

Press Release of the Salzburg Festival

Young Singers Project 2019

Supported by the Kühne Foundation



photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

(SF, 2 July 2019) “The lucky hand – or rather, lucky ear – of Evamaria Wieser, the director of the Young Singers Project, is demonstrated by the fact that the participants in the Young Singers Project achieve excellent results at competitions all over the world and are engaged by the best opera houses,” says Festival President **Helga Rabi-Stadler**. “This year, a total of 13 participants of the Young Singers Project will appear on the programme of the Salzburg Festival. Furthermore, I am particularly pleased that Joel Prieto, a 2008 YSP participant, will sing the title role in *Orphée aux enfers*.”

With the Young Singers Project, the Salzburg Festival has created a high-carat platform for the support of young vocalists, which looks back upon eleven years of successful history in 2019. Since 2008, 157 young vocalists from 41 countries have participated in the Young Singers Project. This year, 13 young singers from eleven nations will take part. They are from Canada, Spain, the UK, France, Russia, Poland, the USA, Ukraine, Ireland and, for the first time, from Mexico and New Zealand.



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The singers are chosen at international auditions. As part of their fellowship, they have the opportunity to work with Festival artists. Tuition includes not only music lessons and repertoire expansion, but also stage rehearsals, language coaching and *lied* interpretation. Its master classes and strong practical orientation make YSP an international model for young artist programmes. Public master classes will be offered this summer by Christa Ludwig, Anne Sofie von Otter, Malcolm Martineau and Helmut Deutsch.

The participants of the Young Singers Project perform this year's children's opera, *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel*, by Marius Felix Lange – and thus, for the first time, a world premiere. They are also heard in other 2019 Festival productions. In a final concert on 24 August, the YSP participants present themselves to the public. The concert at the Mozarteum Foundation's Main Auditorium will be conducted by Adrian Kelly.

Free tickets for the public master classes are available starting on 6 July 2019 at the Salzburg Festival Shop, Hofstallgasse 1, 5020 Salzburg.

The participants in the 2019 Young Singers Project will appear this summer in the following productions:

Der Gesang der Zauberinsel

Joanna Kędzior (soprano), Alcina/Mother
Sarah Shine (soprano), Angelika/Angelica
Carmen Artaza (mezzo-soprano), Bradamante
Iurii Iushkevich (countertenor), Hippogryph/Astolfo
James Ley (tenor), Ruggiero
Benson Wilson (baritone), Mirza/Medoro
Joel Allison (bass-baritone), Dr. Roland Angeler

Adriana Lecouvreur

Josh Lovell (tenor), Poisson
Valentina Pluzhnikova (mezzo-soprano), Mademoiselle Dangeville
Ricardo Bojórquez (bass), Quinault

Médée

Tamara Bounazou (soprano), First Woman
Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur (mezzo-soprano), Second Woman

Salome

Thomas Bennett (bass), Cappadocian



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Success Stories of Former Young Singers

Since 2008 the Young Singers Project has seen 157 young vocalists from 41 countries participate. Many of them have since enjoyed great success, and many of them have kept returning to the Salzburg Festival's stages after their participation in YSP.

Emma Posman, a participant in YSP **2018**, came to special attention when she took on the role of the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Großes Festspielhaus last year when Albina Shagimuratova fell ill unexpectedly. She has since sung this role in 2019 at the Komische Oper Berlin and at the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in Munich. Further engagements as the Queen of the Night will follow.

Christina Gansch, a YSP participant in **2015**, is currently making her debuts at La Scala Milan and at the San Francisco Opera.

2016 was a particularly good year:

Miriam Albano makes her debuts in Rome and Florence; at both opera houses, she sings the role of Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Furthermore, she can be heard in Bordeaux as Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Szilvia Vörös, another YPS participant in **2016**, has joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera this season and has appeared there as Anna in Hector Berlioz' *Les Troyens*. She also sang the role of Laura Adorno in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels.

Andrezj Filonczyk, a Young Singer in **2016**, made his debut as Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème* in Klagenfurt and at the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto.

News of great success has also reached us from **Mingjie Lei**, YSP **2016**: he is the winner of the Song Prize and was one of the finalists at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition.

Vasilisa Berzhanskaya participated in YSP **2017** and has recently made her debuts in Amsterdam and Rome. She will also appear as Diane in Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* at the Haus für Mozart this Festival summer.

2019 Biographies

Joel Allison (Bass-Baritone), Canada



The Canadian bass-baritone has performed throughout Canada with ensembles including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Saskatoon Symphony, Newfoundland Symphony and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. He has also sung the role of Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Saskatoon Opera.

Since the 2018/19 season Joel Allison has been a member of the Canadian Opera Company's Studio Ensemble, where he has appeared in the roles of Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*), the Superior Senator in the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright's *Hadrian* and Schaunard in *La Bohème*.

In the 2017/18 season he won the Second Prize at the Great Lakes regional finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Joel Allison appears in the role of Dr. Roland Angeler in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Carmen Artaza (Mezzo-Soprano), Spain



Born in San Sebastian, Spain, mezzo-soprano Carmen Artaza began her music education playing the violin at the conservatory of her hometown. At the age of 16 she won a First Prize in the international section of the German competition Jugend musiziert, receiving a scholarship for the State High School for Music Carl Maria von Weber in Dresden. From 2013 to 2017 she studied singing in Munich at the Academy of Music and Theatre. Since September 2017, Carmen Artaza has been studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, completing her training with master classes with Christa Ludwig, Teresa Berganza and Snežana Stamenković, among others.

Sie has sung the roles of Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Mother Bayard and Ermengarde in Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* under Dominic Wheeler in productions of the Guildhall School as well as Sesto (*Giulio Cesare*) and Bianca (*The Rape of Lucretia*) in Munich. In 2017 she sang Costanza (*L'isola disabitata*) in a concert performance in Augsburg; the next year she appeared as Paquette in a semi-staged version of Bernstein's *Candide* with the London Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop.

As a concert performer, she has appeared in Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky* with the Munich Symphony Orchestra and in Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Zelenka's *Te Deum* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* under Jörg-Peter Weigle at Berlin's Philharmonie. In 2018 she recorded works by the Catalan composer Enrique Granados for BBC Radio.

Carmen Artaza won the First Prize, Audience Award and Encouragement Award at the Vocal

Competition Luis Mariano in 2018 and an Encouragement Award at the Federal Vocal Competition in Germany in the junior category in 2016. She holds scholarships from the German National Merit Foundation and from the Spanish Ministry of Culture for studies abroad for the second time.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, she sings the role of Bradamante in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Thomas Bennett (Bass), United Kingdom



English bass Thomas Bennett began singing as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. He is currently studying with the Royal Academy Opera, where he is taught by Kate Paterson and Jonathan Papp. He is a recipient of the D'Oyly Carte Memorial Award and is also supported by the Josephine Baker Trust. He is a member of the prestigious Royal Academy Song Circle.

Upcoming engagements include King René (*Iolanta*) at the Royal Academy Opera and Third Rose Tree (*The Nightingale and the Rose*) at the Pegasus Opera. Recent roles include Il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Cadmus and Somnus (*Semele*) at the Royal Academy Opera, Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Cavatina Opera and Polyphemus

(*Acis and Galatea*) at the the Grange Festival.

Recent recital credits include performances of songs by Wolf and Schubert at the Austrian Cultural Forum with the Royal Academy Song Circle. In April 2019 Thomas Bennett made his debut at the Wigmore Hall in a programme of Carl Loewe.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Thomas Bennett sings the Cappadocian in *Salome* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Ricardo Bojórquez (Bass), Mexico



The Mexican bass Ricardo Bojórquez received his first singing lessons from José Briano at the age of 16. Two years later, he enrolled at the Escuela Nacional de Música in Mexico City, where he studied with Rufino Montero. Since 2013 he has been studying with Regine Köbler and Rainer Trost at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts.

As part of a university production, he made his stage debut in 2014 as Nick Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and appeared during the following years in the roles of Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) and Le Bailli (*Werther*) under Roger Díaz-Cajamarca as well as the Cold Genius in Purcell's *King*

Arthur and as Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*). He has also sung the role of a Senator in Krenek's *Pallas Athene weint* at the Neue Oper Wien under Walter Kobéra, Bartolo (*Le*

nozze di Figaro) under Guido Mancusi in Wels and Vöcklabruck und under Christoph Meier at the Schlosstheater Schönbrunn, Masetto and Il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*) under Raphael Schluesselberg in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) under Peter Marschik at the Schlosstheater Schönbrunn, Müff Müff in Gottfried von Einem's *Tulifant* under Caspar Richter at the Concert Hall of the Vienna Boys' Choir and Sciarrone (*Tosca*) under Johannes Wildner at the Opera Burg Gars.

Ricardo Bojórquez became a member of the Domkantorei St. Pölten in 2014, where he has sung the role of Judas in Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* and appeared as the soloist in Bach's Mass in G minor BWV 235. As a lied and concert performer, he has sung works by composers such as Schubert, Strauss, Krenek, Beethoven and Brahms as well as sacred music by Schütz, Bach, Monteverdi, Lasso, Handel and Haydn.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Ricardo Bojórquez appears in the role of Quinault in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur (Mezzo-Soprano), France



The French mezzo-soprano Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur was born in 1993 and has been studying with the soprano Maryse Castets at the Bordeaux Conservatory since 2014, following a degree from the university Sciences Po in Bordeaux. She has also attended several master courses with Claudia Visca, Carlos Aransay, Irène Kudela (Russian repertoire) and Christian Immler (baroque repertoire), among others.

In 2017 she took on the contralto role in Handel's *Messiah* under Marc Minkowski at the Opéra National de Bordeaux. In 2018 she won the First Prize in the competition of the Cap Ferret Music Festival and a Third Prize at the Béziers Vocal Competition. She also won the First Prize at the International Opera Competition in Lavaur that

same year.

In June 2018 Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur sang Gluck's *Orphée (Orphée et Eurydice)* and then participated in the Académie Baroque at the Festival du Périgord Noir, where she appeared in the role of Disinganno in Handel's *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* under the baton of Iñaki Encina Oyón. In May 2019 she sang the role of Grimgerde (*Die Walküre*) at the Opéra National de Bordeaux. Her repertoire also includes the Child in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* and Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Starting in 2019, she joins the Academy of the Paris Opéra.

On the concert stage, Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur sang the contralto part in Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle* under Marc Minkowski at the Opéra National de Bordeaux during the 2018/19 season and joined a European concert tour of the Musiciens du Louvre as a soloist in Mozart's Mass in C minor.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Marie-Andrée Bouchard-Lesieur will appear at the 2019 Salzburg Festival as the Second Woman in *Médée*.

Tamara Bounazou (Soprano), France



Born in 1994, the French soprano Tamara Bounazou started singing at the age of five with Claudine Bunod at Conservatory of Montbéliard. After obtaining her diploma at the Montbéliard Conservatory, she studied with Isabelle Germain at the National Conservatory of Music and Dance of Lyon, graduating with honours in June 2018. In September 2018 she enrolled at the Vienna Music University in the class of KS Edith Lienbacher.

During her studies in France, she played the roles of Colette in *Le Mariage d'Antonio* by Lucile Gretry, Diane in *Actéon* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Laurette in *Le Docteur Miracle* by Georges Bizet, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Benjamin Britten, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* by Humperdinck, and the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* by W. A. Mozart.

Recently, Tamara Bounazou has grown interested in the exploration of electronic music, mixing singing and computer interactivity, especially with the project *Nox* by Jacopo Baboni Schilingi. She has performed this work in France, Italy, China (Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan), Japan (Tokyo), and the USA (New York and Harvard University). This experience opened the doors of contemporary music to her, and the soprano performed the solo part of *Uxactum* by Scelsi in September 2017, accompanied by the Philharmonic Orchestra and the choir of Radio France.

In 2018 she received the Encouragement Award at the International Singing Competition of the Opéra de Marseille. She also received the Social Network Award, the Second Prize in the opera category at the International Singing Competition of Marmande, as well as the French-Quebec Award for Youth.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Tamara Bounazou appears in the role of the First Woman in *Médée* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Iurii Iushkevich (Countertenor), Russia



The Russian countertenor Iurii Iushkevich was born in St. Petersburg in 1997 and received voice lessons from the age of seven onwards. He has won numerous prizes at major international vocal competitions. Thus, he won a First Prize at the Elena Obraztsova Competition for Young Opera Singers in St. Petersburg in 2012. In 2014 he won prizes at the Crescendo International Music Competition in New York and at the vocal competition "Debut" in Germany.

Iurii Iushkevich has performed at renowned music centres, including Carnegie Hall, the Leipzig Opera and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic as well as the Main Auditorium of the Moscow Conservatory, the State Academic Capella St. Petersburg and the Moscow Philharmonic. In 2018 he received a scholarship from the Lyra Foundation in Zurich, appearing



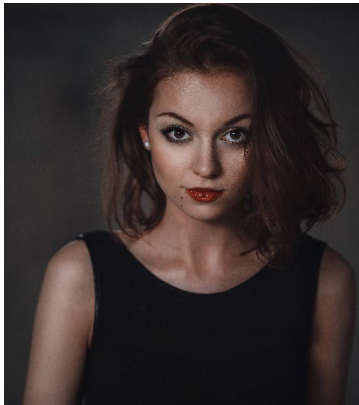
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as a soloist in concerts with the Bavarian Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cuvilliés Theatre in Munich, at the Theater im Kurhaus in Freudenstadt and at the Abbey Concerts St. Blasien in Baden-Württemberg.

Iurii Iushkevich studies with Enrico Facini at the Berlin University of the Arts. His repertoire includes works by Vivaldi, Handel, Gluck, Mozart and Rimsky-Korsakov.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Iurii Iushkevich sings the roles of Hippogryph and Astolfo in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Joanna Kędzior (Soprano), Poland



The Polish soprano Joanna Kędzior studied at the music academies in Poznań and Warsaw. From 2016 to 2018 she was a member of the Opera Academy of the Warsaw National Opera, where she performed the roles of Frasquita (*Carmen*), Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) as well as Papagena and First Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), among others.

She made her professional debut in her first year of studies at the festival Opera Know-how in Poznań; thereafter she was heard at the Poznań Theatre as Cléophas in an adaptation of Gosciny's *Le Petit Nicolas et les Copains*, Karolka (*Jenůfa*), Angelika in Elena Langer's *Figaro Gets a Divorce*, First Witch (*Dido and Aeneas*) and First Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*). She has worked with conductors such as Patrick Fournillier, Kazushi Ono, Tadeusz Koźłowski, Gabriel Chmura, Wojciech Michniewski, Katarzyna Tomala and Paul Esswood and has participated in master classes by Eva Blahová, Matthias Rexroth, Eytan Pessen, Matjaz Robavs, Helena Łazarska, Mietta Sighele, Helmut Deutsch, Paul Plummer, Hedwig Fassbender, Tobias Truniger, Tomasz Konieczny, René Massis and Brenda Hurley.

Joanna Kędzior has been successful in numerous competitions, including a Second Prize and the Dame Joan Sutherland Prize at the Veronica Dunne Vocal Competition in Dublin, the Third Prize and Special Prize at the Competition J. E. J. Reszke in Częstochowa, a Special Award at the Riccardo Zandonai Competition in Trento, the First Prize and Special Prize at the Rudolf Petrák Vocal Competition in Žilina, the Second Prize at the competition Ars et Gloria in Katowice, the Third Prize at the National Vocal Competition in Drezdenko, the Second Prize at the Maria Stankowa Festival in Olsztyn and the First Prize at the Festival Cantate Domino in Koszalin. She also reached the finale of the Halina Halska Fijałkowska Competition in Wrocław.

As a participant of the Young Singers Project, she will sing the role of Alcina in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

James Ley (Tenor), USA



The American tenor James Ley from Elkton, Maryland, is an Artist Diploma in Opera Studies student at The Juilliard School, where he studies with Edith Wiens. At Juilliard, James Ley has appeared in a shared, semi-staged performance of *Winterreise* with Brian Zeger at Alice Tully Hall and as Le petit vieillard in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Emmanuel Villaume. On Juilliard's mainstage, the Peter Jay Sharp Theater, James Ley performed as Don Ottavio in Juilliard's production of *Don Giovanni*.

He recently participated in Carnegie Hall's SongStudio, where he worked closely with guest teachers and coaches including Renée Fleming. In the summer of 2018, he participated in the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in the Mozart Académie and with the Nürnberg Symphoniker through the Internationale Meistersinger Akademie. Before Juilliard, James Ley performed the roles of Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Abraham in a staged production of Britten's *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*, and in Handel's *Messiah* at Wheaton College. As a participant in the Young Singers Project, James Ley performs the role of Ruggiero in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Josh Lovell (Tenor), Canada



In 2019/20, Canadian tenor Josh Lovell is in his first season in the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera, performing Lysander in a new production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lurcanio in David McVicar's production of *Ariodante*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* and finally, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*. Other opera roles include Don Ramiro with The New Generation Festival in Florence and Gonsalve in *L'Heure Espagnol* with Wolf Trap. Other engagements include Mozart's *Requiem* with the Vancouver Symphony and Victoria Choral Society and Handel's *Messiah* with the Victoria Symphony.

In the 2018/19 season, Josh Lovell completed his tenure with The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, performing Odoardo in *Ariodante*, Le Doyen de la Faculté in *Cendrillon*, and a Trojan in *Idomeneo*. He covered the roles of Arbace in *Idomeneo*, the Young Servant in *Elektra*, and Lurcanio in *Ariodante*. On the Chicago concert stage, he debuted with Music of the Baroque, performing Bach's *Coffee Cantata*, conducted by Jane Glover, as well as Handel's *Messiah* with The International Music Foundation and Apollo Chorus. He also debuted the Evangelist in Bach's *Mätthäus-Passion* with the Victoria Philharmonic Choir in Canada, select Bach cantatas as well as the *Magnificat* with Baroque ensemble I Musici de Montréal and a programme of arias with the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra.



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A Victoria, British Columbia native, Josh Lovell is the 2018 Grand and Opera Prize winner at the 52nd Annual International Vocal Competition 's-Hertogenbosch in The Netherlands, the Second Prize winner of the 2018 Dallas Opera Competition, and was a 2017 semi-finalist with the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He is a 2017 graduate of the University of Michigan, where he studied with Stanford Olsen. Previously, he was a student of Benjamin Butterfield at the University of Victoria. He currently studies with Julia Faulkner.

As a participant of the Young Singers Project, Josh Lovell will sing the role of Poisson in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Valentina Pluzhnikova (Mezzo-Soprano), Ukraine



The Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Valentina Pluzhnikova was born in 1996 and has studied with Gennady Kabka at the National Music Academy Peter Tchaikovsky in Kiev since 2015. Since 2017 she has also been a member of the Opera Academy of the Warsaw National Opera, where she participates regularly in master classes given by artists such as Eytan Pessen, Matthias Rexroth, Izabela Kłosińska, Olga Pasiecznik, Paul Plummer, Arabella Cortesi, Helmut Deutsch and Florence Daguerre de Hureaux. She has enjoyed success at international vocal competitions, such as a First Prize at “Pearls of Art” in Kiev in 2017, two Special Prizes at the Eva Marton Competition in Budapest in 2018 as well as the Second Prize and Special Prize of the Fondazione Lucia Valentini Terrani at the Iris Adami Corradetti Competition in Padua in 2018. She was also among the 2018 finalists at the

Ferruccio Tagliavini Competition in Deutschlandsberg, Austria.

Valentina Pluzhnikova made her stage debut in 2016 at the National Music Academy of Ukraine in the role of Flora (*La Traviata*). In further Opera Studio productions, she sang the Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Dunyasha and Lyubasha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Clarice in Rossini's *La pietra del paragone* and Siébel (*Faust*). Her repertoire also includes Mozart's Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*).

In the summer of 2018 she participated in the Corso d'Opera in Cortona, working with Roberto Coviello, Leonardo De Lisi, Angelo Michele Errico, Alessandro Corbelli and Hugo De Ana. She joined other participants of this course in performing in the 2019 New Year's Gala at the Teatro Verdi in Florence with the Orchestra della Toscana.

As a participant of the Young Singers Project, Valentina Pluzhnikova sings the role of Mademoiselle Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.



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Sarah Shine (Soprano), Ireland



Irish soprano Sarah Shine graduated from the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where she studied with Veronica Dunne. Shortly thereafter, she was chosen as one of 40 finalists to compete at the Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition 2015 in Gütersloh, Germany. In December 2015, she was invited by Neue Stimmen and the Bertelsmann Foundation to perform a recital hosted by Renée Fleming in Washington D.C. She is currently a young artist of the Academy

at the Paris National Opera for the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 seasons. In November 2017, she made her debut at the Opera Bastille as Leocadia in *Reigen* by Phillippe Boesmans, conducted by Jean Deroyer. After a performance at Palais Garnier in 2018, Sarah Shine was awarded the Siemens Opera Award. During the 2018-2019 season, she participated in the concerts of the Academy at the Amphitheater Bastille and Palais Garnier and in 2019 performs the role of Adele in *Die Fledermaus* presented at the MC93 before a tour of several French cities.

During her studies, Sarah made her operatic debut with some of Ireland's leading opera companies. She appeared in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* with Opera Theatre Company in June 2014 and in December 2015 made her Wide Open Opera debut in *The Oldest Woman in Limerick*. Previous roles at the Royal Irish Academy of Music include the Young Vixen (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Filia (*Jepthe*), Cis (*Albert Herring*) and Clorinda (*Il Combattimento di Tancredi i Clorinda*).

She has performed with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland) and Ulster Orchestra (Ireland) on numerous occasions and made her debut with The Hibernian Orchestra Ireland as soloist for Gorecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*. She also performed in concert with the Philharmonic Radio Orchestra of Bucharest for the Beirut Chants Festival 2017.

As a participant in the Young Singers Project, Sarah Shine sings the role of Angelika/Angelica in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

Benson Wilson (Baritone), New Zealand



Baritone Benson Wilson from New Zealand is of Sāmoan heritage and based in London. Benson Wilson studied at the University of Auckland and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he graduated with distinction.

During his studies, Benson Wilson was heard in Guildhall School productions as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Assan in Menotti's *The Consul* and Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). He also sang Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Guglielmo at the Bloomsbury Opera and Schabernack (*Le Grand Macabre*) in a semi-staged performance of the London Symphony Orchestra. He made his opera stage debut in 2016 as Schaunard (*La Bohème*) at the Festival Opera in Napier (New Zealand).

In 2016 he sang Richard Rodney Bennett's *Songs before Sleep* at a BBC Total Immersion Concert, recorded by BBC Radio. As a soloist on the concert podium, he has appeared in Handel's *Messiah* with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and in Requiem settings by Mozart, Fauré und Brahms.

In 2018, Benson Wilson won the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Foundation Award and the People's Choice Award. In 2015 the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition awarded him the Symphony Australia Young Vocalist Award, among others, and won a summer scholarship to the International Vocal Arts Institute in New York. The previous year, Benson Wilson had also won New Zealand's premiere singing competition, the Lexus Song Quest.

Benson Wilson has participated in many prestigious young artist summer programmes such as the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto (Italy), the Samling Young Artist Programme (Great Britain) and the New Zealand Opera School, where he has worked with artists such as Kiri Te Kanawa, Barbara Frittoli, Virginia Zeani, Paul Nadler, Sherril Milnes and Richard Bonyngé.

As a participant of the Young Singers Project, Benson Wilson will sing the role of Mirza / Medoro in Marius Felix Lange's children's opera *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the 2019 Salzburg Festival.

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Kind regards,
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