

# ≡ 2021 International ≡ OPERA AWARDS

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## **Winners announced at 2021 International Opera Awards**

- **Online event features performances from winners including Lise Davidsen, Javier Camarena and Jamie Barton**
- **Teatro Real Madrid wins Opera Company of the Year. Full list of winners below**
- **Tribute paid to resilience of opera industry during the coronavirus pandemic**

**2021 International Opera Awards sponsored by Mazars  
Founding Media Partner: Opera Magazine**



Lise Davidsen, 2021 Female Singer of the Year © Ray Burmiston

The much-anticipated winners of the 2021 International Opera Awards sponsored by Mazars were tonight [10 May 2020] announced in an online ceremony watched around the world. The Awards, considered opera's answer to the Oscars, celebrate achievements in opera around the globe over the last calendar year in a wide range of categories. After 2020's live ceremony was forced off stage by the pandemic, the online event celebrated work done in

2019 while also paying tribute to the resilience of the opera world during the pandemic in 2020.

Opera Company of the year was presented to the **Teatro Real Madrid**, recognised both for a superlative 2019 season and as one of the first opera companies to return to live performance under lockdown conditions, with an acclaimed *La Traviata* in July 2020. Norwegian soprano **Lise Davidsen** was named Female Singer of the year while Mexican tenor **Javier Camarena** took the title of Male Singer of the year, dedicating the award to “*the entire artistic community*” for its commitment despite the challenges of 2020.

Also celebrated was American mezzo-soprano **Jamie Barton**, voted by the public as the Opera Magazine Readers’ Award winner, who said she was “*absolutely gobsmacked*” by the win. Mezzo soprano **Vasilisa Berzhanskaya** and tenor **Xabier Anduaga** shared the Mazars Young Singer award while the **Salzburg Festival** – another company to lead the way in performing under covid restrictions – was named Festival of the Year for the second time, having first won the title at the inaugural awards in 2013.

In the UK, there were wins for both **Birmingham Opera Company** (Education & Outreach) and its Music Director **Alpesh Chauhan** (Newcomer of the Year) while **Sir David Pountney** was honoured as winner of the Good Governance Award for Leadership in Opera for his significant contributions as head of the Bregenz Festival and more recently Welsh National Opera.

The 2021 Lifetime Achievement was presented to **Bernard Haitink**, who retired in 2019 aged 90. Reflecting on his career in a touching acceptance speech, the conductor said: “*I can honestly say that some of the deepest and most moving experiences of my musical life have been in the opera house...It has been a gift*”. The award for Philanthropy went to the **Martina Arroyo Foundation** for its work with young artists and outreach initiatives, with the legendary diva herself accepting the award from New York. A new award, presented in association with the organisation **Opera For Peace** was presented to **Denyce Graves**, recognising the American mezzo’s deep commitment to social causes.

Alongside the award presentations, the online event included a “Celebration of Resilience”, paying tribute to some of the many organisations and individuals who staged live or digital performances during the pandemic and found innovative ways to support the industry and wider community. Two video montages included clips from **English National Opera’s** “Breathe” programme, **The Atlanta Opera’s** outdoor “Big Tent Concert Series”, **Pinchgut Opera’s** film “A Delicate Fire” and soprano **Lisette Oropesa’s** hugely popular online masterclass series, along with many others.

As in previous years, the ceremony was presented by BBC Radio 3’s **Petroc Trelawny** and included performances from winners **Lise Davidsen**, **Jamie Barton**, **Javier Camarena**, **Xabier Anduaga**, **Vasilisa Berzhanskaya** and countertenor **Jakub Jozef Orlinski** (winner of the Recording (Solo Recital) award). There was also singing from tenor **Stuart Skelton** (Artistic Ambassador to the Opera Awards Foundation) and soprano **Ermonela Jaho**, as well an exclusive performance recorded on stage at the **Royal Opera House Covent Garden** featuring soprano **Alexandra Lowe**, a member of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme.

The event also raised funds for the **Opera Awards Foundation Artist Hardship Fund**, set up in 2020 to provide emergency grants to young artists severely affected by the pandemic. Continuing a tradition of the live ceremonies, the evening concluded with a chorus of past and present Foundation bursary recipients, captured virtually in association with **Random Opera** singing “Va, pensiero” from Verdi’s *Nabucco*.

The full list of winners can be found below.

Aside from the Readers' Award, all winners were chosen by an international jury of opera professionals chaired by John Allison, editor of *Opera* magazine (the Founding Media Partner of the Awards) and classical music critic of *The Daily Telegraph*. Over 100 finalists from six continents were shortlisted, demonstrating the truly global reach of the Awards.

Harry Hyman, founder of the International Opera Awards, said: *"Much has changed since we originally announced the shortlists for these awards in early 2020, but the opera world has risen to recent challenges with passion, determination and a spirit of resilience and innovation which has been inspiring to witness. Our long-awaited winners – and indeed all of our finalists – remind us why this wonderful art-form is so important, and so worth fighting for. We look forward to seeing them return to live performance in the months to come and can't wait to celebrate together in person again soon."*

David Herbinet, Head of Audit at headline sponsor Mazars, said: *"On behalf of Mazars I congratulate all the well-deserved winners and in particular Vasilisa Berzhanskaya and Xabier Anduaga who shared the Mazars' Young Singer Award. It was wonderful to be part of this year's virtual event and celebrate the achievements and resilience of so many talented people across the opera world, whilst enjoying some truly spectacular performances."*

The Awards, founded in 2012, aim to raise the profile of opera as an art form, to recognise and reward success in opera and to generate funds to provide bursaries for aspiring operatic talent from around the world. Since 2012 over £360,000 has been raised by the Opera Awards Foundation.

**#OperaAwards2021**  
[operaawards.org](http://operaawards.org)

**For further press information please contact Sarah Noble at the International Opera Awards**

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## **FULL LIST OF WINNERS**

### **CHORUS**

Metropolitan Opera

### **CONDUCTOR**

Kirill Petrenko

### **DESIGNER**

Małgorzata Szczeńniak

### **DIRECTOR**

Robert Carsen

### **EDUCATION & OUTREACH**

Birmingham Opera Company

**FEMALE SINGER**

Lise Davidsen

**FESTIVAL**

Salzburg Festival

**LEADERSHIP** sponsored by the Good Governance Institute

David Pountney

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT**

Bernard Haitink

**MALE SINGER**

Javier Camarena

**NEW PRODUCTION**

*Tale of Tsar Saltan* (Tcherniakov, La Monnaie De Munt)

**NEWCOMER**

Alpesh Chauhan

**OPERA COMPANY**

Teatro Real, Madrid

**OPERA FOR PEACE PRIZE**

Denyce Graves

**OPERA ORCHESTRA**

Bayerisches Staatsorchester / Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich

**PHILANTHROPY**

Martina Arroyo Foundation

**RECORDING (SOLO RECITAL)**

Jakub Józef Orliński: *Facce d'amore* (Erato)

**RECORDING (COMPLETE OPERA)**

Thomas: Hamlet (Naxos) [DVD]

**OPERA MAGAZINE READERS' AWARD**

Jamie Barton

**REDISCOVERED WORK**

Moniuszko: *Paria* (Teatr Wielki, Poznań)

**WORLD PREMIERE**

Glanert: *Oceane* (Deutsche Oper, Berlin)

**YOUNG SINGER** sponsored by Mazars

Xabier Anduaga

Vasilisa Berzhanskaya

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

## **MAZARS**

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Founded in Europe, Mazars is present in over 90 countries and territories, with over 40,400 professionals – 24,400 in our integrated partnership, 16,000 via the Mazars North American Alliance – dedicated to helping clients make the most of business opportunities and operate with confidence. In the UK, Mazars has 130 partners and 2,250 staff serving clients from 16 offices nationwide and is ranked one of the top 10 firms nationally.

<https://www.mazars.co.uk/>

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### **Opera Magazine**

Described by *The Daily Telegraph* as 'the bible of the industry', *Opera* magazine has been the world's leading commentator on the lyric stage since 1950. Providing coverage of operatic events through a mixture of features, reviews (live performances, recordings, books) and analysis, plus monthly listings of events worldwide and its famous 'We hear that' section, the magazine has an unrivalled network of international correspondents, covering performances from around the globe.

<http://www.opera.co.uk>

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