

# QUEEN SONJA SINGING COMPETITION

VOICES OF THE WORLD

Oslo, 15.-26. august 2023



*"We should all feel proud that through this competition, Norway has a place on the international map of opera."*

*Lise Davidsen (1. prisvinner 2015, konferansier under finalekonserten)*



Dear Singers,

I wish you a warm welcome to the Queen Sonja Singing Competition 2023.

It is a great privilege for me to follow this celebration of your talent and commitment to the arts. The competition is continuously seeking to grow and develop as a partner for classical singers, and it will enable your unique voices to be heard by a jury consisting of leading international opera and casting directors.

This year's competition also offers coaching, career development sessions, a stagecraft master class, and concert opportunities. It is my sincere hope that your Oslo experience will serve to enhance your personal and artistic development.

I wish you all the very best of luck.



## COMPETITION 2023

- New record of applicants: 521 singers from 58 nations applied to this year's competition
- A top international team of 40 singers from 19 nations competed in Oslo
- 12 days of competition, masterclasses, and career development sessions
- Distinguished jury from leading international opera houses in Europe and USA
- A spectacular final concert at The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
- New initiative in 2023: The Opera Academy, a new career development programme aimed at Norwegian vocal students

### PRIZE WINNERS

First Prize winner (€ 50.000): **Jasmin White** (contralto, USA)

Second Prize winner (€ 10.000): **Aksel Daveyan** (baritone, Armenia)

Third Prize winner (€ 5.000): **Nils Wanderer** (countertenor, Germany)

Winner of the Ingrid Bjoner Scholarship (NOK 100.000): **Victoria Randem** (soprano, Norway)

Winner of the Lied Prize (€ 1,500): **Felix Gygli** (baritone, Switzerland)

Finalist Prize (€ 1.500):

**Navasard Hakobyan** (baritone, Armenia)

**Vladyslav Tlushch** (baritone, Ukraine)

**Rebecka Wallroth** (mezzo-soprano, Sweden)



*Aksel Daveyan (upper left), Felix Gygli (bottom left), Jasmin White (middle),  
Nils Wanderer (upper right) and Victoria Randem (bottom right)*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*



QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

*It has been extremely rewarding competing for the Queen Sonja Singing Competition, and I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to learn and grow, and kickstart my career!*

***Jasmin White (USA), First Prize winner***

*It was wonderful competing in this prestigious competition!*

***Aksel Daveyan (Armenia), Second Prize winner***

*The Queen Sonja Singing Competition gave me the precious chance to compete as my true authentic and artistic self. Thank you for this life changing opportunity.*

***Nils Wanderer (Germany), Third Prize winner***





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

SCREENING JURY 2023

**VIVIANA BARRIOS**

Associate to the  
Artistic Director  
Deutsche Oper, Berlin



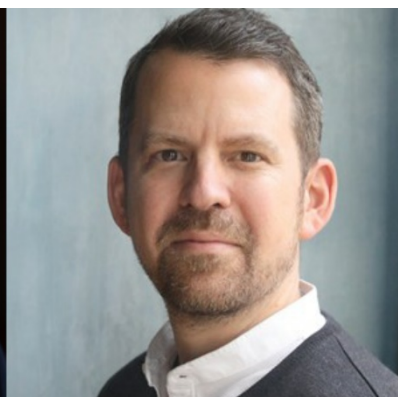
**JEAN DENES**

Opera Director  
Theater Basel



**DOMINIK LICHT**

Casting Consultant  
The Royal Danish Opera,  
Copenhagen



**ELISABETH REISCHL**

Artistic Planning  
Wiener Konzerthaus



**CHANDLER JOHNSON**

Casting Manager  
Santa Fe Opera







QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## COMPETITION JURY 2023

**RANDI STENE (CHAIR)**

Opera Director, The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet

**SAMUEL GELBER**

Director of Artistic Planning, Washington National Opera, USA

**MICHAEL HEASTON**

Assistant General Manager, Artistic, Metropolitan Opera, USA

**STEFAN HERHEIM**

Opera Director, Theater an der Wien

**SOPHIE DE LINT**

Opera Director, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam

**PÅL CHRISTIAN MOE**

Artistic Administrator and Casting Adviser, Norway

**ANNETTE WEBER**

Opera Director, Opernhaus Zürich



*From left: Stefan Herheim, Annette Weber, Samuel Gelber, Randi Stene, Lars Flæten, Liv Redpath, Pål Christian Moe and Michael Heaston. Oscarshall Palace*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*



*I wanted to be a member of the jury because of the prestige of the competition, the high level of talent, the reputation of the competition for being very well-organized and run.*

***Jury Member***

*It was a real privilege to serve on the jury. I have followed the competition for many years and have been impressed with the extremely high level of talent that comes from it.*

***Jury Member***

*Queen Sonja Singing Competition is an internationally renowned competition from which many very successful singers launched careers. The standard has always been very high over the past years. The other members of the jury also promised a good exchange about singers.*

***Jury Member***

*I regard this competition as important for the development of operatic art, in which I want to contribute.*

***Jurymedlem***





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## ARTISTS AND EXPERTISE

**SVEINUNG BJELLAND**

Pianist, Norway



Photo: Anna-Julia Granberg

**LISE DAVIDSEN**

Soprano, Norway



Photo: James Hole

**JAMES GAFFIGAN**

Conductor, USA



**ULRIKE KÖSTINGER**

CEO Operabase, Austria







QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

**THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL  
OPERA ORCHESTRA**

The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet



Photo: Joerg Wiesner

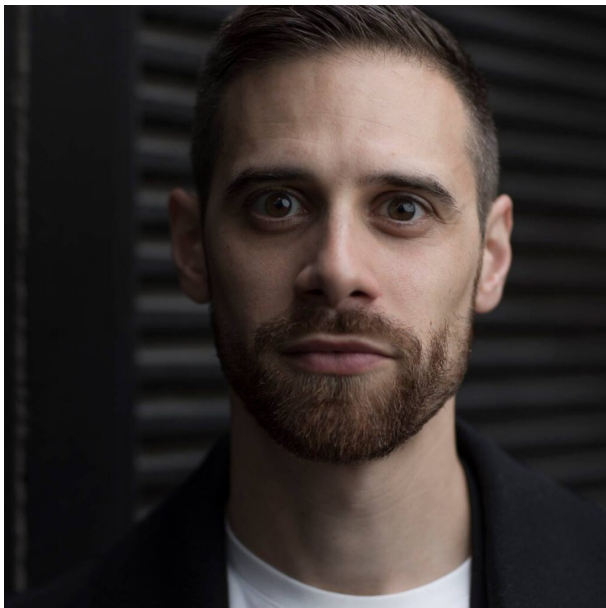
**LIV REDPATH**

Soprano, USA



**PETER DI-TORO**

Head of Marketing and Digital,  
National Opera Studio, United Kingdom



**MELISSA WEGNER**

Director, Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program, USA





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## PROGRAMME 2023

### OPENING CEREMONY

16 August

Oslo City Hall

Host: Municipality of Oslo by Deputy Major Abdullah Alsabeehg

Official opening of this year's Competition

Presentation of this year's participants and jury members



*Hedvig Haugerud, soprano (Norway) presents herself*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

### PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

17 and 18 August

Oslo National Academy of the Arts

38 singers of 19 nations performed opera arias and Lieder



*Melissa Zgouridi, mezzo-soprano (Brazil), preliminary rounds*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*

### SEMI-FINAL

20 August

Oslo National Academy of the Arts

12 singers of 7 nations performed arias and Lieder



*Katerina Burton, soprano (USA) with pianist Olesya Tutova, semi-final*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*



QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## MASTERCLASSES

22 August  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Performance Training with Pål Christian Moe

22 August  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Masterclass in stagecraft with Stefan Herheim



*Jose Simerilla Romero, tenor (Spain) with pianist Olesya Tutova  
in masterclass in stagecraft with Stefan Herheim  
Photo: Tonje Bentsen / QSSC*





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

19 August and 21 August  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Feedback session jury / participants

21 August  
The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet  
Panel Discussion: *Choosing a Career in Opera*  
with jury members and industry executives

22 August  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
*Personal Branding as a Career Partner* with Peter Di-Toro,  
National Opera Studio

23 August  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
*The Virtuoso Marketer* with Ulrike Köstinger, Operabase

## CONCERTS

24 August  
Oscarshall Palace  
Liv Redpath, soprano, USA and Sveinung Bjelland, piano  
In collaboration with The Royal Court



*Liv Redpath, soprano (USA) and pianist Sveinung Bjelland*  
*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*



QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

Saturday 26 August  
The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet  
Final Concert  
6 singers of 5 nations performed opera arias and Lied with  
The Norwegian National Opera Orchestra  
Jasmin White, contralto (USA)  
Aksel Daveyan, baritone (Armenia)  
Nils Wanderer, countertenor (Germany)  
Navasard Hakobyan, baritone (Armenia)  
Rebecka Wallroth, mezzo-soprano (Sweden)  
Vladyslav Tlushch, baritone (Ukraine)  
Conductor: James Gaffigan  
Presenter: Lise Davidsen (First Prize winner 2015)

*We should all feel proud that through this competition, Norway has a place on the international map of opera.*

***Lise Davidsen (Presenter)***

*I'm honored to be part of the Queen Sonja Singing Competition and to be able to work with these extraordinary young singers. Bravi to everyone involved!*

***James Gaffigan (Conductor)***



*Navasard Hakobyan, baritone (Armenia) with the Norwegian National Opera Orchestra lead by conductor James Gaffigan*

*Photo: Per Ole Hagen / QSSC*





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## ARENAS

### THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL OPERA & BALLET



*Photo: Camilla Storvollen / Per Ole Hagen*

### OSLO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF THE ARTS



*Photo: Kjetil Helland / Per Ole Hagen*

### OSCARSHALL PALACE



*Photo: Camilla Storvollen / Per Ole Hagen*



## THE OPERA ACADEMY

### AN ANNUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Queen Sonja Singing Competition has initiated a new career development programme aimed at singing students in Norway. The programme includes modules that prepare students to meet and master key requirements and expectations from the opera industry.

The programme is developed in a collaboration between the Queen Sonja Singing Competition, the Norwegian Academy of Music, and Oslo National Academy of the Arts. The first programme session started in the fall of 2023, with duration through spring 2024.

The Opera Academy will be incorporated as a permanent programme for the competition.

### MODULES AND CONTENT

Participants are invited to partake in modules with physical gatherings for masterclasses and seminars in Oslo. We also offer a mentoring programme with web-based individual follow-up for the participants.

The programme is led by renowned national and international educators with extensive experience from Norwegian and international opera houses. The themes include:

- Career goals and strategies for own artistic development
- Coping under pressure: auditions and competitions
  - Mental health and resilience
  - Digital media and artistic communication
- New demands and expectations from the opera industry
- Values to be communicated in building your own brand
  - Participation in vocal masterclasses





QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## THE SINGERS OF THE OPERA ACADEMY 2023/2024

SOLVI SKOGSTAD

LOUISE ENGESETH

MARI ASCHEHOUG

EMA DELAČ

VIKTORIA JONER

**OPERA ACADEMY 2023-2024**  
PARTICIPANTS

Mari Aschehoug, soprano, the Norwegian Academy of Music  
Ema Delač, mezzo-soprano, Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Louise Engeseth, soprano, the Grieg Academy  
Viktoria Joner, soprano, Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
Solvi Skogstad, mezzo-soprano, Oslo National Academy of the Arts



*Participants, organisers, and Ulrike Köstinger (CEO, Operabase),  
August 2023*

*Photo: Tonje Bentsen / QSSC*



QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

## INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS 2023

### DENMARK

Rasmus Weirup from [Seismograf](#)

### ITALY

Paolo Locatelli from [Classic Voice](#)

Nicola Cattò from [Rivista Musica](#)

### POLAND

Jacek Kornak from [Prestoportal](#)

Dorota Kozinska from [Atorod](#)

Leszek Bernat from [Ruch Muzyczny](#)

### UNITED KINGDOM

Laura Servidei from [Bachtrack](#)

Hugh Morris from [Opera Now](#)

### SWITZERLAND

Reinmar Wagner from [Musik & Theater](#)

### TURKEY

Serhan Bali from [Andante](#)

### GERMANY

Tobias Hell from [Klassikinfo](#)

Bettina Volksdorf from [Radio MDR](#)

### USA

David Salazar from [Operawire](#)



QUEEN SONJA  
SINGING  
COMPETITION

PARTNERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

NATIONAL PARTNERS

The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet  
The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK)  
Norwegian Academy of Music  
Oslo National Academy of the Arts  
The Royal Court  
Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Jette Parker Artists Programme, Royal Opera House, London  
Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Metropolitan Opera, New York  
The Opera Studio, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich  
The International Opera Studio, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin  
Internationales Opernstudio, Opernhaus Zürich  
National Opera Studio, London

CONTRIBUTORS

Anders Sveaas' Charitable Foundation  
Canica AS  
Formue  
The City of Oslo  
Eilif Holte's Foundation  
Ingrid Bjoner Scholarship  
The Norwegian Ministry of Culture  
The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Lucy Høegh's Foundation  
The Lindeman Foundation  
Sat Sapienti Foundation