



Valerie Barber PR

Wigmore Hall / Kohn Foundation International Song Competition 4 – 8 September 2011

Wigmore Hall, in association with the Kohn Foundation, launches its Seventh International Song Competition, which is to take place at Wigmore Hall from 4 - 8 September 2011.

The Competition recognises the song tradition as a whole. It requires contestants to sing in German and French, as well as English, during preliminary stages, and in any chosen language in the final. Unlike other similar competitions, the unique nature of the Wigmore Hall / Kohn Foundation Competition is to honour the best song recitalist, rather than opera performer. Thus the competition is embedded in Wigmore Hall's longstanding reputation as a centre of excellence for song. To celebrate the greatest of Lieder composers Schubert, there will be a special focus on his music in this year's Competition, as participants will be asked to perform at least one Schubert song in each preliminary stage. Wigmore Hall Director, John Gilhooly, said, "As a bastion of the song recital, Wigmore Hall is very much looking forward to hosting this exciting week of music-making, which is an excellent way to help prepare young singers for their future recital careers".

As an introduction to the International Song Competition, Wigmore Hall Learning and pianist Iain Burnside have produced an online video resource, reflecting the art song in all its diversity, with a wide range of distinguished performers. Combining the expertise of Wigmore Hall regulars Mark Padmore, Christopher Maltman and Elizabeth Watts and recent 1st Prize Winner Marcus Farnsworth, the resource can be used by young performers and audience alike. Topics range from an exploration of French, German and English repertoire to advice on preparation and programming for competitions. The resource will be available from the start of this year's Song Competition on: www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/theartofsong.

In the 14 years since the first Wigmore Hall/Kohn Foundation International Song Competition, this biennial event has grown in status and remit and has reached a record number of 170 applications (compared to 142 in 2009) from 33 different countries. The jury has selected 30 singers and pianists, who will be heard in the preliminary stage in September. The entrants' nationalities include the UK, USA, Canada, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Croatia, Poland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Indonesia, Australia and Sri Lanka.

The preliminary rounds will take place on Sunday 4th and Monday 5th September. The semi final stage takes place on Tuesday 6th September and the final stage and prize giving on Thursday 8th September. The distinguished jury this year consists of Wigmore Hall Director John Gilhooly as Chairman, Bernarda Fink, Jeremy Geffen, Soile Isokoski, Graham Johnson, Malcolm Martineau, Thomas Quasthoff, Richard Stokes, Sarah Walker, William Lyne, and Sir Ralph Kohn.

It has just been announced that Sir Ralph Kohn has been awarded the 'Medal of Honour of the City of Leipzig' for his substantial contributions in promoting J. S. Bach and his support of the Bach Festival in Leipzig. Sir Ralph will be presented with the honour by the Lord Mayor in Leipzig's Old Town Hall on 15th June, during this year's Bach Festival.

<http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/songcompetition>

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