

## NATHAN LAY ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF THE 2016 AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL OPERA AWARD



The Chairman of the Australian International Opera Awards (AIOA), William Cowan AM, is delighted to announce that the winner of the 2016 AIOA Scholarship is baritone Nathan Lay.

This prestigious award, valued at \$54,000, pays all the expenses for one year of full time academic study at the Wales International Academy of Voice (WIAV) under the guidance of its internationally acclaimed tenor and director Dennis O'Neil CBE.

Nathan completed his Bachelor of Music at the Melba Conservatorium of Music in 2008. He has since established his career in the Melbourne opera and oratorio scene. In 2010, Nathan won the National Liederfest, and Australian Music Events' "Opera Scholar of the Year". In 2013, he won the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria competition, and also received 3rd Place in the prestigious Herald Sun Aria competition at Hamer Hall.

In 2013, Nathan made his first appearances with Opera Australia in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *Aida*. He also played 'Guglielmo' in *Così fan tutte* for Melbourne Opera. For Victorian Opera, he performed 'The King' in *El Gato con Botas*, 'Louis the Baker' and 'Billy Webster' in *Sunday in the Park with George*, and 'Bunyip Bluegum' in the world Premiere (and Greenroom Award winning opera ensemble) of *The Magic Pudding – The Opera*.

Nathan has just completed his second year at Victorian Opera as a member of their Developing Artist Program.

During his time with the company in 2014, he performed 'Barone Duphol' in *La Traviata*, the 'Father' in *Hansel and Gretel*, and sang in the chorus for Bellini's *Norma*. Towards the end of 2014, Nathan performed his second season with Opera Australia in Verdi's *Tosca* and *Falstaff*. In 2015, Nathan performed for Victorian Opera in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, 'Sir Riccardo Forth' in Bellini's *I Puritani*, 'Young Recruit' in a new production composed by Richard Mills called *Remembrance* alongside David Hobson, and in the quartet for Weill's *Die sieben Todsünden* featuring Meow Meow.

This year the AIOA award attracted a record number of extraordinarily gifted applicants from all over Australia.

Chairman of the AIOA Music Board Roger Lemke, in awarding the scholarship to Nathan said:

\* Nathan has a beautiful baritone quality with a distinctive tone and resonance. We are confident that this together with his fierce determination and commitment to reaching his full potential, will greatly assist him to launch his career on the International operatic stage. We welcome him into the AIOA family which includes many young Australians who are making important contributions to opera worldwide. So far AIOA has sent over 35 talented singers for study in the UK.\*

In accepting the award Nathan said:

\* I'm thrilled to be the recipient of the Australian International Opera Award this year. It is an incredibly generous scholarship, and I'm very grateful for the support of the AIOA. I am really looking forward to this wonderful opportunity to head to Wales, and study with Dennis O'Neill who is widely regarded as one of the finest singing teachers in the world.\*

The annual Australian International Opera Award is a A\$54,000 scholarship and covers all tuition, board and lodging, plus travel to and from Australia and a living allowance to cover incidental expenses for 10 months at WIAV.

WIAV is based at the University of Wales. Its Director is the world renowned tenor, Dennis O'Neill CBE. The Academy was formed in 2006 and, thanks to the unique and intense way that it teaches and its ability to attract superstars of the opera world to run its master classes, it is already widely recognised as the best postgraduate school of its type in the world. Its goal is to help young professional singers to prepare themselves for an international career in opera.

For further information on the WIAV see <http://www.tsd.ac.uk/en/wiav/>

Dennis, who was recently awarded a highly prestigious honorary membership of the Royal Academy of Music, selects only 12 to 15 of the highest potential young opera singers worldwide to study at the Academy each year.

Nathan will commence his studies in September 2016.

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