



MEDIA RELEASE

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Opera Awards congratulates tenor Jonathan Abernethy

| 2014 OPERA AWARDS Recipient

Jonathan Abernethy was the recipient of the following awards, scholarships, prizes and opportunities presented within the 2014 Opera Awards:

- YMF Australia Award
- Armstrong-Martin Scholarship
- Entry to the Britten-Pears Young Artist Program

Roland Gridiger, CEO of Music & Opera Singers Trust Ltd, today announced that the 2014 Opera Awards winner is New Zealand tenor Jonathan Abernethy. Jonathan was selected by an eminent judging panel that included Dr Di Bresciani, Conal Coad, Rachelle Durkin and Gregory Hocking (Chair).

Jonathan receives the YMF Australia (Youth Music Foundation of Australia) Award of \$30,000, the Armstrong-Martin Scholarship valued at \$4,500 (presented by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust) and the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme – which gives artists an opportunity to participate in a high calibre international Masterclass course or opera production led by eminent musicians in the UK.

Jonathan has been invited to perform at the Australian Singing Competition Finals Concert that will be held at the Concourse, Chatswood on Saturday 3 October 2015.

The Opera Awards assist opera singers who are already fully-fledged professionals but need financial support for further study in Australia and overseas. Language tuition, vocal coaching, preparation with a specialist for a particular role and the opportunity to see opera performed in other parts of the world are all valuable aids to furthering individual careers.



Jonathan Abernethy tenor
| 2014 OPERA AWARDS (continued/2)

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Jonathan Abernethy began his career in arresting fashion as a boy soprano. In 2002 he joined New Zealand diva Dame Malvina Major as a soloist in Leonard Bernstein's *Jewish Psalms*. In the same year he was again a soloist with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in the New Zealand Arts Festival Stadium Spectacular in Wellington.

As a young tenor, Jonathan is capitalising on that early success. Following a 2012 recital in Wellington, the city's Capital Times drew attention to 'a sweet-sounding natural lyrical tenor voice with good top notes and a natural personality that is refreshing, all assets that he uses with intelligence and skill'. Two years earlier, as Alfredo in a Wellington production of *Die Fledermaus*, *Middle C Classical Music Reviews* praised his gift for using 'what sounded like a lovely lyric tenor voice to mellifluous effect'. In July 2013, his appearance as Don Ottavio in the Opera Australia/Oz Opera touring production of *Don Giovanni* was hailed as 'a standout performance'.

Jonathan was the winner of the Joan F Stevens and Opera Australia Awards at the New Zealand Singing School in Napier in 2011. Late in 2012 he was invited to join the prestigious Opera Australia Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artist Programme in Sydney. While with Opera Australia, he has sung the parts of Don Ottavio in Oz Opera's *Don Giovanni*, Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*, Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and appeared as a soloist at the Sydney Opera House in Opera Australia's *Great Opera Hits*. In 2014, his performances include the roles of Tamino in *The Magic Flute* and Fenton in *Falstaff*, and covering the roles of Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* all for Opera Australia. In 2015, Jonathan's performances for Opera Australia will include Tamino in *The Magic Flute* and Lerma in *Don Carlos*.



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In New Zealand, Jonathan has sung the tenor roles in major oratorios Haydn's Creation and the Petite Messe Solennelle of Rossini. Prior to his move to Sydney with Opera Australia, he studied with Isabel Cunningham and Professor Terence Dennis from the renowned vocal studies department of Otago University's School of Music. He has a degree in E-Commerce and information Systems from Victoria University in Wellington.

Jonathan continues to enjoy the support and mentoring of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.

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