

Olga Bezsmertna From Ukraine Wins the 2011 NEUE STIMMEN Competition

14th international singing competition comes to a close

The winners of the 2011 NEUE STIMMEN international singing competition have been announced:

First prize (€15,000): Olga Bezsmertna, Ukraine, lyric soprano, *1983

Second prize (€10,000): Jongmin Park, South of Korea, bass, *1986

Third prize (€8,000): Jinxu Xiahou, China, tenor, *1990

Fourth prize (€4,000): Cristina-Antoaneta Pasaroiu, Rumania, soprano, *1986

Fifth prize (€4,000): Nadezhda Karyazina, Russia, mezzo-soprano, *1986

Sixth prize (€4,000): Maria Celeng, Slovakia, lyric soprano, *1988

People's choice award (€500 voucher for sheet music from the Bärenreiter publishing house): Jongmin Park

In the course of auditions held in 23 cities around the world, 41 talented young opera singers qualified for the week-long final round in Gütersloh. Of that number, 15 competed in the semifinals. A total of more than 1,400 up-and-coming talents from all over the world entered the competition.

Liz Mohn, president of the competition and vice-chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board, pointed out in her speech that NEUE STIMMEN is known for quality, achievement and competition, but also for bringing together young artists from many different countries. "It is always gratifying to see how well young singers from all around the globe get along, and to watch as new friendships emerge."

It is not only the winners who benefit from the NEUE STIMMEN competitions. "The members of our jury, who have a wealth of experience in the opera world, devote a great deal of time to each individual singer, including those who have not reached the finals," says Mohn, who is committed to supporting these talented young people as they advance in their careers. Some of the singers who particularly impressed the jury will have the opportunity to participate in special master classes in the coming year.

Chairing the ten-person jury is Dominique Meyer, director of the Vienna State Opera.

Members of the jury include Kammersänger Francisco Araíza, professor at the State University of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart; Brian Dickie, general director of the Chicago Opera Theater and head of the NEUE STIMMEN auditions; Kammersänger Siegfried Jerusalem, professor at the College of Music Nuremberg; Jürgen Kesting, music critic and author; Gustav Kuhn, conductor and director of the Tyrolean Festival Erl; Bernd Loebe, general director of Oper Frankfurt; Nicholas Payne, director of Opera Europa, the European association of opera houses and festivals; Kammersängerin Anja Silja; and Evamaria Wieser, artistic consultant at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma.

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