



20 singers from 15 countries announced for BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2019

15-22 June 2019

- **20 of the world's best young singers to compete in the 36th year of the BBC's premier voice competition**
- **Competitors come from 15 countries, including three from Russia, two each from South Korea, Ukraine and USA, and one each from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, England, Guatemala (for the first time), Mexico, Mongolia, Portugal, South Africa and Wales**
- **Extensive broadcast coverage across BBC platforms includes more LIVE TV coverage than ever before**
- **High-level jury includes performers José Cura, Robert Holl, Dame Felicity Lott, Malcolm Martineau, Frederica von Stade alongside leading professionals David Pountney, John Gilhooly and Wasfi Kani**
- **Value of cash prizes increased to £20,000 for the Main Prize and £10,000 for Song Prize, thanks to support from Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation**
- **Song Prize trophy to be renamed the Patron's Cup in recognition of this support**
- **Audience Prize this year to be dedicated to the memory of much-missed baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky, winner of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 1989, who died in 2017**
- **New partnership with Wigmore Hall sees all Song Prize finalists offered debut concert recitals in London's prestigious venue, while Main Prize to be awarded a Queen Elizabeth Hall recital at London's Southbank Centre**

Twenty of the world's most outstanding classical singers are today [4 March 2019] announced for BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2019. The biennial competition returns to Cardiff between 15-22 June 2019 and audiences in the UK and beyond can follow all the live drama of the competition on BBC TV, radio and online.

Known throughout the classical world as the premier showcase for opera and concert singers on the brink of major international careers, BBC Cardiff Singer of the World has helped launch the careers of such stars as Jamie Barton, Elīna Garanča, Anja Harteros, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Jacques Imbrailo, Christopher Maltman, Karita Mattila, Bryn Terfel, and most recently Scottish mezzo-soprano Catriona Morison, the first British winner of both the Main Prize and the Song Prize.

The competitors – ten men and ten women chosen from over 400 applicants – come from 15 countries. Russia leads the field with three competitors, followed by South Korea, Ukraine and the USA with two each. For the first time a singer from Guatemala has been selected and there is one singer each from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, England, Mexico, Mongolia, Portugal, South Africa and Wales. The average age of the competitors is 30.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, patron of the eight-day competition, and Nicholas Payne were tasked with choosing 44 singers to participate in live auditions in six cities around the world. Those competitors were then whittled down to the twenty finalists who will come to Cardiff by a jury which comprises of Angela Livingstone, Isabel Murphy and Jeremy Caulton.

Thanks to support from the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, which is committed to providing financial support to outstanding young singers, the value of the cash prizes this year will be higher than ever. Winners of the Main Prize and Song Prize will receive £20,000 and £10,000 respectively. Finalists for the Main Prize will be awarded £2,500 each and for the Song Prize £1,000 each. The Song Prize trophy will be re-named the Patron's Cup in recognition of this support.

Stakes are also higher than ever thanks to a new partnership with London's Wigmore Hall, which will offer each of the Song Prize finalists a recital at the world's leading venue for chamber music and song.

Artistic Director of BBC Cardiff Singer David Jackson said: *"We've had an extraordinary level of applicants for 2019 and it's fair to say that we're in for a thrilling week of singing. This year we're offering live TV broadcasting and streaming for the first time, increased prize money and career-enhancing recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and Southbank Centre."*

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa said: *"The auditions this year have been excellent, and we are in for something really special in June. I'm greatly looking forward to the Competition."*

For the title of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, the Cardiff Trophy and a cash prize of £20,000, the twenty singers will perform their own programmes of operatic and concert works at St David's Hall, Cardiff in four competitive rounds which will be accompanied by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conducted by Ewa Strusińska and by the Welsh National Opera Orchestra conducted by Ariane Matiakh. BBC National Orchestra of Wales will play for the Main Prize final.

Judging the Main Prize will be a distinguished panel including opera director David Pountney (chair), acclaimed singers José Cura, Dame Felicity Lott and Federica von Stade and Grange Park Opera founder Wasfi Kani.

Nineteen of the singers compete for the Song Prize and the Patron's Cup. Performing Lieder and art songs the singers are accompanied by internationally-renowned pianists including Llŷr Williams and

Simon Lepper. These intimate recitals take place at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, with a final at St David's Hall. It is also judged by a high-profile jury chaired by Wigmore Hall's John Gilhooly, who is joined by singers Robert Holl, Dame Felicity Lott, Frederica von Stade and pianist Malcolm Martineau.

The Audience Prize allows the public to vote for their favourite singer, voting in the hall, online and by phone. The winner is presented with £2,500 and a crystal trophy by conductor Richard Bonyng, who was the husband of the first patron of the competition, the soprano Dame Joan Sutherland after whom the prize is named. This year it is dedicated to the memory of Dmitri Hvorostovsky, the much missed and beloved baritone who became Cardiff Singer of the World in 1989.

Full details of the broadcasting on BBC Four, BBC Two Wales, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Wales and BBC Radio Cymru, S4C and online at bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger will be announced nearer the time.

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

More details and ticket information can be found at bbc.co.uk/CardiffSinger.

Ends

For further press information, tickets or images, please contact Victoria Bevan at Premier.

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PICTURES:

Attached images shows: Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, patron of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. Dame Kiri images can also be downloaded [here](#):

Images of each of the competitors can be downloaded [here](#):

Images from BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2017 can be downloaded [here](#):

Notes to editors:

The singers are as follows (in order of nationality)

[Guadalupe BARRIENTOS](#) – mezzo soprano – Argentina (32 years)

[Lauren FAGAN](#) – soprano – Australia (31 years)

[Camila TITINGER](#) – soprano – Brazil (29 years)

[Mingjie LEI](#) – tenor – China (31 years)

[Katie BRAY](#) – mezzo soprano – England (32 years)

[Adriana GONZALEZ](#) – soprano – Guatemala (27 years)

Jorge ESPINO – baritone – Mexico (27 years)

[Badral CHULUUNBAATAR](#) – baritone – Mongolia (29 years)

[Luis GOMES](#) – tenor- Portugal (32 years)

[Roman ARNDT](#) – tenor – Russia (30 years)

Karina KHERUNTS – mezzo soprano – Russia (32 years)

Yulia MENNIBAEVA – mezzo soprano – Russia (31 years)

[Owen METSILENG](#) – tenor – South Africa (31 years)

Leonardo LEE – baritone – South Korea (31 years)

[Sooyeon LEE](#) – soprano – South Korea (30 years)

[Lena BELKINA](#) – mezzo soprano – Ukraine (31 years)

Andrei KYMACH – baritone – Ukraine (31 years)

[Patrick GUETTI](#) – bass – USA (31 years)

[Richard OLLARSABA](#) – bass baritone – USA (31 years)

[Angharad LYDDON](#) – mezzo soprano – Wales (30 years)