



SOLTI TE KANAWA
ACCADEMIA DI BEL CANTO

Newsletter



With less than three months before the launch of our seventh season, I am delighted to introduce our second biannual newsletter with the announcement of our new collaboration with The Rolex Institute.

The three-year agreement, which includes student scholarships, is borne out of the two organisations' shared values and dedication to the arts, as well as their belief in the importance of mentorship. A recognised figure in the world of philanthropy, Rolex has been involved for decades in supporting the arts and in 2002 launched its Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, a program similarly aimed at assisting rising talent. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration for the years to come.

I'm equally excited to present our seventh season, which promises to be another great success. Twelve outstanding singers have been selected to take part in our summer programme. Further into this newsletter you'll find short bios introducing this year's roster of participants.

Once again this summer, masterclasses, concerts and various courses will make up the core of our

offerings headed by our distinguished roster of professors which will include Richard Bonyngue, Jonathan Papp, Corradina Caporello, Paolo Specca, Terence Dennis, Emanuela Ferrari, and of course our beloved Dame Kiri. We're also very pleased to welcome a new professor this summer, the esteemed young stage director and drama coach Alexander Zeldin whose experience and know how will undoubtedly be a great addition to our course.

This is an exciting time for the Accademia. Between our upcoming summer course and our various projects and concerts throughout the year we're making definite headway towards becoming one of the premiere centres for young vocalists. As ever, we are grateful for the support and backing of our sponsors and friends without whom all this great progress would not be possible.

As part of our summer activities and following last season's great success, we'll be welcoming the second edition of the **Solti Peretti Repetiteurs** masterclasses from 29th August to 5th September. We are most grateful to Elsa Peretti and the Peretti foundation for supporting this project.

I hope you'll enjoy reading this newsletter and I especially hope that it will inspire you to come and join us in Tuscany this summer. See you in Castiglione!

Candice Wood

Candice Wood

Executive Director of the Solti Te Kanawa Accademia

Support

"The Rolex Institute encourages visionary individuals who make a meaningful contribution to the world in which we live through their exceptional talent, quality and achievements. The Institute honours and supports significant contributions to science, culture, the arts and education. It includes all of Rolex's philanthropic programmes, patronage, specialised activities and educational initiatives.

This is an exciting partnership, which will allow the Accademia to further its

ambitions and honor Sir Georg's dream of assisting promising young talent to reach their full potential. The natural synergies between our two organisations and our shared commitment to excellence promise a mutually beneficial collaboration."



ROLEX INSTITUTE



News



IN OCTOBER 2009 four participants from previous summer programmes were invited to join the Accademia on a special trip to Hong Kong to take part in a series of masterclasses conducted by Dame Kiri and the Accademia's Artistic Director,

Jonathan Papp. Hosted by the **Hong Kong Academy of performing Arts** and with the participation of several of its best students – including soprano Narine Ojakhyan (2008) and baritones Laurence Meikle (2009) and Seung-Wook Seong (2005), the event marked the beginning of the Accademia's presence in the Far East. As part of its ambitions to reach the world's most promising vocalists, the Accademia is exploring the possibility

of exporting the skills of its faculty and guest teachers to promising singers in Asia. Of the many talented vocalists we met during our visit, tenor **Chen Chen** has since been accepted to participate in this summer's programme in Tuscany. Chen is also one of the first singers to benefit from our collaboration with The Rolex Institute.

THREE PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS of the Accademia's summer programme, Matilda Paulsson, Lauryna Bendziunaite and Roberto Gomez, were featured alongside Dame Kiri and Diva Opera on **March 25th, 2010** for a special concert in honour of the Prince of Wales' Youth and Business charity. The evening was generously funded by Accademia sponsors Mr. and Mrs. John Whittaker. Matilda and Lauryna joined Dame Kiri in a very warmly applauded performance of the famed trio from Strauss' "Der Rosenkavalier".

Introducing the 2010 Accademia Participants

Armenian-Australian soprano **Natalie Zabel Aroyan** graduated with a double-degree in Business and I.T. in Sydney, before changing her path to study opera. Since then she has been awarded numerous prizes including First Place at the 2008 Herald Sun Aria Competition, a competition previously won by Dame Joan Sutherland and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and of Mannes College in New York, Natalie has already performed several important operatic roles including Amelia in Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera" and Fiordiligi in Mozart's "Cosi Fan Tutte".

Soprano **Runette Botha** is a first year postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she is currently studying towards an MA in Opera with Lillian Watson and Dominic Wheeler. A former graduate of the University of Cape Town, South Africa (Performer's Diploma in Opera), Runette counts several roles in her repertoire including Miss Wordsworth in Britten's "Albert Herring", Donna Anna in Mozart's "Don Giovanni", Drusilla in Monteverdi's "L'Incoronazione di Poppea" and Yvette in Puccini's "La Rondine".

British soprano **Kezia Bienek** is in her fifth year at the Guildhall School in London where she studies under the tutelage of Professor Laura Sarti. She has sung for musicians such as Sir Colin Davies and Sarah Walker and has been featured as soloist with the LSO St. Luke's in such prestigious venues as the Wigmore and Barbican concert halls in London, England. This season Kezia can be heard singing Rossini's "La petite messe solennelle". She will also be covering Lady Billows in Britten's "Albert Herring" for the Guildhall's prestigious opera course.

New Zealand soprano **Joanna Foote** has already sung numerous operatic roles including those of Susanna in Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro", Nannetta in Verdi's "Falstaff" and Polly in Weill's "Threepenny Opera". A graduate of UCLA in the US and the University of Auckland in Australia Joanna was a 2009 finalist in the McDonald's Aria Competition at the Sydney Opera House and in the same year won The Otago Daily Times Aria Competition in New Zealand. Joanna can be heard this month as Najade in Seattle Opera's Young Artist Production of Strauss' "Ariadne auf Naxos".

Mezzo-soprano Egle Sidlauskaitė is a graduate of the **Kaunas Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre** where she studied under the tutelage of Maestro Ladiga. She went on to attend the Conservatory of Milan and has since won several prizes including First Place at the "Art of the XXI Century" competition in Ukraine (2007) and Third Prize at the "In Stemme" competition in Luxemburg (2009). Egle regularly participates in masterclasses and to date has sung for Maestri Aragall, Arena, Mauro and Finazzi, amongst others.

Mezzo-soprano **Qian Fu** is currently enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she is completing a Master of Arts under the tutelage of Glenville Hargreaves and Iain Ledingham. A graduate of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Qian is the winner of the Chinese division of the "Neue Stimmen" 2007 International Vocal Competition. A seasoned recitalist Qian performed at the Central Music Hall in Beijing, China, in 2008, amongst other venues.

ON 8th DECEMBER 2010 at London's Royal Albert Hall, the Accademia will take part in a special gala evening featuring Dame Kiri and tenor José Carreras in an effort to help raise funds for his International Leukaemia Foundation. Mr. Carreras launched the foundation in 1988 shortly after having

recovered from the illness himself. To date his tireless efforts have gathered important financial support from companies and individuals worldwide.



WE ARE DELIGHTED to announce the addition of Stage Director **Alexander Zeldin** to our esteemed roster of teaching staff. Mr. Zeldin, who is perhaps best known as the youngest director to make his debut at the Mariinsky Theatre St Petersburg with his Russian Premiere production of Thomas Adès' "Powder Her Face," trained in Poland, France and the UK, including a stint at Oxford University. Since then, he has worked in close partnership with Valery Gergiev and in 2008-2009 was entrusted with the very impressive task of staging a George Tsypin designed Wagner Ring cycle. His re-imagining of the production played in St Petersburg and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and is now to go on a world tour.

VISIT the Accademia's new website by logging on to www.soltitekanawaaccademia.org

Chinese tenor **Chen Chen** started his vocal studies at the age of sixteen. He is a graduate of the Central Conservatory of Music in China and is currently enrolled at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts where he has been granted a full scholarship to study with Brian Montgomery and Katusha Tsui-Fraser. Chen's operatic repertoire includes such roles as Don Jose from Bizet's "Carmen" and Rinuccio from Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi". In 2009, Chen made his debut at China's National Centre for the Performing Arts with Opera Hong Kong.

Tenor **Xu Lei** began his musical studies as a pianist before changing his path at nineteen to study voice. A graduate of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, he is currently enrolled at Birmingham Conservatoire where he is studying under the tutelage of Julian Pike. Xu is very active on the concert scene and has participated in many concerts, festivals, and opera scenes, including a 2008 recital at Beijing's Central music Hall.

South Korean tenor **Jungsoo Yun** began singing at the age of seventeen and in 2007 graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. He then went on to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and in September 2009 was awarded the Director's Scholarship to study at the International Academy of Voice, Cardiff University under Dennis O'Neill. Amongst his numerous recent performances he counts a December 2009 appearance as guest singer for Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's Christmas Concert at Cadogan Hall in London as one of this season's highlights.

Baritone **Iurii Samoilov** hails from Vitebsk, Belorussia. At the age of sixteen he entered the National Music Academy of Ukraine before going on to study at the Dutch National Opera Academy in Amsterdam in 2009. A soloist of the Kiev Music Academy's Opera Studio Iurii is also a visiting member of the Opera Studio Nederland in Amsterdam.

Bartione **Julien Debreuil** studied at the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music. Very active on the concert stage he has recently performed in such esteemed venues as the Royal Festival Hall, Barbican. He has sung leading roles for Opéra Municipale, Il Teatro Regio and Buxton Festival Opera and given recitals for the Oxford Lieder Festival, Chelsea Schubert Festival and Wigmore Hall. Future engagements include appearances with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and London Handel Players.

A graduate of the Music Academy in Łódź and of Indiana University in the United States, bass-baritone **Mirosław Witkowski** made his operatic debut at the Grand Theatre in Łódź singing Don Basillio in Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Sevilla" and Ariodante in Handel's "Xerxes". He is a recipient of several prizes and this month will take part in the Finals of the Seoul International Music Competition in South Korea. Mirosław has also completed two seasons as a Resident Young Artist with the Cincinnati Opera Theatre, and in 2009 was a Studio Artist with the Sarasota Opera in Florida.

Alumni News

We are always very happy to hear from former participants. It is with great pleasure that we share the following news from three of our recent alumni:



American Baritone **Nathan Herfindahl** (Accademia 2008) has completed his tenure as a Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist with Washington National Opera. Recently praised by Tim Smith of "Opera News" as "...especially compelling for his

burnished vocalism" (for his portrayals of Harlequin in Strauss' "Ariadne auf Naxos" and Ping in Verdi's "Turandot") Nathan tells us has become a member of the Metropolitan Opera roster and was involved in the premiere production of Shostakovich's "The Nose". His first child *Bella*, is due in a few weeks, and we wish him and his wife all the best!



Soprano **Eleonora Vindau** (Accademia 2008) informs us that she has recently graduated with honors from the Kiev National Academy. Upcoming performances include the role of Lauretta in Prokofiev's "The Betrothal in a Monastery" in

Toulouse and at the Opera Comique de Paris. Eleonora made her debut at the renowned Mariinsky Theatre as Papagena in Mozart's "The Magic Flute" and has since toured extensively with the company performing under the baton of such esteemed conductors as Valery Gergiev. This summer Eleonora will participate in the "Young Singers Project" at the Salzburg Festival in Austria.



Baritone **Viktor Rud** (Accademia 2005) recently spent two years at the International Opera Studio in Berlin, Germany where during the 2008-09 season he sang the role of a "Neapolitan Mama" in Donizetti's "Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali."

Viktor jokes: "It's the only transvestite role for a baritone in the repertoire... So I enjoyed it very much!" Currently in Hamburg singing roles such as the Count in Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" and Schaunard in Puccini's "La Boheme" Viktor spent most of last summer working with Maestro Barenboim, performing in Prokofiev's "Il Giocatore" at Milan's La Scala as well as in Beethoven's "Fidelio" in Salzburg and the BBC Proms in London.

Upcoming Dates

27th June – 18th July 2010
SUMMER COURSE IN CASTIGLIONE DELLA PESCAIA, ITALY

27th June-18th July
Masterclasses with Jonathan Papp

27th June-18th July
Masterclasses with Terence Dennis

27th June-9th July
Masterclasses with Corradina Caporello

30th June – 4th July
Masterclasses with Richard Bonyng

4th July – 18th July
Masterclasses with Paolo Specca

5th July – 9th July
Masterclasses with Alexander Zeldin

9th July – 18th July
Masterclasses with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa

10th July – 15th July
Masterclasses with Pepi Ferrari

16th July
Final public concert in Piazza Solti
Castiglione della Pescaia

17th July
Hotel l'Andana. Gala concert hosted by
Vittorio Moretti and Alain Ducasse with
Dame Kiri and the students of the 2010
STKA

29th August – 5th September
Solti Peretti Repetiteur
masterclasses.



HOW YOU CAN HELP THE ACCADEMIA

The Accademia has been a true entrepreneurial success story, pulling together resources to produce extraordinary results. It is dependent upon charitable contributions for its survival, without which it cannot exist.

As the Accademia goes from strength to strength our hope is to provide financial security necessary to preserve the Solti Te Kanawa legacy and the Bel Canto tradition.

Should you wish to know more about opportunities to support the Accademia, please contact:

Candice Wood *Executive Director of the Accademia*
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