onegin*; Countess Polina *The Queen of Spades*; Maddalena *Rigoletto*; Joan *The Maid of Orleans* and Ulrica *Un ballo in maschera*. Olesya's concert repertoire includes works by Bach, Pergolesi, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Berlioz, Wagner, Mahler and Prokofiev. Artists Olesya has performed with include Valery Gergiev, Leo Kremer, Fabio Mastrangelo and Vladimir Fedoseev. She has given solo recitals in St Petersburg, Moscow and Ekaterinburg and has toured in Europe, the USA, South America, Korea, China and Japan.

Future plans include Konchakovna *Prince Igor* in Zurich in 2012. In her spare time, Olesya enjoys the gym, cinema, reading and driving.

SOUTH KOREA Hye Jung Lee (soprano) Age 27	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 4: Thursday 15 June Song Prize Recital 4: Tuesday 13 June
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Hye Jung Lee graduated from Seoul National University in 2006, with teacher Hyun Ju Yun. She continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik, Dresden with Ilse Hahn and Mannes College of Music, New York, with Beth Roberts. She was the recipient of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Scholarship 2006-2008 and winner of Metropolitan Opera Council in Indiana District in 2010. Hye Jung won second prize at the 2008 Shizuoka International Opera Competition, third prize at the 58th ARD International Music Competition in 2009 and won the Career Bridges grant award in 2010.

Hye Jung joined the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera in 2010 and performed Giannetta *L'elisir d'amore* and scenes from *Ariadne auf Naxos* Zerbinetta and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Tytania there the same year. Her repertoire includes Adele *Die Fledermaus*, Lauretta *Gianni Schicchi*, Ilia *Idomeneo*, Marie *La fille du régiment*, Zdenka *Arabella*, Nannetta *Falstaff* and Frasquita *Carmen*. She has also taken part in many concerts, including Mozart's *C minor Mass*, Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* at Carnegie Hall and a UBS gala concert at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt.

In July 2012, Hye Jung will perform Madame Mao *Nixon in China* with San Francisco Opera. In her spare time, she enjoys movies and yoga.

UKRAINE Andrei Bondarenko (baritone) Age 24	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 3: Wednesday 15 June Song Prize Recital 3: Monday 13 June
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Andrei Bondarenko trained at the National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in Kiev and the Kiev Conservatory. Since 2007 he has been a soloist in the Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers in St Petersburg. Awards include third prize at the 2006 International Rimsky-Korsakov vocal competition in St Petersburg, third prize at the International Maniuszko Competition and finalist in the 2010 Operalia competition. In 2009 he took part in the Salzburg Festival Young Singers' Project, working with Michael Schade and taking master classes with Christa Ludwig, Marjana Lipovšek and Thomas Quasthoff. In 2010 he sang Grigorio *Roméo et Juliette* with Yannik Nezet-Seguín and this year The Emperor *Le Rossignol* with Ivor Bolton.

Andrei's current roles at the Mariinsky include Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* and Conte *Il nozze di Figaro*. Other repertoire includes Onegin *Eugene Onegin*, Silvio *Pagliacci*, Marullo *Rigoletto*, Robert *Iolanta*, Aeneas *Dido and Aeneas*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* and Belcore *L'elisir d'amore*. This year, in Vienna, Germany, Moscow, St Petersburg and at the Sydney Festival, he takes part in a new Michael Sturminger project, *The Giacomo Variations*, alongside John Malkovich.

Future engagements include his Glyndebourne Touring Opera debut as Malatesta *Don Pasquale* in 2011 and Marcello *La bohème* at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2012. Andrei enjoys playing jazz saxophone.

URUGUAY Enzo Romano (bass-baritone) Age 31	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 4: Thursday 15 June
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Enzo Romano was born in Montevideo and studied singing and repertoire at the Escuela Nacional de Arte Lírico with Amelia Veiga, and in Argentina with Susana Cardonnet and Cecilia Varela. From 2006 he studied singing at the Instituto Superior de Arte, Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires with Marta Blanco and Mercedes Alas. He specialises in the *buffo* and contemporary repertoire. He won the first prize in the 2001 Juventudes Musicales Competition, Uruguay. In 2009 Enzo was a finalist in the Competizione dell'Opera SemperOper, Dresden, and took part in the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition, Vienna.

Enzo made his debut in 2002 as Marquis d'Obigny *La traviata* at Teatro del Sodre, Montevideo, under the direction of Piero Gamba. Other roles include Dulcamara *L'elisir d'amore*, which he performed at Teatro Municipal de Temuco, Chile. He reprised the role at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires in 2009, as a result of winning the Teatro Colón competition for young singers the previous year. In 2010 he sang Don Magnifico *La Cenerentola* for the Juventus Lyrica Association at the Teatro Avenida, Buenos Aires and at the Teatro Municipal, Temuco.

This year he joins the Opera Estudio at Teatro Argentino de la Plata. In his free time Enzo enjoys learning theatre clown techniques and Tai chi chuan practice.

USA Leah Crocetto (soprano) Age 31	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 4: Thursday 16 June Song Prize Recital 4: Tuesday 14 June
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Leah Crocetto is from Adrian, Michigan, and is a third year Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera. She was a 2010 Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan National Council Auditions; 1st Place Winner, People's Choice and Spanish Prize winner at the José Iturbi International Music Competition and winner of a Sara Tucker Career Grant.

This season includes her European debut as Leonora *Il trovatore* with Opéra National de Bordeaux and as soloist in Mahler's *Second Symphony* at the Grand Teton Festival, conducted by Donald Runnicles. At San Francisco Opera last season she covered Leonora *Il trovatore* and Desdemona *Otello* and this season includes the High Priestess *Aida* and Opera in the Park with Nicola Luisotti. She sang her first performance of the Verdi *Requiem* in her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel and will perform it again with Columbus Symphony and Albany Symphony. Leah has an engagement at the Hollywood Bowl singing Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Rafael Frúbeck de Burgos.

Future plans include Liù *Turandot* at San Francisco Opera, Desdemona *Otello* at Frankfurt Opera and the Poulenc *Gloria* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In her spare time, Leah enjoys karaoke, travelling, wine tasting and making mp3 player playlists.

WALES John Pierce (tenor) Age 28	BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Concert 3: Wednesday 15 June Song Prize Recital 1: Sunday 12 June
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John Pierce was born and educated in Flintshire, north Wales, and studied with Jeffrey Lawton at the Royal Northern College of Music. During his time at the RNCM, John won the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Strauss Prize in 2008 and the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award in 2009. A recent Samling scholar, his other prizes include the MOCSA Young Welsh Singer of the Year and Welsh Singers Competition, both in 2010. John is currently training with Ryland Davies at the National Opera Studio in London. He receives several awards, including a Lionel Anthony scholarship, a Susan Chilcott scholarship, The Countess of Munster Award and support from the Arts Council of Wales.

Operatic roles include Rodolfo *La bohème* (British Youth Opera and English National Opera cover), Boris *Katya Kabanova* and Alfredo *Die Fledermaus* (RNCM), Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore* and the Duke *Rigoletto*. John's concert repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Stabat Mater*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Verdi's *Requiem*.

Future plans include Pinkerton *Madama Butterfly* for Mid Wales Opera and concerts with the Orchestra of St John's in London and Oxford. John's interests include photography, walking, sport, cooking and spending time with his fiancée and small daughter.



BBC Cardiff Singer of the World
BBC Canwr y Byd Caerdydd

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Patron : Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC
Noddwr : Y Fonesig Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC

BIOGRAPHIES: MEMBERS OF THE JURY

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa

Patron and Jury member: BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

Kiri Te Kanawa moved rapidly into the front rank of international opera after her sensational debut as the Countess *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Royal Opera House in 1971. Since then, her lyric soprano voice has become one of the most famous in the world, especially in Mozart, Richard Strauss, Verdi and Puccini. As well as performing on the greatest opera stages worldwide, Dame Kiri has made countless appearances with many great orchestras, conductors and pianists, her wide repertoire also embracing contemporary popular music. She has recorded extensively in opera, oratorio, art and popular song, on CD and DVD.

In 2004 she launched the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, a charity which supports New Zealand singers and musicians. She is also the Founding Artistic Director of the Solti Te Kanawa Accademia di Bel Canto, a summer opera course based in Italy. In 2010 she headed BBC Radio 2's quest for a gifted singer of the future, The Kiri Prize. Always passionate about young singers, Dame Kiri regularly conducts master classes and coaching sessions throughout the world.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa holds honorary doctorates from ten universities and is an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music. She has been awarded Dame Commander of the British Empire, the Order of Australia and the Order of New Zealand.

Marilyn Horne

Jury member: both competitions

Marilyn Horne is one of America's best-loved artists and a popular performer throughout the world. Her five-decade career in opera, concert, and recital has been celebrated throughout the world for the power and artistry of her unique and dazzling mezzo-soprano coloratura, and for her revival of many forgotten Rossini, Handel, Vivaldi and Bellini operas.

She was named a Kennedy Center Honoree in 1995, and was awarded the Fidelio Gold Medal by the International Association of Opera Directors. She is in the American Classical Music Hall of Fame, and has several Grammy Awards. In 2009, Marilyn Horne was honoured with the *Opera News Award* and celebrated her 75th birthday and the 15th anniversary of the founding of her Marilyn Horne Foundation - to support young singers and the art of the song - with a star-studded gala concert at Carnegie Hall.

Miss Horne launched the Marilyn Horne Foundation in 1994. She is Vocal Program Director at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, and each season she is engaged for master class residencies at the University of Oklahoma at Norman, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Manhattan School of Music, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the University of Maryland at College Park. This is Miss Horne's fifth visit to the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World jury.

Dennis O'Neill

Jury member: BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

Dennis O'Neill is one of the world's leading operatic tenors. He appears frequently across Europe and America, including at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera New York and the State Operas of Vienna, Munich, Berlin and Hamburg. He is particularly associated with the great Verdi roles.

Dennis O'Neill's television series for the BBC in the 1980s were enormously popular and he has subsequently made television films on Caruso and movie themes. Recordings include Verdi's *Requiem*, *La fanciulla del West*, *Aida*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, operatic arias and an anthology of Italian Song. Videos include *Der Rosenkavalier* with Solti, *Macbeth* with Sinopoli and *Die Fledermaus* with Kiri te Kanawa conducted by Plácido Domingo.

Recent performances have included *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Sydney, *Otello* in Hamburg, Munich, Sydney, Brazil and Cardiff; *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Munich; *Aida* in Munich, Dresden and Cardiff; *Un ballo in maschera* in Lisbon, Munich and Rome; *Turandot* at the Met and Covent Garden; *Norma* in Barcelona; *La Juive* for Covent Garden and the Netherlands Opera; a tour of Verdi's *Requiem* with La Scala and Riccardo Muti as well as *The Dream of Gerontius* in Munich with Zubin Mehta and in London with Mark Elder. He was awarded the CBE in 2000.

Håkan Hagegård

Jury member: both competitions

Håkan Hagegård shot to fame playing Papageno in Ingmar Bergman's 1975 film of *Die Zauberflöte*, having made his operatic debut in 1968 in Stockholm in the same role. His impressive career comprises opera, song and sacred music as well as contemporary and popular song and he has performed at all the major international opera houses and concert halls throughout the world. A champion of contemporary music, he has performed world premieres of works by John Corigliano, Dominick Argento and other internationally recognized composers.

His recordings include the Grammy Award-winning Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with James Levine; Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Emanuel Ax; the Grammy-nominated *Hagegård Sings Brahms, Sibelius and Stenhammar* with the pianist Warren Jones and Mahler's *Das klagende lied* with the Hallé Orchestra and Kent Nagano.

Mr Hagegård is professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music, has taught at the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and since 2010 has been running Singers Studio Sweden, a forum for artistic development in Stockholm. In 1985 Håkan Hagegård was appointed vocalist to His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and in 1989 became a member of the Royal Swedish Academy. He received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Karlstad in 2002.

Lorenzo Mariani

Jury member: BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

Lorenzo Mariani works as a stage director of opera across the world, and has been artistic director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo since 2005. He was born in New York and studied modern history at Harvard University before making his opera staging debut with Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Teatro Comunale in Florence, a project which marked the beginning of his subsequent regular collaboration with the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Festival.

He has to his credit stagings for some of the world's most prestigious opera houses and festivals, including Chicago's Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, Finnish National Opera, Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Regio in Turin and Wexford Festival. Lorenzo Mariani has worked with many prominent conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Myung-Whun Chung, John Eliot Gardiner, Daniele Gatti and Zubin Mehta.

Mr Mariani's recent productions include Lucio Dalla's musical *Tosca amore disperato*, *The Rake's Progress* and *The Threepenny Opera* for Rome's Accademia di Santa Cecilia; *Candide* for Teatro San Carlo of Naples; *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the Teatro Massimo of Palermo, Teatro Lirico of Cagliari and Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland. Last year he directed a new production of *La fanciulla del West* for San Francisco Opera.

Alexander Polianichko

Jury member: BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

Alexander Polianichko was formerly a violinist in the Leningrad (St Petersburg) Philharmonic Orchestra under Evgeny Mravinsky, and studied conducting with the legendary Professor Ilya Musin at the St Petersburg Conservatoire. In 1988 he was awarded first prize in the Sixth All-Union Conductors' Competition and the following year joined the Mariinsky (Kirov) Theatre where he still conducts on a regular basis.

He has conducted the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theatre at the Edinburgh International Festival as well as in China, England, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan and the United States. Alexander Polianichko has conducted at houses including La Scala Milan, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opéra National de Paris, Stuttgart Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, Royal Danish Opera, San Francisco Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Welsh National Opera, English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Alexander Polianichko is also a distinguished symphonic conductor and has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Bergen Philharmonic, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane Symphony Orchestras and Wellington Symphony Orchestra. He returns to Gothenburg Opera and Welsh National Opera in the 2011/12 season.

Bengt Forsberg

Jury member: Song Prize

Bengt Forsberg is one of Sweden's leading musicians, with a varied career encompassing solo piano performance, chamber music, conducting and piano accompaniment. He has maintained a long-standing musical partnership with mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, resulting in many recordings including the songs of Grieg, which won a Gramophone Record of the Year Award for 1995. He and von Otter also collaborated in the BIS label's complete Sibelius project. Bengt Forsberg also regularly accompanies cellists Mats Lidström and Andreas Brantelid and violinist Nils-Erik Sparf.

He studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Gothenburg, Sweden, at first training to become a church organist and cantor but switching to piano by the time of his graduation in 1978. He continued his piano studies with Phyllis Sellick and Peter Feuchtwanger in London and Herman D Koppel in Copenhagen.

Bengt Forsberg is known for his wide repertoire and his constant interest in reviving neglected music, including works by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Charles Alkan, Emmanuel Chabrier, Wilhelm Stenhammar, Benjamin Godard, Léon Boëllmann, Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Pierné and Percy Grainger. He has a strong interest in French music of the 1800s and has recorded works by Saint-Saëns. He is director of the chamber music series at the All Saints' Church in Stockholm.

Adam Gatehouse

Jury member: Song Prize

Adam Gatehouse is Editor Live Music at BBC Radio 3, having worked there as a producer and executive producer. He instigated and produced the BBC Wigmore Hall lunchtime concerts and the lunchtime series at LSO St Luke's, working with many of the greatest artists of our time including Magdalena Koszena, Mitsuko Uchida, Steven Isserlis, the Beaux Arts Trio, Alfred Brendel, András Schiff and Ian Bostridge.

In 1999 he set up BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme, in which 12 young artists or groups are selected for a two year period during which they are given studio recordings and appearances with BBC orchestras and at the BBC Proms. Graduates from the scheme include Paul Lewis, Christopher Maltman, the Belcea Quartet, Simon Trpčeski, Alison Balsom, Alice Coote, Ailish Tynan and Andrew Kennedy.

For BBC Radio 3 Adam Gatehouse has produced major series on the history of Glyndebourne, the Philharmonia Orchestra, documentaries on Rudolf Nureyev (nominated for a Sony Award), Yehudi Menuhin and Georg Solti. His documentary on Prokofiev won a Sony Silver Award. He has also devised and produced special 'days' dedicated to Verdi, Walton, Berlioz, Janáček and Tchaikovsky. In 2006 Adam Gatehouse launched the Festival de Valloires, a chamber music festival in Picardy.

John Fisher

Chairman of the jury: both competitions

John Fisher was born in Glasgow and educated at Glasgow University, the Royal Academy of Music and the London Opera Centre. He started his operatic career at Welsh National Opera in 1972 as Music Director of the company's Opera for All project. From 1973 he worked at La Monnaie, Brussels, on the music staff and as Music Director of the Opera Studio. In 1975 he joined the music staff at De Nederlandse Operastichting, Amsterdam, and in 1977 was appointed Head of Music Staff at La Scala, Milan, becoming the company's Artistic Administrator in 1981, a position he held until 1988.

In 1989, he was appointed Artistic Director of La Fenice, Venice, the first non-Italian to be appointed to that position in any of the state-funded Italian opera houses. From 1983 to 1988, he was also an artistic/musical consultant for Festival Rossini, Pesaro. In 1994, he became Director of Opera and Vocal Productions and Executive Producer at Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft, Hamburg.

From 1997 John Fisher was Director of Music Administration at Metropolitan Opera, New York, and then chief executive and artistic director of Welsh National Opera until December 2010. John has worked extensively with Decca and with Unitel, collaborating with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle on several opera films.

Pictures of the members of the jury are available at www.bbcpictures.com

ORCHESTRAS & CONDUCTORS

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

BBC National Orchestra of Wales occupies a special role as both a national and broadcasting orchestra. The orchestra has won acclaim with its conducting team of Principal Conductor Thierry Fischer, Principal Guest Conductor Jac van Steen, Associate Guest Conductor François-Xavier Roth and Conductor Laureate Tadaaki Otaka. As well as the core repertoire, the orchestra undertakes adventurous programming in new or rarely-performed works. In 2008 Simon Holt took up the role of Composer-in-Association, consolidating the ensemble's commitment to contemporary music.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales is Orchestra-in-Residence at St David's Hall, Cardiff, presents a concert series at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, and tours throughout Wales. It performs every year at the BBC Proms and at other major UK festivals and undertakes international touring. Education and community outreach is integral to the orchestra's musical life and extends its work into schools, workplaces and communities.

The orchestra is based at its state-of-the-art recording and rehearsal base, BBC Hoddinott Hall at Wales Millennium Centre. It works closely with radio and television programme-makers and records numerous soundtracks, including BBC Wales's *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* series and the BBC's *Human Planet* series. Recent CD recordings include the 2011 Grammy-nominated *Ivanhoe* by Arthur Sullivan on Chandos.

Jac van Steen

Conductor

Jac van Steen has been Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales since 2005. He was born in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, and studied conducting at the Brabants Conservatory of Music. He has held numerous conducting posts throughout Europe, including the Bach Choir in Nijmegen; Het Nationale Ballet, Amsterdam; the Bochumer Symfoniker; the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra; the New Berlin Chamber Orchestra; the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar and Staatskapelle Weimar; Orchester Musikkollegium Winterthur; the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera Theatre Dortmund. He has guest conducted throughout Europe, including Berliner Sinfonie-Orchester, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jac van Steen has worked with UK ensembles including the London Sinfonietta; BBC Symphony Orchestra; BBC Philharmonic; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Hallé Orchestra; City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Opera North as well as his relationship with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Collaborating with young musicians and students are of great importance to Jac van Steen and he works with the Bundes Jugend Orchestra Berlin, Chetham's School of Music, the Young Artists' Festival Bayreuth and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He also teaches conducting at the Royal Conservatory of Music and Dance in The Hague.

Orchestra of Welsh National Opera

The Orchestra of Welsh National Opera was founded in 1970. Since then it has established itself as one of the finest British orchestras, with a wide-ranging operatic repertoire - from Monteverdi through Handel and Mozart to Wagner, Janáček, Maxwell Davies and MacMillan - and with its concert work and recordings.

Former Music Directors of WNO include Sir Charles Mackerras, Richard Armstrong and Tugan Sokhiev. Carlo Rizzi was Musical Director from 1992-2001, returning in 2004 to lead the company into its new home in Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay, until 2007. Lothar Koenigs joined the Company as Music Director in 2009, having already established a relationship with the orchestra, with *Khovanshchina* and *Salome* in the theatre and in St David's Hall, Cardiff.

In addition to extensive touring of opera throughout the UK, in recent years the orchestra has developed its profile in the concert hall. It has featured in three symphonic concerts at St David's Hall each season as well as many concerts at major Welsh and English venues and festivals. These include the Royal Festival Hall and Barbican, London; Symphony Hall, Birmingham; Bridgewater Hall, Manchester; the BBC Proms in London and the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen, with major artists including Bryn Terfel, Angela Gheorghiu and José Carreras.

Lawrence Foster

Conductor

Lawrence Foster, Welsh National Opera conductor, also currently holds the positions of Music Director of Orchestre et Opéra National de Montpellier and Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra. Lawrence Foster has appeared in major opera houses throughout the world. He works regularly at Hamburgische Staatsoper, with recent productions having included *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Der Freischütz* and *Carmen*. Future plans in Hamburg include *Pique Dame* in 2011/12 and *The Cunning Little Vixen* in 2013/14. In 2011 he returns to Opéra de Marseille for *Wozzeck* and will also conduct the world premiere of *Die Marquise von O* by René Koering for Opéra de Monte Carlo. He will make his debut with Oper Frankfurt with a production of *Khovanshchina* in 2012/13.

Orchestral highlights of this season include appearances with NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, the Residentie Orkest, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris and Tivoli Symphony Orchestra. He also has an ongoing relationship with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra; appearances with them in 2011 include the Kissinger Sommer Festival and touring in 2012.

Future highlights include concerts with MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Helsinki Philharmonic, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne and Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de Espana. He will also appear at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival and will take the Gulbenkian Orchestra to the Enescu Festival in September 2011.

OFFICIAL ACCOMPANISTS

Simon Lepper

Simon Lepper was educated at King's College, Cambridge, and the Royal Academy of Music. He is currently professor of piano accompaniment at the Royal College of Music.

Simon has given recitals with many leading singers, including Cora Burggraaf, Nicole Cabell, Allan Clayton, Lucy Crowe, Jonathan Lemalu, Stephan Loges, Christopher Purves, Joan Rodgers, Kate Royal, James Rutherford, Ailish Tynan, Elizabeth Watts and Roderick Williams. He has performed at venues including the Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Salzburg Mozarteum, Musée d'Orsay and Cologne Philharmonie as well as at festivals throughout Europe including Verbier, Switzerland, the December Nights Festival, Moscow, and the BBC Proms. Recordings include Debussy and Strauss songs with Gillian Keith, Warlock songs with Andrew Kennedy and contemporary works with violinist Carolin Widmann, which received a Diapason d'Or.

Recent highlights include performances of the Schubert and Schumann song cycles with Mark Padmore, recitals with Sally Matthews at the Concertgebouw, Angelika Kirchschrager at the Verbier Festival and Wigmore Hall and with Dame Felicity Palmer at Oxford Lieder Festival. Future plans include performances with singers Malin Christensson and Lawrence Zazzo and a duet recital with Sally Matthews and Karen Cargill at the Wigmore Hall. This is Simon's fifth appearance as an official accompanist for BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.

Gary Matthewman

Gary Matthewman studied at the Royal College of Music and in Berlin and Vienna. He has won several awards, including the accompaniment prizes at the Royal Over-Seas League Competition, Maggie Teyte Awards, and first Das Lied - International Song Competition in Berlin.

Gary has appeared in recital throughout Europe, and in the USA, Brazil, South Korea and New Zealand. He has performed at the Aldeburgh, Newbury, Hay-on-Wye, North Norfolk, Bath and Sheffield (Music in the Round) Festivals, at London's Wigmore Hall, the Royal Opera House, and in the Rosenblatt Recital Series at St John's, Smith Square. Gary has made numerous live broadcasts and recordings for BBC Radio 3. He has performed alongside some of today's most exciting singers, including Sir Thomas Allen, Kate Royal, Simon Keenleyside, Sumi Jo, Ian Bostridge, Sally Matthews, Markus Werba, Toby Spence, Elizabeth Watts, Yuriy Mynenko, Cora Burggraaf and Stephan Loges.

Gary is also in demand as a song coach and répétiteur. He teaches Lieder at the Oxenfoord International Summer School in Edinburgh, examines for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, and has presented education seminars for them in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. This is Gary's first appearance as official accompanist at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.

Llŷr Williams

Llŷr Williams has performed with orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, London Mozart Players, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Sinfonia Cymru and Minnesota Orchestra. He also appears at the BBC Proms in London and at the Edinburgh Festival. The 2009/10 season included his Salzburg debut, with the Mozarteum Orchestra and Ivor Bolton, an appearance with the LPO and Jukka-Pekka Saraste and performances at the Schubertiade in Perth and with I Pomeriggi Musicali in Milan.

Throughout 2010 Llŷr performed a Beethoven sonata cycle around the UK and gave recitals in the Wigmore Hall and in Ghent. His collaboration with violinist Alexander Janiczek continued with a Beethoven series in Perth and the Aschau Festival. September 2010 saw the release of his latest CD featuring music by Mussorgsky, Debussy and Liszt. Llŷr is the subject of two films produced for S4C: one won a Welsh BAFTA for Best Music Programme, the second featured his debut at Carnegie Hall.

Llŷr Williams studied at The Queen's College, Oxford, and the Royal Academy of Music. From 2000-02 he was a Shinn Fellow at the Academy, coaching singers and studying conducting. Llŷr has been one of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World's official accompanists since 2003.

Pictures of the official accompanists are available at www.bbcpictures.com

INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

- BBC Cardiff Singer of the World takes place 12 - 19 June 2011
- The biennial competition was established in 1983 by BBC Cymru Wales. Past winners include Karita Mattila, Dmitri Hvorostovsky and the 2009 winner Ekaterina Scherbachenko
- 20 singers will take part in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition at St David's Hall, Cardiff
- All singers are eligible to take part in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Song Prize at the New Theatre, Cardiff, and St David's Hall
- The 20 singers were all auditioned by Julian Smith, Music Adviser
- Prizes: the winner receives £15,000; Song Prize winner £5,000; Dame Joan Sutherland Audience Prize £2,000. Each winner also receives a trophy
- BBC Cardiff Singer of the World is organised by BBC Cymru Wales in association with Welsh National Opera and is supported by the City and County of Cardiff
- Master classes are given by members of the jury to non-finalists and vocal students and are supported by the Ian Smith of Stornaway Trust
- The competition will be broadcast on BBC TWO, BBC FOUR, BBC Two Wales, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Wales and BBC Radio Cymru and online at bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger
- The competition's website will carry full details of all the singers and their repertoire and contains an extensive archive of video clips from all the competitions bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger
- The audience will enjoy around 17 hours of performance during the competition
- In 2013 the competition will celebrate its 30th anniversary

Audition Statistics: 602 singers from 71 countries

Women	396	(67%)
Men	191	(33%)
Sopranos	322	(55%)
Mezzos & Contraltos	74	(13%)
Counter-tenors	8	(1%)
Tenors	65	(11%)
Baritones	96	(16%)
Bass-baritones	4	(1%)
Basses	18	(3%)

Singers were auditioned in 45 locations:

Amsterdam, Athens, Baku, Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Cardiff, Chicago, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Houston, Kiev, London, Madrid, Milan, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Oslo, Paris, Perth (Australia), Prague, Pretoria, Riga, San Francisco, Santiago, São Paulo, Shanghai, Sofia, St Petersburg, Stockholm, Sydney, Tallinn, Tbilisi, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Toronto, Vienna, Vilnius, Warsaw.



BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

BBC Canwr y Byd Caerdydd

BBC | cymru wales

Patron : Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC
Noddwr : Y Fonesig Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ DBE AC

DIARY

BBC Cardiff Singer of the World:

Monday 13 June, 7.30pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: Concert One
Tuesday 14 June, 7.30pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: Concert Two
Wednesday 15 June, 7.30pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: Concert Three
Thursday 16 June, 7.30pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: Concert Four
Sunday 19 June, 5pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: The Final

BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Song Prize:

Sunday 12 June 2pm, New Theatre, Cardiff: Recital One
Sunday 12 June, 7.30pm, New Theatre, Cardiff: Recital Two
Monday 13 June, 2pm, New Theatre, Cardiff: Recital Three
Tuesday 14 June, 2pm, New Theatre, Cardiff: Recital Four
Friday 17 June, 7.30pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff: Song Prize Final

Master Classes:

Saturday 18 June, 11am and 3pm, New Theatre, Cardiff
Saturday 18 June, 12.30pm and 4pm, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

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For more information & press tickets contact Ceri Mears 029 2032 3599
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