News Item, 10/04/2013, Gütersloh: NEUE STIMMEN 2013: 1,428 applications from around the globe

Preliminary round auditions for the Bertelsmann Stiftung's international singing competition begin in Melbourne

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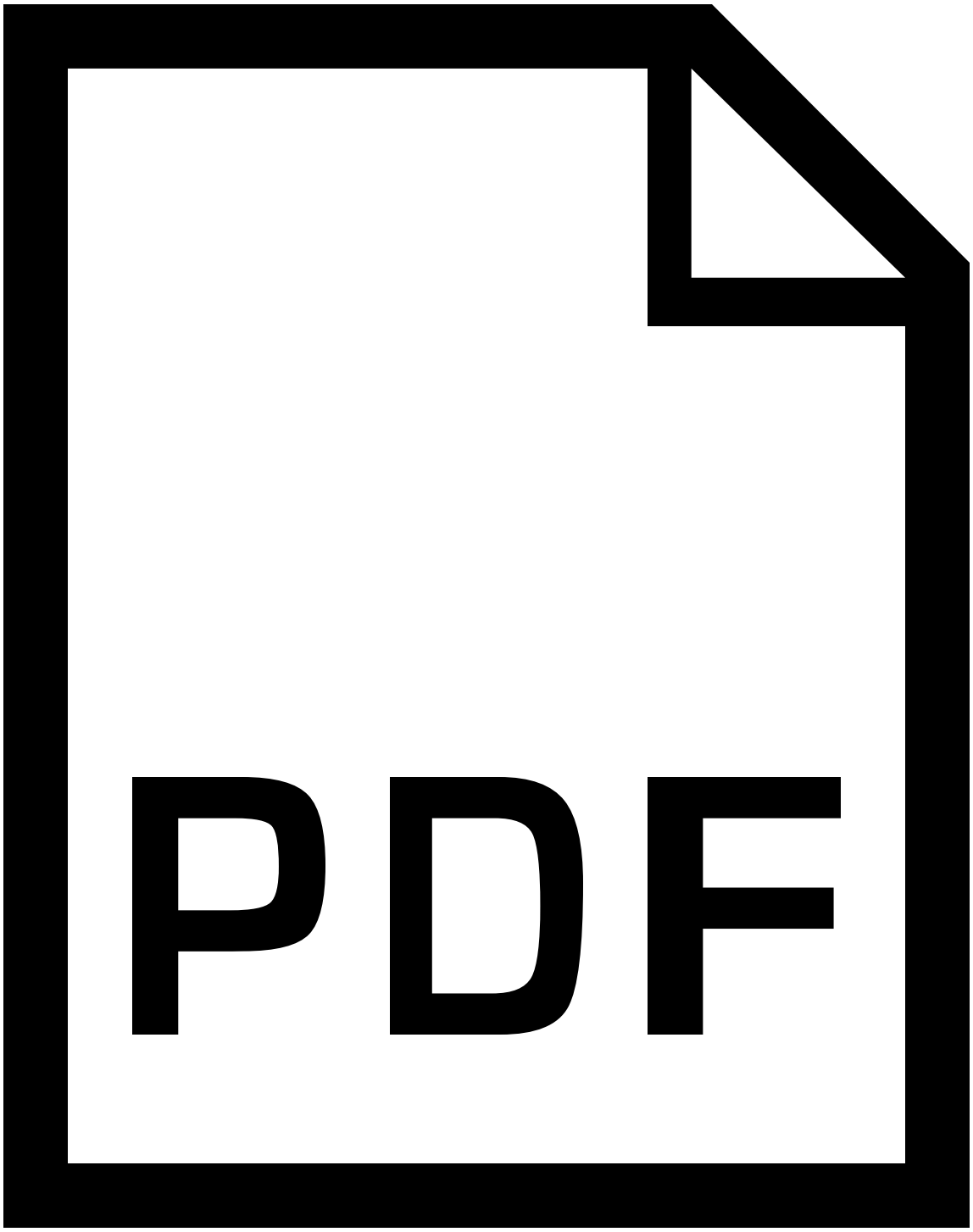

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Ines Koring

A total of 1,428 up-and-coming opera singers have applied to participate in the Bertelsmann Stiftung's 15th NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition. Held across the globe, the preliminary round auditions will begin on April 21 in Melbourne, followed by auditions in New York, Toronto and Chicago. Applicants have 22 venues to choose from. Preliminary auditions in Germany will take place in Munich (June 1–2), Berlin (June 11–12) and Düsseldorf (June 13–15).

Almost one-third of the applicants are from Asia, with 188 candidates coming from South Korea, 172 from China and 95 from Japan. Other regions with a large number of candidates include the United States, with 115, and Central and South America, with 107. In addition, 109 applicants are from Germany, 94 from Russia, 65 from Romania and 64 from Ukraine, home to the top prizewinner in 2011. Singers from Israel, South Africa and Mongolia will also be participating. In terms of venues, 218 candidates will audition in Berlin, 154 in Düsseldorf, 109 in Munich, 102 in Beijing, 88 in Vienna and 83 in Moscow. As for cities serving as audition sites for the first time, 80 singers will perform in Rome, 50 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and 23 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"I am very pleased that opera talents from so many countries have applied to participate this year," said Liz Mohn, president of the NEUE STIMMEN competition and vice-chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board. "I am also more than a bit proud to see how the international singing competition has constantly grown over the last 25 years, how the quality of the voices has increased and how the event has come to serve as a bridge between peoples, religions and cultures."

Brian Dickie, member of the NEUE STIMMEN jury and former general director of the Chicago Opera Theater, is leading the preliminary rounds and will be present at all of the venues to ensure uniform standards throughout. He will use his blog to report on what he sees and hears. The last auditions will take place in August.

The singers will be judged on technical ability, musical presentation, vocal quality, and artistic personality and presence, with equal weight given to each aspect. The final round will be held from October 6 to 13 in Gütersloh under the auspices of Dominique Meyer, chairman of the NEUE STIMMEN jury and director of the Vienna State Opera. Of all the initial applicants, only between 40 and 45 will be asked to participate in the final round. The first-place male and female winners will each receive €15,000.

In addition to Meyer and Dickie, members of the international jury include Gustav Kuhn, conductor and director of the Tyrolean Festival Erl; Francisco Araíza, Kammersänger and professor at the College of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart; Siegfried Jerusalem, Kammersänger and professor at the College of Music Nuremberg; Jürgen Kesting, music critic and author; Bernd Loebe, general director of the Opera Frankfurt; Nicholas Payne, director of Opera Europa, the association of European opera houses and opera festivals; Anja Silja, Kammersängerin; and Evamaria Wie¬ser, artistic consultant at Lyric Opera Chicago and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. Christoph Meyer, general director of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf/Duisburg, will serve on the NEUE STIMMEN jury in 2013 for the first time.

The NEUE STIMMEN competition has launched the careers of numerous renowned singers, such as Vesselina Kasarova, René Pape, Nathalie Stutzmann, Noëmi Nadelmann, Roman Trekel, Hanno Müller-Brachmann, Melanie Diener, Dietrich Henschel, Michael Volle, Angelika Kirchschlager, Anna Samuil, Maxim Mironov, Julia Novikova, Christiane Karg and Marina Rebeka, the last of whom is currently appearing as Donna Anna in Mozart's "Don Giovanni" at the Zurich Opera House.

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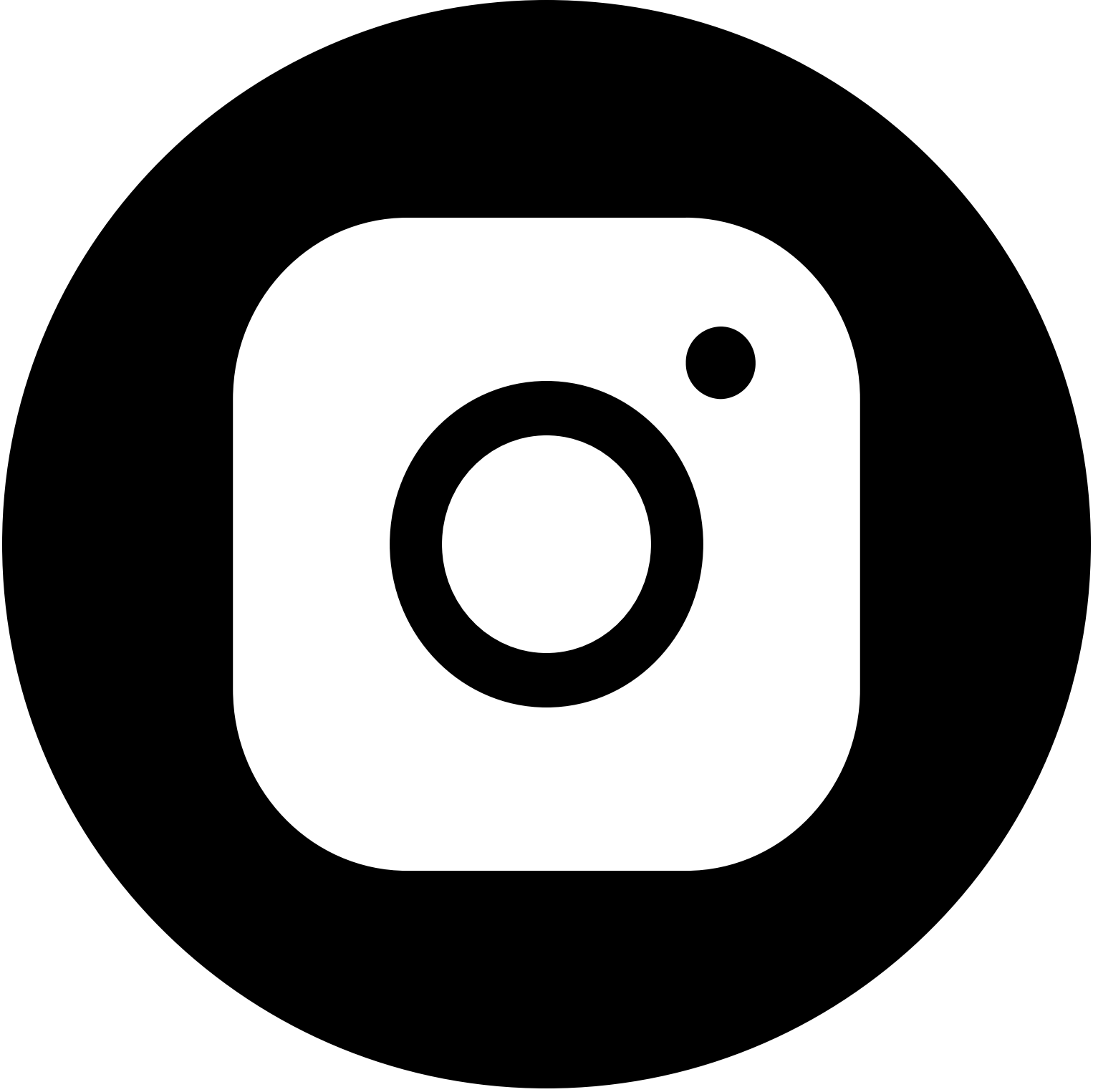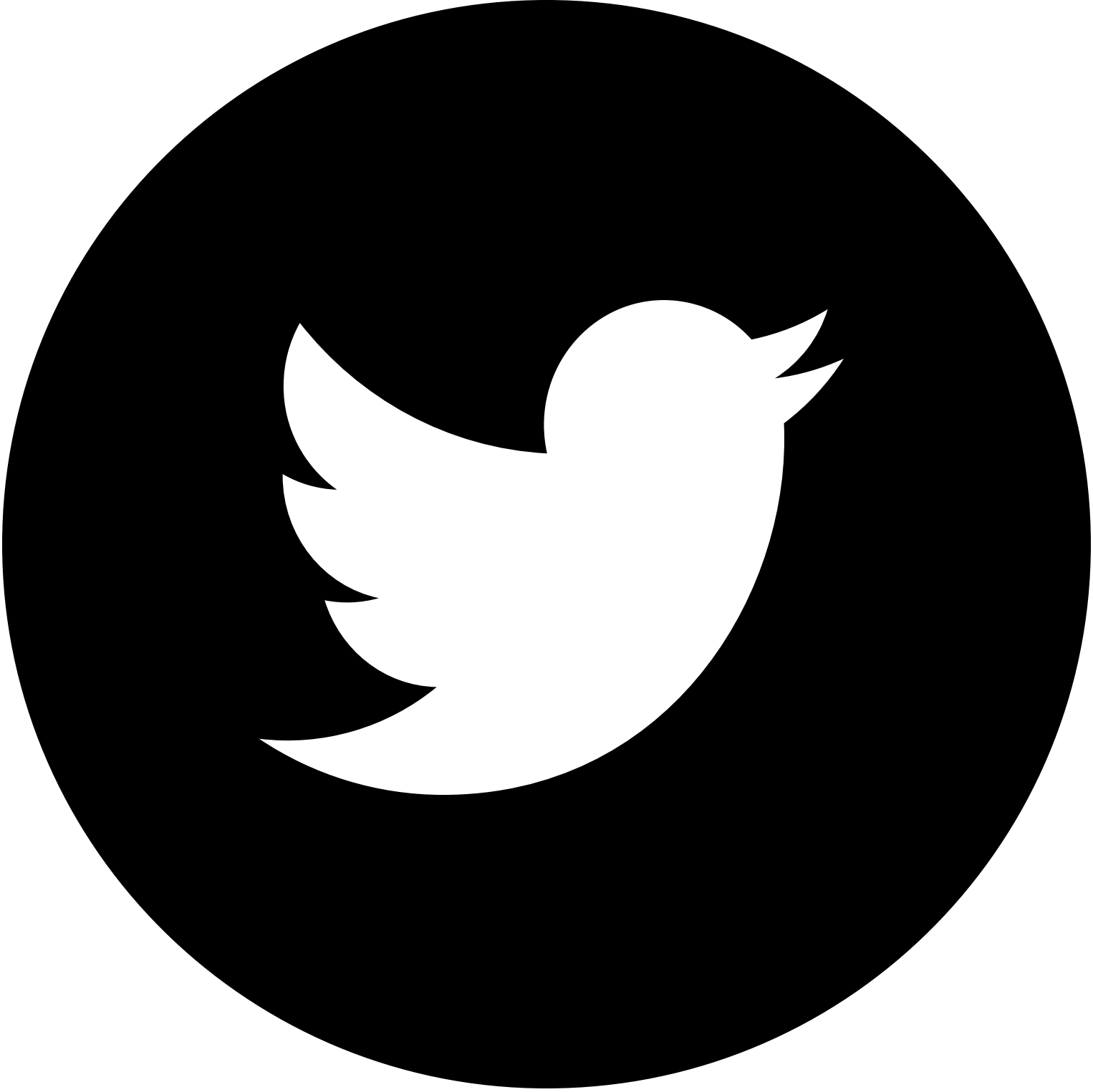
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