

Monday, November 9th 2020

Press Release

## **VERONICA DUNNE BURSARY ANNOUNCES YOUNG IRISH OPERA SINGERS AWARDED BURSARIES**

**~ SIX TALENTED YOUNG SINGERS TO BENEFIT FROM THIS NEW BURSARY  
INITIATIVE ~**

The **Veronica Dunne Bursary** is delighted to award its inaugural opera bursaries to six young singers to help mentor and support them in developing their future singing careers.

The singers who have been awarded bursaries are:

Ava Dodd  
Carolyn Holt  
Aebh Kelly  
Anna Helena MacLachlan  
Jade Phoenix  
Karla Tracey

**Veronica Dunne, doyenne of Irish opera and acclaimed teacher, whose cherished dream has been to establish this bursary, today said:**

"We're excited about this initiative which we've created to develop the potential of our young singers. We look forward to mentoring them in vocal and technical training, and to help guide them towards achieving their particular career goals." Ms. Dunne added: "I want this bursary to be my legacy to future young Irish stars of opera."

The **Veronica Dunne Bursary** was established in 2020 with funding from the Department of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht. A bursary fund totalling €15,000 has now been awarded to these six successful competitors. The competition was open to singers born on or after February 1st 1989, who live in Ireland or abroad, and to singers of any nationality who are resident or studying in Ireland.

**Diarmuid Hegarty, President of Griffith College and Chairman of the Veronica Dunne Bursary committee, said:**

"On behalf of the Veronica Dunne Bursary committee, I welcome all the young competitors. We had a record number of applications to the bursary. The distinguished international jury was certainly impressed with the calibre of contestants. It is appropriate that Tara Erraught should sit on the jury panel as she has been such an exemplar to these young singers. I thank Tara, Mark Shanahan and Tobias Trungier for their advice and encouragement to our competitors.

Mr. Hegarty thanked Minister Catherine Martin for her commitment to the Arts. He added: "I know her Department will join with these singers in encouraging them to take full advantage of this bespoke programme to improve their skills and confidence in pursuing fulfilling and successful careers."

Singers applying for a bursary were asked, in the first instance, to submit an online application, comprising a recent video recording of two arias and a CV showing relevant

training or experience. An artistic panel assessed the applications based on the standard of each recording and relevant experience.

The members of the international jury were **Tara Erraught**, Irish mezzo soprano, **Mark Shanahan**, conductor and Head of Music at London's National Opera Studio, and **Tobias Truniger**, Director of the Opera Studio, Bavarian State Opera.

The auditions were held in MoLI (Museum of Literature Ireland) in Dublin and were subject to current Government COVID-19 Level 5 restrictions.

Twenty six short-listed competitors were invited to compete in live rounds in front of the international jury on Saturday, November 7th. For this 1st Round, competitors were required to sing two contrasting operatic arias. 10 competitors were selected to go through to the 2nd round on Sunday, November 8th. This final selection of the six successful competitors was based on an interview with the international jury and a performance of an aria.

**Thr Veronica Dunne Bursary Committee gratefully acknowledges funding from the Department of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht**

For information about the Veronica Dunne Bursary:

[www.vdiscompetition.com/bursary](http://www.vdiscompetition.com/bursary)

Social Media Channels:

Twitter: @VDISComp;

Facebook: Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition;

Instagram: VDISComp

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## **NOTE TO EDITOR**

The Veronica Dunne Bursary is a new funding and mentoring scheme to nurture Ireland's young opera talent.

It is an initiative of the Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition which takes place every three years in Dublin, and attracts the best young singers from all over the world to compete for the prestigious prize. The next competition takes place in 2022.

It is planned to hold the Veronica Dunne Bursary competition every three years but this is subject to receipt of financial support from Government.

