

## Transylvanian-born mezzo-soprano Eszter Balogh wins the 2019 Handel Singing Competition



Eszter Balogh © Chris Christodoulou

Following the final on Saturday 6 April, the **Handel Singing Competition** announced mezzo-soprano **Eszter Balogh** as the 2019 winner. Alongside Eszter, the finalists were **Patrick Terry** (countertenor), **David de Winter** (tenor) and **William Thomas** (bass) and the final took place at St George's, Hanover Square in London in front of a live audience. Eszter Balogh won first prize – supported by The Carne Trust - winning £5000, and the second prize of £2000, supported by London Handel Festival audiences, was awarded to countertenor Patrick Terry. The Audience Prize, supported by Angela Hyde-Courtney, was presented to William Thomas, and the Selma D and Leon Fishbach Memorial Awards went to William Thomas and David de Winter. The adjudicators for this year were **Catherine Denley, Michael George, Rosemary Joshua** and **Ian Partridge**, who were chaired by **Jane Glover**. The four finalists presented all-Handel programmes accompanied by the London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Laurence Cummings.

In addition to the cash prizes, the Competition supports the continuing professional development of the Finalists by offering them guaranteed performance opportunities. All four of the 2019 Finalists will be invited to give a lunchtime recital in the 2020 London Handel Festival in addition to a showcase concert with Laurence Cummings on 19 September this year. As the winner, Eszter Balogh will be invited to give a recital for the City Music Society in October, and also to be a soloist in the *Messiah* for the Huddersfield Choral Society in December with Jane Glover and the Orchestra of Opera North. Eszter Balogh and Patrick Terry, as first and second prize winners, will also be invited to give a lunchtime recital in the Halle Handel Festival in Germany next year. This year's London Handel Festival features over 20 past Finalists

Samir Savant, Festival Director, says: *"Congratulations to both Eszter and Patrick for winning the first and second prizes in the Handel Singing Competition, a wonderful achievement. I have been impressed with the very high standard this year, and I look forward to working with all four Finalists in future years."*

Laurence Cummings, Musical Director, says: “*We had a fantastic Final on Saturday. Four remarkable singers with phenomenal voices and such dramatic range. Bravo to everyone! I am thrilled that we will get to work with Ezster, Patrick, William and David again.*”

The Handel Singing Competition launched in 2002 and has since become an integral part of the London Handel Festival. The competition this year received over 170 applications from 25 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Israel and the US. Previous finalists include Iestyn Davies, Lucy Crowe, Grace Davidson, Tim Mead, Christopher Ainslie, Rupert Charlesworth and Ruby Hughes. The Handel Singing Competition is generously sponsored by Prof. Schumann GmbH.

[www.london-handel-festival.com](http://www.london-handel-festival.com)

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-ENDS-

## Notes to Editors

### **Finalists:**

Eszter Balogh *mezzo-soprano*

David de Winter *tenor*

Patrick Terry *countertenor*

William Thomas *bass*

**Conductor: Laurence Cummings** (harpsichord)

### **Adjudicators:**

Jane Glover *chair*

Catherine Denley

Michael George

Rosemary Joshua

Ian Partridge

### **Repertoire:**

**Eszter Balogh *mezzo-soprano***

Where shall I fly (Hercules)

Cara speme (Giulio Cesare in Egitto)

Dopo notte (Ariodante)

**Patrick Terry *countertenor***

Yet, can I hear that dulcet lay (The Choice of Hercules)

Crude furie degl' orridi abissi (Serse)

Mi lusinga il dolce affetto (Alcina)

**William Thomas *bass***

O ruddier than the cherry (Acis and Galatea)

Leave me, loathsome light (Semele)

Racks, gibbets, sword and fire (Theodora)

**David de Winter tenor**

Accompagnato: Fatto inferno e il mio petto (Rodelinda)

Aria: Pastorello d'un provero armento (Rodelinda)

The enemy said (Israel in Egypt)

Descend, kind pity, heav'nly guest (Theodora)

**About the Handel Singing Competition**

The composer George Frideric Handel was known to encourage and train young, unestablished singers, many of whom rose to fame as his star soloists. We continue Handel's great tradition of nurturing talent through our Handel Singing Competition, which is presented as part of the annual London Handel Festival. The competition was inaugurated in 2002 with Ian Partridge and James Bowman as the first adjudicators, and has grown to become a major international singing event, attracting over 170 applicants from 25 countries all over the world in 2019.

The calibre is demonstrated by past winners and finalists who have gone on to become internationally recognised soloists, not just in the baroque music field, and give regular appearances in the world's leading opera houses. They include Iestyn Davies, Lucy Crowe, Grace Davidson, Tim Mead, Christopher Ainslie, Rupert Charlesworth and Ruby Hughes.

All singers are required to present all-Handel programmes. The Competition comprises a First Round, where the singers are heard live or can submit sound or video files, followed by a Semi-Final of approximately 12 singers which is open to the public, and the Final, held at St George's, Hanover Square, when this year four singers were accompanied by the London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Laurence Cummings. St George's is in the heart of London's Mayfair, where Handel lived, and the church is where he worshipped.

As well as cash prizes and the chance to work with a professional baroque orchestra, one of the key benefits of getting through to the semi-finals and finals is the increased profile, through significant press and promoter interest, which leads to numerous engagements; this has been the vehicle through which they have been able to build their professional careers. All finalists are also offered recitals and roles in future London Handel Festivals and in recent years the winners of the first and second prizes have been invited to give recitals at the Handel Festival in Halle, Germany and the New Walk Museum in Leicester.

<https://www.london-handel-festival.com/handel-singing-competition/>

**About the London Handel Festival**

The London Handel Festival is an annual celebration of the life and work of composer George Frideric Handel. Our core charitable and artistic objectives are to explore the full repertoire of Handel, to nurture emerging talent, and to bring Handel's music to broader audiences.

Founded in 1978, the London Handel Society has played a crucial role in the revival of interest in Handel's music. Each year we present the prestigious London Handel Festival, some 40 events held in venues across London in March and April, celebrating Handel's extraordinary creative life in the city which he made his home. Our Musical Director is Laurence Cummings, one of the world's pre-eminent Handelian conductors, who directs the London Handel Orchestra and leading soloists in several performances across the festival, often reviving lesser-known works. Our Associate Director is Adrian Butterfield, who also leads the London Handel Orchestra.

Our base is St George's church in London's Mayfair where Handel worshipped. In addition, we work with a range of established venues and artistic partners, including Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith

Square and Early Opera Company, and we give a platform to emerging talent, working with groups such as La Nuova Musica and Opera Settecento.

[www.london-handel-festival.com](http://www.london-handel-festival.com)

### **Eszter Balogh, mezzo-soprano**

Transylvanian-born mezzo-soprano Eszter Balogh began her musical studies with the Hungarian Radio Children's Choir. She gained her Master's of Music in Oratorio and Lied from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 2014. Her repertoire encompasses baroque, romantic and 20th-century music.

She is a regular performer in Hungary's concert scene and has appeared as a soloist with the Budapest Festival Orchestra; the Purcell Choir and Orfeo Orchestra, led by György Vashegyi; the Budafoki Dohnányi Orchestra and the MÁV Symphony Orchestra. She has worked with such conductors as Helmuth Rilling, Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro, Péter Oberfrank, István Dénes, Gábor Hollerung and László Kovács. In 2016 she sang as alto soloist in Bach's *St John Passion* under Helmuth Rilling.

Eszter made her operatic debut in 2014 singing Costanza in Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* with the Hungarian National Opera. In 2018 she portrayed Orlofsky in Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* with the National Opera Theatre of Pécs and appeared as Dinah in Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* at the Palace of the Arts in Budapest.

### **Patrick Terry, countertenor**

Patrick Terry is a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. This season, he will travel to Japan to appear in *Le Promesse* Gala Concert at the New National Theatre, Tokyo, and will sing Farnace in Handel's *Berenice* and Artemis in Hans Werner Henze's *Phaedra*. Recent appearances include a recital in the London Song Festival and the role of Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* with La Nuova Musica.

Patrick is a graduate of the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Michael Chance and Caitlin Hulcup.

He is an alumnus of the Chautauqua Opera Company and the Samling Institute. Winner of the Loveday Song Prize at the 2017 Kathleen Ferrier Competition, his further competition success has included Second Prize at the 2015 Joan Chissell Schumann Lieder Competition, winning the 2014 Maureen Lehane Vocal Award and winning the 2017 Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Award.

### **William Thomas, bass**

British bass Will Thomas is the winner of the 2019 Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition, winner of the 2018 Kathleen Ferrier Award and winner of the 2018 John Christie Award from Glyndebourne. A Jerwood Young Artist in the 2018 Glyndebourne Chorus, he sang the role of Nicholas in Barber's *Vanessa*.

In January he performed the bass solo at Wigmore Hall in Graham Johnson's *Songmakers' Almanac* and last November he made his London Symphony Orchestra debut performing Bartok's *Cantata* under François-Xavier Roth at the Barbican Concert Hall. He sang the bass role in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in Lyon in June 2018 and made his debut performance in 2017 as the Shepherd in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Garsington Opera.

Brought up in Harpenden, he is currently on the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he studies with John Evans; recent roles at the Guildhall include Peter Quince in

Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Will is a Help Musicians UK Maidment award holder, won the Joaninha Trust Award in March 2018 and also became a Drake Calleja Scholar for 2018-19.

Future engagements include a recital at Leeds Lieder in April and another Songmakers' Almanac Concert with Graham Johnson in June.

### **David de Winter, tenor**

David de Winter read Music at Durham University, and studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Jonathan Papp and Ryland Davies. His repertoire is extremely varied, from Gesualdo to Michael Finnissy. Opera highlights include his debut at Glyndebourne and BAM (New York) in Britten's *Billy Budd*; the title role in Arne's *Alfred* (Doha Baroque Ensemble); Moore in Frederick Lampe's *The Dragon of Wantley* (London Handel Festival); and Goro in Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* (Bury Court Opera and Southbank Sinfonia).

In concert David has performed Bach's Mass in B minor at the Royal Festival Hall (London Mozart Players); Handel's *Messiah* at Cadogan Hall (English Chamber Orchestra); Coridon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at Wigmore Hall (Early Opera Company/Christian Curnyn); Monteverdi's *Vespers at Rheingau Festival* (The King's Consort); the world premiere of Finnissy's *Tom Fool's Wooing* at Milton Court Concert Hall (EXAUDI); and Evangelist in Pärt's *Passio* at St John's Smith Square (Aurora Orchestra and Tenebrae).

In recital, David has performed with the harpist Anne Denholm at the Henry Wood Hall; a programme of Purcell, Monteverdi and Schubert at the 180° festival in Sofia; and at the London English Song Festival at St George's, Hanover Square.

His future engagements include Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* (arias) with Philharmonie Zuidnederland and Jos van Veldhoven.

### **Laurence Cummings, Musical Director**

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as conductor and harpsichord player. He has been Musical Director of the London Handel Festival since 1999 and Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen since 2012, as well as Music Director of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto. He is the William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music.

He has conducted productions for English National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Buxton Festival Opera, Royal Academy of Music, Garsington Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Linbury Theatre Covent Garden, Göteborg Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Opéra de Lyon, and the Handel and Haydn Society.

He regularly conducts The English Concert and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has worked with the Hallé, Bournemouth Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Wiener Akademie, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington), Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, Basel Chamber Orchestra, Musikkollegium Winterthur, and Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

His numerous recordings include the first recording of Handel's newly discovered *Gloria* with Emma Kirkby, and Handel Arias with Angelika Kirchsclager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony

BMG. Highlights this season include Handel's *Berenice* for the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre in collaboration with the London Handel Festival, Handel's *Semele* at the Royal Academy Opera, and Monteverdi's *Vespers* at Garsington Opera; appearances with The English Concert, the Ulster Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; together with his commitments at Casa da Música in Porto and the London and Göttingen Handel Festivals.