



INDEPENDENT OPERA

announces

PETER KELLNER AS WINNER OF 2017 WIGMORE HALL/
INDEPENDENT OPERA VOICE FELLOWSHIP

SPONSORSHIP OF WIGMORE HALL INTERNATIONAL SONG COMPETITION

NEW COMMISSION FROM JOBY TALBOT

Independent Opera (IO) was very present at the Wigmore Hall last week. On Thursday 5 October, IO announced 26 year old Slovakian bass Peter Kellner as the winner of the 2017 Wigmore Hall/IO Voice Fellowship, a two-year award of £10,000 plus professional mentoring from IO and the Wigmore Hall. A graduate of the Konzervatórium Košice Timonova and the Mozarteum University Salzburg, Peter is currently a member of Oper Graz in Austria where later this season he will sing the title role of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and Colline in Puccini's *La bohème*.

The following evening, on Friday 6 October, IO presented its inaugural Voice Scholars' recital, its response to the needs of the artists it has supported since 2005. Recognising the importance of professional experience as well as training, IO's five 2016-17 Voice Scholars - sopranos Samantha Clarke, Charlie Drummond and Nika Gorič; and mezzo-sopranos Katie Coventry and Jade Moffat - whose IO scholarships provided them with £5000 towards their final year of study, additionally received professional mentoring from IO's Creative Director Natalie Murray Beale. The singers were accompanied by James Baillieu who worked previously with two Wigmore Hall/IO Voice Fellows.

Preceding the recital, IO announced two major initiatives for 2019: sponsorship of the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition and a new commission from composer Joby Talbot. The new commission takes its inspiration from Queen Victoria's diamond and sapphire coronet designed for her by Prince Albert, and acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum thanks to a generous gift from William and Judith Bollinger. In 2019, the coronet will be the centre-piece of the newly-refreshed William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery, one of the finest and most comprehensive collections in the world. Joby Talbot's oratorio will also receive its première in 2019.

IO's relationship with the Wigmore Hall dates back 10 years to its first Wigmore Hall/IO Voice Fellowship awarded to bass Matthew Rose. He was selected from amongst the participants of the biennial Wigmore Hall International Song Competition formerly supported by the Kohn Foundation (1997-2017), and auditioned by IO's Creative Director Natalie Murray Beale. Subsequent Wigmore Hall/IO Voice Fellowships have been awarded to Gaëlle Arquez, Clara Mouriz, Dominik Köninger, Anna Huntley and James Newby.

Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells was founded in 2005 to support outstanding young artists in every discipline of opera. Seeing the need to bridge the gap between raw talent and a professional career, co-founders William and Judith Bollinger, together with Alessandro Talevi, devised a series of initiatives to support young and talented artists. IO mounted its first production - Rossini's *La Scala di Seta* - directed by Alessandro Talevi, within the year and, two years later, launched its comprehensive Artist Support scheme. To date IO Artist Support has provided professional mentoring support together with funds worth more than £750,000 to 110 artists in the fields of singing, directing, design, choreography and production. William and Judith Bollinger were recognised as Philanthropists of the Year at the 2016 International Opera Awards.

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