



Opera Awards Foundation announces 2019 bursary recipients

14 recipients to benefit from career-changing funding designed to help develop operatic careers and maximise professional potential

The International Opera Awards today [18 November 2019] announces the aspiring operatic talent that will benefit from its Foundation in 2019/20. The Opera Awards Foundation was established by Harry Hyman in 2012 with the aim of helping aspiring artists reach their professional potential.

The Foundation has awarded 14 recipients bursaries totalling £60,000 for 2019/20 which was raised through its annual gala dinner earlier this year and donations from individual supporters and patrons.

The bursary recipients – 11 singers, a conductor, a director and an opera festival – hail from six countries (Ukraine, UK, South Africa, Greece, America, Canada), and were selected because they demonstrated true professional potential, clear financial need, and the drive and determination to make a difference on the global operatic scene.

The bursary funding will be used to help recipients with a variety of career expenses (e.g. travel and living costs, course fees, promotional materials, and professional coaching sessions), allowing them to focus their time and resources on career development. In some cases, it will be used to fund specific projects. For example, **Xolane Marman**, the only recipient this year to have had Foundation funding previously, will use the money to run opera and vocal workshops in underfunded South African schools through an organisation he has founded called *Operatunity*. The **Waterperry Opera Festival** will use funding to focus on accessibility and diversity in its 2020 programme, primarily by breaking down traditional relationships between instrumentalists, cast and conductor, and by incorporating British Sign Language and immersive and interactive components into its productions.

The Opera Awards Foundation invites applications from aspiring operatic talent across the globe, including singers, directors, conductors, répétiteurs and composers, who strive for operatic excellence, but who require support to achieve this. When applying, applicants are required to outline their career ambitions and demonstrate how a bursary will help them achieve these. Successful recipients are then selected by a specialist panel of industry professionals. For 2019, this panel consisted of; Editor of *Opera Magazine*, John Allison; Director of Opera at Opera Holland Park, James Clutton; Operatic casting agent, Sarah Playfair.

Harry Hyman, founder of the International Opera Awards, said:

“After what has been another brilliant year at the Opera Awards, I am very proud to be able to present this year’s Opera Awards Foundation bursary recipients. It’s very difficult with the economies around the world in the condition they’re in now for aspiring talent to develop and I hope that we can make a positive impact on the opera scene by helping them onto the road to success. It means so

much to be able to contribute and I get a real feeling of achievement when I see our young artists engaged by major opera companies and young artist programmes around the world. We look forward to welcoming these rising stars and to see how they progress over the next year and beyond.”

As well as financial assistance, bursary recipients benefit from advice and guidance from the International Opera Awards and its network. The Opera Awards Foundation regularly organises and hosts recitals, masterclasses and other events for its bursary winners, granting them exposure to some of the industry’s top professionals.

Previous bursary recipients have gone on to perform at such world-renowned venues as The Royal Opera House, The Metropolitan Opera, Hungarian State Opera, Glyndebourne, Welsh National Opera, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Opera Holland Park among others, and become members of some of the world’s most prestigious young artist programmes including the Opernhaus Zürich International Opera Studio, Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artists, English National Opera Harewood Artists and Salzburg Festival Young Singers Project. This not only demonstrates the positive impact that the scheme has had on individuals and their careers, but on the global opera scene at large.

2019 bursary winners:

Anna Starushkevych, mezzo-soprano, Ukraine

[Aphrodite Patoulidou](#), soprano, Greece

[Caroline Modiba](#), soprano, South Africa

[Claire Lees](#), soprano, UK

[Ella Taylor](#), soprano, UK

Jack Holton, baritone, UK

[Jacqueline Piccolino](#), soprano, America

[Kieron Connor Valentine](#), counter-tenor, UK

[Kseniia Nikolaieva](#), mezzo-soprano, Ukraine

[Luvuyo Mbundu](#), baritone, South Africa

[Sarah-Jane Lewis](#), soprano, UK

[Vanessa Chartrand-Rodrigue](#), conductor, Canada

[Xolane Marman](#), director, South Africa

[Waterperry Opera Festival](#), UK

All previous bursary winners can be found at this link:

<http://www.operaawards.org/foundation/bursary-recipients/>

The Foundation invites applications annually. Applications for 2020 bursaries will open in August 2020, and will be available online here: <http://www.operaawards.org/foundation/apply/>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Opera Awards Foundation

The Opera Awards Foundation was founded in 2012 by Harry Hyman. To date, the Foundation has more than 100 bursary recipients with over £400,000 in order to help aspiring talent to achieve their career potential. There are no restrictions on age or nationality, nor is support limited to singers: applications are encouraged from any artist working toward a career in opera, who needs financial support to achieve their career goals.

<http://www.operaawards.org/foundation/>