

PRESS RELEASE

## Final round of NEUE STIMMEN awaits with 36 opera talents from 21 countries

**Of the nearly 1,400 original applicants, 19 women and 17 men will take part in the final round of the international singing competition. Their goal is to reach the finale on June 30 in Gütersloh. The selection process took longer and was more complex due to the pandemic, but it also included a number of innovations and improvisations. The final concert with orchestral accompaniment will be [streamed live](#).**

Gütersloh – May 23, 2022. The final round of the 2021/2022 NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition will feature 36 opera talents from 21 countries. From June 26 to 30, the contestants will have a possibly one-time opportunity to demonstrate their talent and stage presence to opera-house managers, festival directors, music agents and talent scouts. In NEUE STIMMEN's 35th year, the final round's conclusion and highpoint will once again be the final concert on Thursday, June 30, which will take place with orchestral accompaniment before a live audience in Gütersloh's Stadthalle. As in past years, it will also be possible to follow the final concert live on the website [www.neue-stimmen.de](http://www.neue-stimmen.de) beginning at 7 pm. In addition, social media users can visit NEUE STIMMEN's Facebook and Instagram channels to learn more about the talented singers and happenings behind the scenes.

The 19th edition of the competition has been a very special event for the NEUE STIMMEN team, since promoting new talent has taken on enormous importance given the cutbacks in the cultural sphere due to the pandemic. "Unfortunately, in the last two years, we've been able to directly experience music's beauty and power far too rarely," says Liz Mohn, president of NEUE STIMMEN. "The restrictions have been a burden for young singers in particular, since they've been unable to demonstrate their talent. We shouldn't underestimate how crucial performing and interacting with colleagues is for the personal and professional development of young singers. It was therefore very important for me that NEUE STIMMEN should continue to offer them the possibility of realizing their dream of an opera career, even in such difficult times. Now we can look forward to these interesting young people inspiring us with their impressive voices."

### **Renowned international jury comprised of nine members**

A total of 19 women and 17 men have been invited to participate in the final round in Gütersloh, with sopranos making up the largest vocal range. The renowned nine-member jury, chaired by Dominique Meyer, CEO of La Scala opera house in Milan, includes two new members: Christoph Seufferle, director of opera at Deutsche Oper in Berlin, and Argentine-born mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, who is one of the world's most sought-after opera singers. Brian Dickie, former general director of Chicago Opera Theater, Sophie Joyce, casting director of Opéra National de Paris, and Evamaria Wieser, casting director of the Salzburg Festival, served as jurors for the preliminary auditions. They will be joined by Bernd Loebe, managing director of Oper Frankfurt, Elisabeth Sobotka, artistic director of the Bregenz Festival, and Sophie de Lint, director of the Dutch National Opera. As in past competitions, the Duisburg Philharmonic under the baton of Jonathan Darlington will provide musical accompaniment for this year's finale.

## Video applications and auditions via livestream

A total of 1,367 up-and-coming singers applied to compete in NEUE STIMMEN 2021/2022. The response was thus on par with pre-Covid levels, although the application and selection process posed a major challenge for the NEUE STIMMEN team as a result of the pandemic. Once the initial evaluations were carried out based solely on video submissions, it was nonetheless possible to hold international auditions – a hallmark of the NEUE STIMMEN brand – live on site by December in 11 cities: Amsterdam, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, London, Los Angeles, Milan, Moscow, Munich, New York, Paris and Zurich. The auditions in Cape Town took place via livestream.

“As jury members, we were enormously impressed by the singers’ passion and willingness to improvise during the selection process,” says Evamaria Weser. “Naturally live auditions allow us to make even more differentiated judgements. However, given the circumstances, the selection via video and livestream proved to be a very viable alternative and could become a permanent part of the competition in the future. We very much believe we have once again found a wide range of promising and interesting opera talents for this final round who will inspire us with their voices.”

As in the past, not only will the up-and-coming singers have the opportunity to take home prizes totaling more than €60,000, by reaching the final round they can also establish valuable contacts with decision makers from the world of opera. In addition, they will receive professional assistance and support through the NEUE STIMMEN network even after the competition ends. Selected singers can participate in master classes, workshops and career seminars and perform at NEUE STIMMEN concerts. They could also receive a scholarship for the International Opera Studio at Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin. Long-standing partnerships, including with the Bregenz Festival, provide opportunities for the young talents to appear on established stages, helping them become better acquainted with the opera world’s requirements.

### Additional information

The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s [NEUE STIMMEN](#) International Singing Competition was initiated by Liz Mohn in 1987. For 35 years, it has been considered one of the world’s most important platforms for up-and-coming opera singers, who can use the competition to make contact with jury members, opera-house managers and music agents. NEUE STIMMEN has helped numerous talents launch international careers, including renowned artists such as Christiane Karg, Nathalie Stutzmann, Marina Rebeka, Michael Volle, René Pape, Franco Fagioli, Nadine Sierra and Elsa Dreisig.

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Attachment: List of final-round participants, including name, vocal range, year of birth and native country.

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

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