

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

International OPERA AWARDS

UKRAINIAN OPERA COMPANIES HONOURED BY INTERNATIONAL OPERA AWARDS

- Odesa and Lviv opera theatres jointly awarded Opera Company of the year in recognition of outstanding work in extraordinary circumstances
 - Dame Janet Baker given Lifetime Achievement Award
- Samoan tenor Pene Pati wins Opera magazine's Readers' Award in public vote
 - British soprano Nardus Williams named as Rising Star



Representatives from Lviv and Odesa Opera at International Opera Awards 2022 © Javier del Real

***** Photos from the awards ceremony can be downloaded [here](#) *****

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#OperaAwards2022

Two Ukrainian opera companies were celebrated for their outstanding work in challenging circumstances at the **International Opera Awards 2022** this evening [28 Nov]. The international opera world came together at Teatro Real in Madrid for the glittering ceremony celebrating the best of the past year. Hosted by the BBC's **Petroc Trelawny**, it was the first time the Awards has ever taken place outside of the UK, and the first in-person event since 2019.

Lviv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre and **Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre** were jointly awarded the **Opera Company** award – the first time the award has ever been given to two companies – to acknowledge their courage and resilience for continuing to perform despite the dangers and depredations unleashed by the war. While the invasion forced both theatres to close initially, both companies have recently reopened and started staging world-class productions again. Representatives from both companies accepted the award in-person, to a rapturous reception and a long standing ovation from the audience at Teatro Real.

After a 30 hour journey by bus, car and air to be present at the ceremony, Oksana Taranenko, Stage Director of Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre, said: *“We are accepting this Award for every Ukrainian soul in heaven. We are in a cold dark place trying to do our jobs. We are fully aware that we have become a place of inspiration for the people... We have many staff from the company fighting on the front lines or living as refugees: recently we had no sopranos as they are mostly young mothers and had to leave. This great support from the international community will help us to stand up for our people.”*

Legendary British mezzo-soprano **Dame Janet Baker** was celebrated with the **Lifetime Achievement** award. From her operatic debut in 1956 to her retirement in 1982, her reputation as one of the greatest British singers was cemented by her acclaimed roles at Glyndebourne and English National Opera, as well as her association with Benjamin Britten who wrote the cantata *Phaedra* especially for her. Speaking in a video acceptance speech, Dame Janet Baker said: *“I look back over those working years and my mind is full of the joy it brought me. I learnt something useful and valuable from all my colleagues, and I miss every one of them so much. I feel tonight is a very special gift to me. To the member of the International Opera Awards, to Opera magazine, and to Petroc who spoke so beautifully, there is only the one familiar but heartfelt word – thank you.”*

The **Opera Magazine Readers' Award** – the only award voted for by the public – was won by Samoan tenor **Pene Pati**. As well as being a member of popular trio Sol3 Mio, Pati's star has continued to rise over the past few years and he has performed at some of the world's greatest opera houses and recently released his debut solo album on Warner Classics to critical acclaim. Accepting the award via video, Pati said: *“What an absolute surprise! Thank you to everyone who voted – what an amazing feeling to know that your singing has touched many people. When you're from little old Samoa on the other side of the globe, you never quite imagine that your voice will reach this far, so thank you truly from the bottom of my heart and I hope to sing for you in the near future.”*

British soprano **Nardus Williams** was awarded the **Rising Star** award – a former English National Opera Harewood artist and Times Breakthrough Award nominee, this accolade further establishes her growing reputation as one of the most exciting British singers of her generation.

The **Good Governance Institute Leadership Award** was given to **Nicholas Payne**, who has led Opera Europa since 2003 and previously been in charge at English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, and the **Philanthropy** award was given to **Aline Foriel-Destezet** for her continued support of music and opera.

Other winners announced on the night included French soprano **Sabine Devieille** and French baritone **Stéphane Degout**, who were named as **Female Singer** and **Male Singer** respectively, and **Daniele Rustioni** was presented with the **Conductor** award. **Michael Spyres** collected the award for **Recording (Solo Recital)** for *BariTenor*, a collection of works for both tenor and baritone range, while the award for **Recording (Complete Opera)** went to the recording of Offenbach's *Le voyage dans la Lune* on the Bru Zane label. Soprano **Susan Bullock CBE** presented the **Villa Conchi International Opera Award for Festival of the Year**, sponsored by The Grand Wines, to **Santa Fe Opera**, and the **Sustainability** award was won by **Göteborg Opera**.

The winners reflect the true international and collaborative nature of opera, with winners tonight hailing from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Samoa, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The full list of winners can be found below.

John Allison, editor of Opera magazine and Chair of the jury, said: *"I'm especially grateful that we have been able to recognize the work of two outstanding Ukrainian opera companies, who are continuing bravely to do excellent work under impossible conditions. But I'm also happy that as the Awards return live to the stage we are bringing together so much talent from around the world."*

Harry Hyman, founder of the International Opera Awards, said: *"Huge congratulations to all the winners, and to all of the nominees for providing opera lovers across the world with such joy over the past season. After three years of not being able to celebrate the International Opera Awards in person, it's a true joy to be able to come together at the spectacular Teatro Real and celebrate the best of opera across the globe. As well as celebrating the past season, it's also been an opportunity to look towards the future – with the funds raised tonight to support our Opera Awards Foundation bursaries, we can ensure that the next generation of aspiring operatic talent can achieve their goals and enthral audiences for years to come."*

The audience at the Teatro Real were treated to performances from opera stars from across the globe during the ceremony. Rising Star winner **Nardus Williams** performed "E Susanna non vien...Dove sono..." from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, **Barno Ismatullaeva** sang *Un bel dì, vedremo* from *Madama Butterfly*, and there were duos from *Lucia di Lammermoor* from **Sabina Puertolas** and **Xabier Anduaga** and *I puritani* from **Jessica Pratt** and **Francesco Demuro**. Reflecting the location of this year's Awards, popular songs from zarzuelas were performed by Xabier Anduaga and **Sabina Puertolas**. They were also joined by the **Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro Real**, conducted by **José Miguel Pérez Sierra**.

The shortlist of nominees was compiled by an impressive international jury of opera critics, administrators and performers from 20 different countries and chaired by John Allison, editor of *Opera* magazine (the Founding Media Partner of the Awards) and classical music critic of *The Daily Telegraph*. The winners of all categories, except the Readers' Award, were also decided by the jury.

The Awards, founded by philanthropist Harry Hyman in 2012, aim to raise the profile of opera as an art form, to recognise and reward success in opera and to generate funds to provide bursaries for aspiring operatic talent from around the world. Since 2012 over £400,000 has been raised by the Opera Awards Foundation, going to more than 125 bursary recipients. In the past year, just under

£52,000 has been given out in bursaries to opera artists who are emerging onto the professional international opera scene.

In 2020, the Foundation established an Artist Hardship Fund, providing emergency grants to previous bursary recipients facing financial hardship due to the pandemic. In 2021 the Fund re-opened grant applications more broadly to other young and emerging artists affected by the crisis.

The awards ceremony was streamed live on Teatro Real's [My Opera Player](#) and [OperaVision](#), where audiences can continue to catch up with the event on demand.

operaawards.org/

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Photos from the awards ceremony can be downloaded [here](#).

International Opera Awards 2022 – Winners

Conductor

Daniele Rustioni

Designer

Michael Levine

Digital Opera

Upload (Dutch National Opera)

Director

Stefan Herheim

Equal Opportunities and Impact

Foundation Studio, Cape Town Opera

Female Singer

Sabine Devieille

Villa Conchi International Opera Award for Festival of the Year

Santa Fe Opera

Good Governance Institute Leadership Award

Nicholas Payne

Lifetime Achievement

Dame Janet Baker

Male Singer

Stéphane Degout

New production

Glyndebourne: La Voix humaine/Les Mamelles de Tirésias (c. Robin Ticciati, d. Laurent Pelly)

Opera Company

Lviv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre

jointly with

Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre

Philanthropy

Aline Foriel-Destezet

Opera Magazine Readers' Award

Pene Pati

Recording (complete opera)

Offenbach's Le Voyage dans le Lune (Bru Zane)

Recording (solo recital)

Michael Spyres, BariTenor (Erato)

Rediscovered Work

Dallapiccola: Ulisse (Oper Frankfurt)

Rising Star

Nardus Williams

Sustainability

Gothenburg Opera

World Premiere

The Time of our Singing (Kris Defoort/La Monnaie De Munt)

Opera Awards Foundation

The Opera Awards Foundation was founded in 2012 by Harry Hyman. To date, the Foundation has more than 125 bursary recipients 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 anyone working towards a career in opera who needs financial support to achieve their career goals.

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

Mazars

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In the UK, Mazars has approximately 130 partners and over 2,500 employees, and is ranked one of the top 10 firms nationally.

Opera Magazine

Described by *The Daily Telegraph* as 'the bible of the industry', *Opera* magazine has been the world's

leading commentator on the lyric stage since 1950. Providing coverage of operatic events through a mixture of features, reviews (live performances, recordings, books) and analysis, plus monthly listings of events worldwide and its famous 'We hear that' section, the magazine has an unrivalled network of international correspondents, covering performances from around the globe.

<http://www.opera.co.uk>

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