

PRESS RELEASE

For the first time, NEUE STIMMEN's international master class will support opera talent through an all-digital format

As part of a new online format, rising opera singers from all over the world will receive invaluable support helping them on the way to successful careers. From 26 to 30 October, they will work with high-profile opera experts, both individually and in groups, to further develop their skills. Communal activities will play an important role and build on NEUE STIMMEN's network ethos, even in the digital environment.

Gütersloh, 22 October 2020. The 13th edition of NEUE STIMMEN's International Master Class features a premiere: From 26 to 30 October, 11 young opera singers from nine countries will for the first time have the opportunity to further develop their artistic and professional capacities in a wholly digital format. They will interact with one another via video, and train both in groups and in individual sessions with renowned artists and instructors, including mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, vocal coach John Norris, tenor Julian Prégardien, director Martina Gredler and Salzburg Festival Casting Director Evamaria Wieser.

Under the digital master class concept, participants will be presented with the contents of their lessons on the screen, and will put it into practice through a variety of activities. For example, the opera artists will sing in front of their own webcams, and carry out acting, movement and speaking exercises. Given the growing importance of digital channels, they will also receive training sessions, workshops and advice on the use of streaming platforms and social-media channels, as well as on the creative use of audiovisual online-presentation formats. Over the course of the week, they will jointly develop a music film, which will subsequently be available to watch beginning in the middle of November at [neue-stimmen.de](https://www.neue-stimmen.de). The singers were drawn from among the participants of the International Singing Competition NEUE STIMMEN 2019, and were rated by the jury as being particularly worthy of further support.

“Connecting artists across national borders”

“With our first digital master class, NEUE STIMMEN is carving out an innovative path in supporting young opera singers from around the world. As usual, the focus will be on providing holistic support, an essential characteristic of NEUE STIMMEN. The master class will help the artists to deepen their skills and gain a better sense of the field's new requirements, while enabling them to exchange ideas and learn from and alongside each other as a community. The new master class is intended to show creatively that music's power and communal experience can be well expressed even in digital form, and that artists can be connected across national borders,” said Liz Mohn, NEUE STIMMEN president and deputy chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung board.

NEUE STIMMEN's International Master Class is regarded as an important talent incubator for emerging opera talent. Even in digital form, it is remaining true to its fundamental time-proven idea: Under the guidance of experienced artists and instructors, selected opera singers will work for a highly focused week on their voices, vocal interpretations, expressiveness and stage presence, as well as on extra-musical skills such as career

management, network maintenance, audition training, and the use of digital channels and presentation formats. Lesson plans will be individualized, with each participant receiving at least 12 hours of individual instruction and eight hours of group instruction. They will also have the opportunity to watch other participants' individual coaching sessions as observers.

Communal activities will play a major role

In the current situation, with so few in-person live events, it is particularly important for the NEUE STIMMEN team to maintain contact with and between the artists. To ensure that personal interactions remain as close as possible even in the digital format, social activities will be given great significance during the 2020 master class. Each day of instruction will begin with a communal warm-up, and will end with a casual digital group get-together. This allows the young artists to share stories from their home countries and their experiences from the course program as they develop relationships that will serve them well in their later careers.

“Particularly at this difficult point in time, it is very important to support young singers and to provide them the opportunity to learn with and from each other in a forum. I am therefore delighted that NEUE STIMMEN is holding its renowned Master Class in digital form this year. This new coaching format promises to bring insights that are of particular value to the promotion of rising talent in opera and the concert industry. I am very excited about being able to engage with the singing talents,” said mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, a 2020 Master Class lecturer.

“Over the past weeks and months, many singing instructors have been able to gain extensive experience with digital learning tools, and have themselves learned a great deal. It is now possible to offer high-quality acting lessons and vocal training via videoconferencing. The opera singers participating in the NEUE STIMMEN master class can benefit greatly from these new coaching experiences. The concept leaves considerable room for individual training on the one hand, and for group-dynamic encounters on the other, which is something I am very much looking forward to,” said John Norris, vocal coach and instructor for the 2020 master class.

NEUE STIMMEN's new digital offerings

In connection with the digital master class, late October will also mark the premiere of the “NEUE STIMMEN Master Class Talks” podcast, a series of conversations with figures from throughout the opera industry on various topics related to the singing profession. The podcast will be available through AudioNow, iTunes and Spotify, as well as through the [neue-stimmen.de](https://www.neue-stimmen.de) web site. With the aim of providing the young artists with another stage, NEUE STIMMEN is also currently establishing a blog on its web site. Here, Master Class 2020 participants and instructors, as well as other NEUE STIMMEN artists, will be able to report on their individual challenges and inspirations in these exceptional times.

Participants in the Masterclass 2020 will include:

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	VOICE TYPE	NATIONALITY
Britten	Spencer	Tenor	Canada
Burns	Ian	Baritone	USA
Daleore	Adrian	Bass-baritone	Serbia

Decker	Kayleigh	Mezzo-soprano	USA
Fridriksdottir	Marta Kristin	Soprano	Iceland
Hottiger	Kathrin	Soprano	Switzerland
Kelly	Aebh	Mezzo-soprano	Ireland
Kunath	Jakob	Baritone	Germany
Monreal	Marvic	Mezzo-soprano	Malta
Rollinson	Gabriel	Bass-baritone	Germany/USA
Sterby	Matilda	Soprano	Sweden

Additional information

The Bertelsmann Stiftung's International Singing Competition NEUE STIMMEN was launched in 1987 by Liz Mohn, NEUE STIMMEN president and vice-chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung board. With NEUE STIMMEN, the Bertelsmann Stiftung seeks and offers support to the world's best young opera singers. All of the project's elements – the competition, the master class, concerts, seminars and coaching sessions – operate under the NEUE STIMMEN "Creating Careers" umbrella. All existing and new support measures are intended not only to discover talented new artists, but also to provide them with a sustainable support network and advice over the long term. In doing so, the Bertelsmann Stiftung provides young vocal talents with valuable opportunities in a globalized and rapidly changing opera world. NEUE STIMMEN has already helped put many young artists on the path to an international career, including internationally known singers such as Christiane Karg, Nathalie Stutzmann, Marina Rebeka, Michael Volle, René Pape, Franco Fagioli and Elsa Dreisig.

For more information on NEUE STIMMEN, please visit www.neue-stimmen.de.

Contact: Dorothea Gregor, Telephone: +49 52 41 81 81 420
E-Mail: dorothea.gregor@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

About the Bertelsmann Stiftung: Inspiring people. Shaping the future.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to ensuring that everyone can participate in society – politically, economically and culturally. Our core themes include education, democracy, Europe, health, values and the economy. In our work, we focus on people, since only they can inspire and change the world, and make it better. In doing so, we generate knowledge, impart skills and develop solutions. The non-profit Bertelsmann Stiftung was founded in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn.

For more information, please visit www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de