

≡ 2026 INTERNATIONAL ≡  
OPERA AWARDS

## FINALISTS REVEALED FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERA AWARDS 2026



*Petroc Trelawny presents International Opera Awards 2025 © G.Antonoglou*

- **Winners to be announced in glittering ceremony on Saturday 21 November at MusikTheater an der Wien, hosted by Petroc Trelawny**
- **Opera lovers worldwide can enjoy the ceremony, featuring live performances from stars of the opera world, via free livestream on OperaVision**
- **Voting for Readers' Award – the only category decided by the public – now open**

**#OperaAwards2026**

The **International Opera Awards** today [23 September] announce the finalists for the 2026 Awards. Founded by philanthropist Harry Hyman in 2012, the Awards are one of the most prestigious accolades in opera and honour exceptional operatic talent from

across the globe. Funds from the event support the Opera Awards Foundation, which provides bursaries for emerging talent in opera worldwide.

The Award categories cover the entire breadth of the artform, from singers, conductors and opera companies to designers, directors, premieres, recordings, sustainability and more. This year's shortlist includes nominees from 24 countries, once again demonstrating the truly international reach of the Awards.

Nominees for the prestigious Opera Company Award this year include **Atlanta Opera, Croatian National Opera, Zagreb, English National Opera, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Opéra de Lyon** and **Teatro Real, Madrid**. British soprano **Louise Alder** – winner of the Young Singer Award at the 2017 International Opera Awards – is nominated in the Female Singer category, joined by **Sara Blanch, Vera-Lotte Boecker, Ambur Braid, Saioa Hernández** and **Golda Schultz**. Another 2017 Award winner, American tenor **Lawrence Brownlee**, joins the list of finalists in the Male Singer category along with **SeokJong Baek, Clay Hilley, John Osborn, Morris Robinson** and **Georg Zeppenfeld**.

Voting is also open for the **Readers' Award – Opera Magazine with Opera News**, the only International Opera Award decided by public vote. This year's finalists include British-Russian mezzo-soprano **Aigul Akhmetshina**, British tenor **Allan Clayton**, Norwegian soprano **Lise Davidsen**, Italian soprano **Rosa Feola**, American soprano **Lisette Oropesa**, Austrian tenor **Andreas Schager**, Chilean-American tenor **Jonathan Tetelman** and German baritone **Michael Volle**. Voting is open until Wednesday 21 October exclusively on the [International Opera Awards website](#).

The finalists were curated by an esteemed international jury of opera critics, administrators and performers, chaired by **John Allison**, editor of *Opera Magazine with Opera News*, the founding media partner of the Awards. The full shortlist can be found below.

Winners will be revealed on Saturday 21 November at a glittering ceremony taking place for the first time at **MusikTheater an der Wien** in Vienna. The ceremony will once again be hosted by the BBC's **Petroc Trelawny** and features live performances from international opera stars including soprano **Anastasia Bartoli**, mezzo-soprano **Carol Garcia** and tenor **Dave Monaco**, who is also nominated for this year's Rising Star Award. They are joined by the **ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Corrado Rovaris** and the **Arnold Schoenberg Choir**, directed by **Erwin Ortner**. Audiences around the world will be able to enjoy every note via [OperaVision](#), where the ceremony will be livestreamed for free.

Special awards for **Leadership, Philanthropy** and **Lifetime Achievement** will also be announced at the awards ceremony.

The trophies for the International Opera Awards 2026 embody a unique piece of Viennese theatre history: they have been crafted in the Theater an der Wien's in-house workshop using wood from the theatre's original stage floor. These boards have been graced by some of the most distinguished figures on the international opera scene, including Cecilia Bartoli, Diana Damrau, Stéphane Degout, Plácido Domingo, Edita Gruberová, Camilla Nylund, John Osborn, Marlis Petersen, Erwin Schrott, Christine Schäfer, Bo Skovhus, Michael Spyres, Kurt Streit, and Anne Sofie von Otter. Each trophy is a one-of-a-kind object, combining master craftsmanship with the theatre's rich history and preserving the memory of countless extraordinary moments on stage.

**Harry Hyman, Founder of the International Opera Awards, said:** *"It's been another wonderful year for opera across the globe and I'm delighted to see this reflected in the shortlists for the 2026 International Opera Awards. My congratulations to all those nominated, and I look forward to celebrating with you in Vienna in November."*

**John Allison, Chair of the Jury and Editor of Opera Magazine with Opera News, said:** *"This year's shortlist offers a vivid snapshot of the vitality and breadth of achievement in opera today. From exceptional singers and conductors to visionary productions, recordings, companies and new work, it shows an art form that continues to prove itself truly international and constantly evolving. It is a pleasure to see that reflected in the jury's choices, and I warmly congratulate all the finalists."*

More information on the Awards can be found on the [International Opera Awards website](#).

**-ENDS-**

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### **Notes to Editors**

Please find images from the International Opera Awards 2025 ceremony [here](#).

### **International Opera Awards 2026 – Shortlist**

#### **CONDUCTOR**

Riccardo Chailly

Marie Jacquot

Václav Luks

Joana Mallwitz

Maxime Pascal

Nathalie Stutzmann

**DESIGNER**

Jon Bausor  
Anisha Fields  
Marg Horwell  
Ines Nadler  
Francis O'Connor  
Raimund Orfeo Voigt

**DIRECTOR**

Vasily Barkhatov  
Romeo Castellucci  
Lotte de Beer  
Netia Jones  
Tobias Kratzer  
Lydia Steier

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Cincinnati Opera – Black Opera Project  
Fundación Ibáñez Atkinson – Young Artist Programme  
Second Movement – Rough for Opera  
Opera North – Melodic Memories  
Staatsoper Stuttgart – Station Paradiso  
Teatro Real – Agrupación Musical Inclusiva

**FEMALE SINGER**

Louise Alder  
Sara Blanch  
Vera-Lotte Boecker  
Ambur Braid  
Saioa Hernández  
Golda Schultz

**FESTIVAL**

Bregenz Festival  
Garsington Opera  
Monteverdi Festival Cremona  
Prototype Festival  
Sofia Opera Wagner Festival  
Teatro Nuovo

**MALE SINGER**

SeokJong Baek  
Lawrence Brownlee  
Clay Hilley  
John Osborn  
Morris Robinson  
Georg Zeppenfeld

**MUSICAL THEATRE**

*La Cage aux Folles* (Théâtre du Châtelet)  
*Killing Carmen* (Volkoper Wien)  
*The Sound of Music* (Opera North)  
*El barberillo de Lavapiés* (Theater Basel)  
*Jesus Christ Superstar* (Komische Oper Berlin)  
*The Light in the Piazza* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis)

**NEW PRODUCTION**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Teatro Real/The Royal Ballet and Opera/Maggio Musicale Fiorentino/Deborah Warner)  
*Bluthochzeit* (Oper Frankfurt/Alex Ollé)  
*Dead Man Walking* (English National Opera/Annilese Miskimmon)  
*Die Fledermaus* (MusikTheater an der Wien/Stefan Herheim)  
*Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence/Barrie Kosky)  
*Prince Igor* (Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz/Roland Schwab)  
*Rienzi* (Bayreuther Festspiele/Alexandra Szemerédy and Magdolna Párditka)  
*Tristan und Isolde* (Metropolitan Opera/Yuval Sharon)

**OPERA COMPANY**

Atlanta Opera  
Croatian National Opera, Zagreb  
English National Opera  
Hamburgische Staatsoper  
Opéra de Lyon  
Teatro Real, Madrid

**READERS' AWARD**

Aigul Akhmetshina  
Allan Clayton  
Lise Davidsen

Rosa Feola  
Lisette Oropesa  
Andreas Schager  
Jonathan Tetelman  
Michael Volle

### **RECORDING (COMPLETE OPERA)**

Barber: *Vanessa* (National Symphony Orchestra, CD)  
De Hartmann: *Esther* (Pentatone, CD)  
Dennehy: *The First Child* (Signum, CD)  
Giordano: *Marina* (Decca, CD)  
Handel: *Giulio Cesare* (Naxos, DVD)  
Smetana: *The Two Widows* (Naxos, CD)  
Traetta: *Ifigenia in Tauride* (Aparté, CD)  
Weill: *Love Life* (Capriccio, CD)

### **RECORDING (RECITAL)**

Katie Bray: *In Search of Youkali* (Chandos)  
Malin Byström: *German Opera Scenes and Arias* (BIS)  
Véronique Gens: *Les Divas d'Offenbach* (Alpha Classics)  
Erin Morley and Lawrence Brownlee: *Golden Age* (Pentatone)  
Jakub Józef Orliński: *If music ...* (Erato/Warner Classics)  
Sondra Radvanovsky: *Puccini Heroines* (Pentatone)

### **REDISCOVERED WORK**

Bembo: *Ercole amante* (Opéra de Paris)  
Cavalli: *Pompeo Magno* (Bayreuth Baroque Opera Festival)  
Cesti: *Il pomo d'oro* (Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik)  
De Grandval: *Mazeppa* (Oper Dortmund)  
Noskowski: *Wyroki* (Teatr Wielki, Poznań)  
Ostrčil: *Legenda z Erinu* (National Theatre, Prague)  
Villa-Lobos: *Yerma* (Ópera de Tenerife)  
Weingartner: *Kain und Abel* (Staatstheater Darmstadt)

### **RISING STAR**

Keren Kagarlitsky (conductor)  
Madison Leonard (soprano)  
Giorgi Manoshvili (bass)  
Dave Monaco (tenor)  
Patricia Nolz (mezzo-soprano)

Lauranne Oliva (soprano)  
Lorenzo Passerini (conductor)  
Sahy Ratia (tenor)  
Ian Rucker (baritone)  
Chelsea Zurflüh (soprano)

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Collectif 17h25 – MOD 200  
Glyndebourne – Wildlife Corridor  
La Monnaie – Green Opera  
Longborough Festival Opera  
Project Butterfly – Modena/Helsinki/Gdańsk  
Santa Fe Opera

## **WORLD PREMIERE**

Bell/Steier: *Medusa* (La Monnaie/De Munt)  
Coll/Rigola: *Enemigo del pueblo* (Palau de les Arts/Teatro Real)  
Dean/Betts: *Of One Blood* (Bayerische Staatsoper)  
Mazzoli/Vavrek: *The Galloping Cure* (Scottish Opera/Opera Ventures Productions/Edinburgh International Festival)  
Mernier/Fort: *Bartleby* (Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège)  
Palmer/Purcell: *The Drover's Wife* (Opera Australia/Queensland Performing Arts Centre/Oombarra Productions)  
Ruo/Hwang: *The Monkey King* (San Francisco Opera)  
Sciarrino/Turroni: *L'Agamennone* (Bühnen Bern)

## **About the Opera Awards Foundation**

The Opera Awards Foundation was founded in 2012 by Harry Hyman. To date, the Foundation has helped more than 200 bursary recipients 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/>

## **About MusikTheater an der Wien**

The Theater an der Wien is one of Vienna's most beautiful and historically significant theatres. Built in 1801 in the spirit of Mozart by his librettist Emanuel Schikaneder, it has seen many historic world premieres, including Beethoven's only opera *Fidelio*. To coincide with the celebrations marking Mozart's 250th birthday, the Theater an der Wien was reopened in 2006 as "the new opera house" of the City of Vienna. As part of

Vereinigte Bühnen Wien, a company of the Wien Holding group, the stagione opera house has been setting new artistic standards ever since as it delves deep into over 400 years of musical life in Europe, from the early Baroque to the present day. The internationally acclaimed opera director Stefan Herheim took on overall responsibility for opera productions at the MusikTheater an der Wien in 2022.