

Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonynge Foundation Newsletter

Christmas Edition No. 35 - December 2023

The 32 year old soprano from Melbourne, REBECCA GULINELLO has won the 13th annual Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonynge Bel Canto Award. Rebecca sang arias from Le Cid, La bohème, Adriana Lecouvreur and Don Giovanni to take out the \$30,000 first prize, Solti Accademia Prize and Audience Prize. She joins a strong line-up of previous winners including, Alasdair Kent, Kiandra Howarth, Pene Pati, Naomi Johns, Fleuranne Brockway, John Longmuir and Bronwyn Douglass, among others. Rebecca recently made her Opera Australia debut as Micaela in Carmen and Mimi in La bohème and will travel overseas in 2024 to pursue her career. Having entered the competition over 10 years ago, where she reached the semi-final, she finally came back for a second chance at the title. In what was one of the closest finals in history, bass baritone James Young came second, soprano Felicity Tomkins third, bass baritone Alfred Fonoti-Fuimaono fourth and bass baritone Matthew Avery fifth. Unfortunately, Jeremy Kleeman had to withdraw from the competition due to ill-health.

Sydney Int. Song Prize duo, tenor MICHAEL PETRUCCELLI and pianist, KONRAD OLSZEWSKI (below) were the first prize winners in this year's Song Prize. Young Yi and Jake Cheong won second prizes with Matthew Avery and Joseph Koo third.

The Independent Theatre once again played host to this year's competition with patrons thoroughly enjoying the afternoon of high-class music making by these fine young artists. We wish them all great success in their endeavours.



Welcome to the thirty-fifth edition of Bel Canto.

The past few months have been rather exciting in many ways. Firstly, an update on the Michael Stennett designs. The sale of these designs raised over \$20,000 for the Foundation which went toward this year's \$30,000 first prize in the Bel Canto Award. Our gratitude goes to Michael and his estate for this generous gift, and to everyone who purchased one of the designs. In addition to these designs, was the sale of a number of framed and signed portraits of Dame Joan from The Met in New York, as well as, copies of the *Designs for a Prima Donna* book. All had been donated to the Foundation, raising a further \$4,000.

2023 Bel Canto Award and Sydney Int. Song Prize

The 13th JSRB Bel Canto Award and 5th Sydney International Song Prize were another success thanks to Richard Bonynge, Marilyn Richardson, Bernadette Cullen, Bradley Gilchrist, Dr Robert Mitchell, our volunteers, AV team and wonderful audience.



Friends of the Foundation Lunch

The Friends of the Foundation lunch was held for the first time at the Union, University and Schools Club in Sydney. Seventy patrons enjoyed a three course lunch with our Bel Canto Award winner, Rebecca Gulinello and Glenn Amer entertaining us all on the day. Left: Rebecca Gulinello with Richard Bonynge at the Friends Lunch

A Celebration of the presentation of the Richard Bonynge and Joan Sutherland Collection to the National Library of Australia

In December, the National Library will host the opening of the Bonynge/Sutherland collection at the National Library in Canberra, in the presence of His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC, the Governor-General and Richard Bonynge.

Dame Joan Sutherland 100th Anniversary Project

At the Friends lunch, I announced an idea for a launch of a new project for 2026, the 100th Anniversary project. To celebrate Dame Joan's 100th birthday, the Foundation is looking at having a life-size statue of Dame Joan made from bronze to be placed somewhere around the Sydney Opera House. This being a World Heritage listed building may present a few obstacles, but we will certainly endeavour to find the perfect location. With statues of many of the great opera singers throughout the world, it seems remiss that Australia doesn't have a single statue of Dame Joan.



The project will require a team effort for it to come to fruition. Permission needs to be obtained for an appropriate site from council and governments. A good sculptor needs to be commissioned and funding will need to be raised. The Foundation would naturally assist with this, but additional funds would have to be obtained from the public sector. What was incredibly encouraging at this year's lunch, was the number of Patrons who were genuinely enthusiastic about the project. A few offered to host fund-raising events in NSW and Victoria, with suggestions for possible sculptors. Our first hurdle is obtaining permission and a site. If you can assist with this process, do let me know. I have a few helpers already, but the more the merrier.

Joan Sutherland DECCA Project

Starting in March 2024, DECCA will be releasing the first of three box sets of everything recorded by Joan Sutherland. Each limited edition set will comprise of approximately 55cds. Definitely one for all you collectors out there - watch this space.

On page 4, you will see photos from our recent events, but for now, I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas, Season's Greetings, a Happy New Year and a marvellous 2024. With sincere thanks,

Fiona Janes



News from our Alumni taking the world by storm!

Fresh from singing Woglinde for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's *Das Rheingold* with Simone Young, **Samantha Clarke** has a busy year ahead with Violetta in *La traviata* and *Theodora* in concert for Opera Australia, Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan tutte* in Kyoto Japan, Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Garsington Opera in the UK, Mahler 8 for WASO and Cleopatra back in Sydney with Pinchgut Opera in November. All three Rhinemaidens (right) are JSRB alumni. Well done ladies, we're all so proud of you.

Speaking of Ring Cycles, **Anna-Louise Cole** finally gets to sing Sieglinde and Brünnhilde in OA's Brisbane Ring Cycle this month. **Daniel Sumegi** is Wotan, **Dominica Matthews** is Flosshilde and Schwertleite, **Warwick Fyfe** is Alberich, **Olivia Cranwell** is Sieglinde and the 3rd Norn - all JSRB alumni.

Valda Wilson returns to Sydney to perform Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* for Pinchgut Opera in May/June 2024. She recently debuted as Suor Angelica in Saarbrücken.

James Young has won the German-Australian Opera Grant in Victoria. This gives him a contract in Wiesbaden in 2024 where he will join last year's Bel Canto Award winner **Fleuranne Brockway** who will sing Wellgunde, Rossweise and Zweite Dame. She recently made her debut in Bonn as Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*.

Jeremy Boulton will sing Fiorello in *Il barbieri di Siviglia* and do a masterclass with Brigitte Fassbaender for the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in Munich in 2024 plus perform in their production of *Les Misérables*.

2023 ECP finalist and 3rd prize BCA winner this year, **Felicity Tomkins** from New Zealand, is a name to watch. She's just won the Lockwood Aria in New Zealand and is on the move to London where she'll sing for the Tait Memorial Trust.

John Longmuir will sing Arbace in *Idomeneo* for Opera Australia and Rodolfo on their National Tour, and appear in *Candide* for the State Opera of South Australia.

Marlena Devoe is singing Anna Bolena in Hong Kong this month for Musica Viva.

Kiandra Howarth is singing Desdemona in Hannover right now and will debut as Regan in *King* Lear as well. She sings Freia in *Das Rheingold* in Zurich, Countess in Hannover and Magda in *La Rondine* for Victorian Opera in August. Don't miss her return to our shores along with **Lauren Fagan** as Suor Angelica and **Helen Sherman** as Dorabella in *Cosi fan tutte*, both for Opera Australia.

Thank you to this year's donor Angels

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We couldn't do it without YOU!





Pene Pati as Nemorino in *L'elisir d'Amore* in San Francisco this month. Alfredo in *La traviata* follows at the Deutsche Opera Berlin, then a concert in Paris and *Beatrice di Tenda*, a concert in Bordeaux, *Damnation of Faust* in Birmingham, a recital in Quebec, *Manon* in Hamburg, *Rigoletto* at the Berlin Staatsoper, plus a few more concerts, then Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in Birmingham, and that's just to June 2024!







President, Doug Cremer (79), passed away. Doug championed young singers for many years as President of the Society and helped initiate the Foundation. Thank you Doug for all your service to this organisation.









POSTAL ADDRESS

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