

PRESS RELEASE

## 1,367 opera talents from 67 countries apply to participate in NEUE STIMMEN 2021/22

**Interest in the Bertelsmann Stiftung's international singing competition remains high. The number of applicants underscores the importance of promoting new talent during the coronavirus pandemic. The response to the new video application has been positive, with jury members viewing more than 2,700 videos. The worldwide auditions for up-and-coming opera singers begin on September 28.**

Gütersloh – September 9, 2021. The objective of NEUE STIMMEN to offer young opera talents around the world new prospects for their careers even – and especially – during the coronavirus pandemic has been very well received. A total of 1,367 young singers from 67 countries applied to participate in the 19th edition of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's international singing competition, a figure on the same high level as previous years. The sustained interest is noteworthy, since applicants were required to submit videos this year for the first time, an undertaking that often required considerable effort. Based on the videos and on additional information – such as age, vocal range, training and stage experience – the jury used a uniform evaluation system to select those applicants for the next round that they consider to be the most promising: 549 talents, who will now have the chance to demonstrate their abilities during a live audition.

The live auditions begin on September 28 and are a trademark of the NEUE STIMMEN brand. Events are planned for 12 cities in Europe, the United States and South Africa: Amsterdam, Berlin, Cape Town, Frankfurt, London, Los Angeles, Milan, Moscow, Munich, New York, Paris and Zurich. Whether the jury members will be able to be present in person will depend on the relevant pandemic-related conditions in the individual countries and cities. As an alternative, the auditions can also take place via livestream, something that is already planned for Cape Town. However, the objective remains to hear as many singers in person as possible. The auditions will conclude on December 7 and 8 in Munich. All dates can be found on the [neue-stimmen.de](https://neue-stimmen.de) website.

### **Video applications will continue and be developed further**

“NEUE STIMMEN has already helped many talented singers from around the world by paving their way to a successful career in the globalized opera business. I am particularly pleased that so many young artists have again applied to participate in our competition. Moreover, the digital application process has impressively shown how open young talents are to using new technologies as part of their career planning. As we can see, in these challenging times up-and-coming singers firmly believe in their abilities and are purposefully advancing their opera careers. We want to assist them by providing the best possible support,” says Liz Mohn, president of NEUE STIMMEN.

NEUE STIMMEN's appeal was reflected in the commitment exhibited by the applicants. Many demonstrated their perseverance and their talent for improvisation as they recorded videos in professional settings with piano accompaniment, despite the changing pandemic-related restrictions. The jury for the selection process – consisting of Brian Dickie, former general director of the Chicago Opera Theatre; Sophie Joyce, casting director of the Opéra National de Paris; and Evamaria Wieser, casting director of the Salzburg Festival – also showed perseverance: Since each singer was required to submit two arias, the three jury

members had to view and evaluate 2,734 videos once the application phase concluded on June 13. Despite all the effort which that required, both the NEUE STIMMEN team and the jury agreed that the videos have contributed positively to the competition, because they provide a solid basis for evaluating the singers when considered together with the other conventional application elements. The videos will therefore continue to be part of the process and will be developed further.

### **Final round from March 5 to 12, 2022 in Gütersloh**

The NEUE STIMMEN final round will take place from March 5 to 12, 2022 in Gütersloh's Stadthalle, with the semifinals held on March 10 and the finals on March 12. For those performances the young singers will be accompanied by an orchestra as they present their talents and repertoire to the jury, an international audience of opera-world experts, and the media. As in past years, the jury chairman will be Dominique Meyer, director of Milan's La Scala opera house. The Bertelsmann Stiftung will be awarding a total of over €60,000 in prizes to the final-round participants. Just as important are the interactions the singers will have with numerous representatives from the worlds of opera and culture and with the worldwide NEUE STIMMEN network.

#### Additional information

The Bertelsmann Stiftung's NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition was launched in 1987 by Liz Mohn. Through NEUE STIMMEN, the Bertelsmann Stiftung seeks out and promotes the best young opera talents worldwide. All project modules – the competition, master classes, concerts, seminars and coaching sessions – are part of the NEUE STIMMEN "Creating Careers" initiative. The goal of existing and new measures is not only to discover talented performers, but also to offer them advice and assistance over the long term. With that, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is providing young vocal talents with opportunities to participate in the globalized and rapidly changing world of opera. NEUE STIMMEN has helped numerous acclaimed artists in their younger years as they launched international careers, including Christiane Karg, Nathalie Stutzmann, Marina Rebeka, Michael Volle, René Pape, Franco Fagioli, Nadine Sierra and Elsa Dreisig.

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

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to enabling social participation for everyone – politically, economically and culturally. The issues we address are education, democracy, Europe, health, values and the economy. In doing so, we focus on people, since only they can change the world and make it better. We share knowledge, promote expertise and develop solutions. A nonprofit foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was established in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn. **For more information, please visit:** [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de)

