



SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE
18. Juli – 31. August 2022

Press Release of the Salzburg Festival

Young Singers Project 2022

Supported by the Kühne Foundation, main sponsor of the Salzburg Festival



Serafina Starke (GER), Festival President Dr. Kristina Hammer, Alma Neuhaus (USA), Flore Van Meerssche (BEL)
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Nicole Chirka (UKR), Aleksei Kulagin (RUS), Ann-Kathrin Niemczyk (GER), YSP Director Evamaria Wieser
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(SF, 4 July 2022) “Our Young Singers Project offers vocalists ideal conditions to work on repertoire with renowned coaches and further develop their artistic abilities. As director of the Young Singers Project, Evamaria Wieser continues to prove her unerring instinct for discovering and selecting outstanding vocal talents,” says Artistic Director **Markus Hinterhäuser**.

“This year we look forward to welcoming 15 participants from nine nations who will appear in seven productions. The Young Singers Project ideally illustrates the Salzburg Festival’s endeavours to engage with the next generation and support selected young talents to the best of our abilities,” Festival President **Dr. Kristina Hammer** characterizes the YSP concept.

With the Young Singers Project, the Salzburg Festival created a platform fostering young vocalists in 2008. Since this long-standing success story began, 182 young singers from 45 countries have participated; this year the participants come from Germany, Belgium, South Korea, the USA, Ireland, Thailand and Italy – as well as two singers from Ukraine and one from Russia.

The singers are chosen by Evamaria Wieser at international auditions. As part of their fellowship, they are offered a comprehensive educational programme. Tuition includes not only music lessons and repertoire expansion, but also stage rehearsals, language coaching, *lied* interpretation and working with Festival artists. Master classes and a strong practical orientation make YSP an international model for young artist programmes. Public master classes will be offered this summer by Malcolm Martineau, Lisette Oropesa and Piotr Beczala.

Every year, the participants in the Young Singers Project are featured in the children’s opera performances; this year the new production will be Stefan Johannes Hanke’s *Der Teufel mit*



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den drei goldenen Haaren. They also appear in productions of the 2022 Festival season and present themselves to the audience in a final concert on 27 August. The concert at the Main Auditorium of the Mozarteum Foundation features the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg under the baton of Adrian Kelly. For many concertgoers, this performance by the young singers is the emotional highlight of their visit to the Salzburg Festival.

Free tickets for the public master classes are available online from 2 July 2022 onwards via www.salzburgerfestspiele.at. Please note that these tickets must be personalized.

The participants of the 2022 Young Singers Project will perform in the following productions and roles this summer:

IL TRITTICO

Martina Russomano (Soprano) - Un'amante, Suor Osmina
Alma Neuhaus (Mezzo-Soprano) - Seconda Cercatrice
Liam James Karai (Bass-Baritone) - Guccio
Aleksei Kulagin (Bass) - Pinellino

KÁŤA KABANOVÁ

Ann-Kathrin Niemczyk (Soprano) - Fekluša
Nicole Chirka (Mezzo-Soprano) – Glaša / A Woman

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Ann-Kathrin Niemczyk (Soprano) - Alisa
Seungwoo Simon Yang (Tenor) - Normanno

AIDA

Flore Van Meerssche (Soprano) - Sacerdotessa

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE

Jasmin Delfs (Coloratura Soprano) – Queen of the Night (10 August)

DER TEUFEL MIT DEN DREI GOLDENEN HAAREN

Serafina Starke (Soprano) – The Princess
Sofia Vinnik (Mezzo-Soprano) – The Child of Fortune
Niklas Mayer (Tenor) - Ferryman / Rather Stupid Robber / Inhabitant of the Sick Land
Pete Thanapat (Bass-Baritone) - Devil / Robber Boss / Inhabitant of the Sick Land
Alexandre Fritze (Bass) – The Devil's Grandmother / Slow Robber / Inhabitant of the Sick Land

CONCERT OF THE VIENNA PHILHARMONIC (20, 22 August) under the baton of Daniel Barenboim



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Second Act from *Parsifal* WWV 111

Sopranos: Serafina Starke, Ann Kathrin Niemczyk, Flore Van Meerssche, Jasmin Delfs
Mezzo-Sopranos: Alma Neuhaus, Sofia Vinnik
as Flower Girls

Further information on the master classes and YSP final concert can be found here:
<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/s/young-singers-project>

Biographies of the 2022 YSP Fellows

Serafina Starke



German soprano Serafina Starke was born in Munich in 2000 and was three when she received her first lessons on the violin and the piano. In 2013 she sang the role of Flora (The Turn of the Screw) with Opera Incognita in Munich. In 2021 she took the part of Papagena (Die Zauberflöte) at a concert for children organized by the Munich Philharmonic. Also in 2021 she appeared as Antiope in Maria Antonia Walpurgis's Talestri with the Munich Chamber Opera and in 2022 appeared with the same company as Ela Delahay in Ernst Fischer's Charleys Tante. In June 2022 she sang Amore and Valletto in a Mozarteum production of L'incoronazione di Poppea. Serafina Starke has won prizes at several competitions and holds scholarships from the Gianna Szel

Scholarship Foundation and the Fritz Wunderlich Society. She has been studying singing at the Salzburg Mozarteum since 2018 and the violin since 2020.

Ann- Kathrin Niemczyk



Soprano Ann-Kathrin Niemczyk was born in Hagen and began studying singing in 2015 with Melanie Maennl, who continues to be her vocal coach. She gained her earliest experience of the stage as a child soloist at the Hagen Theatre, performing parts that included the Third Boy (Die Zauberflöte), the Forester's Son (The Cunning Little Vixen), a Noble Orphan (Der Rosenkavalier) and a Peasant Girl (Le nozze di Figaro). Since October 2018 she has been studying with Markus Köhler and Manuel Lange at the Detmold School of Music. As part of her studies she recently sang the Countess (Le nozze di Figaro). Among the many prizes that Ann-Kathrin Niemczyk has won in international competitions are a scholarship from the Federal Singing Competition in Berlin and a Grand Prix at the 2019

International Giulio Perotti Singing Competition in Ueckermünde. In 2021 she received first prizes in the Iris Adami Corradetti Concorso Lirico Internazionale in Padua and at the International Johannes Brahms Competition in Pörtlach.



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Flore Van Meerssche



Belgian soprano Flore Van Meerssche made her professional stage debut as Irina in Johann Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow* at the 2021 Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. Other roles in her repertoire include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*), the title role in Maria Antonia Walpurgis's *Talestri*, Minerva (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) and Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*). In 2021 she and the pianist Gyeongtaek Lee won the Prix de Mélodie at the International Competition of the Nadia and Lili Boulanger Centre in Paris. In 2022 they also won a scholarship from the LIEDBasel International Festival. Among the conductors under whom Flore Van Meerssche has sung are Philippe Pierlot, Alessandro de Marchi and Andrea Marchiol, while the ensembles with which she has appeared include Collegium Vocale of Ghent, the *ricercar* consort, the *capella sollertia*, the Munich

Chamber Opera and the Bavarian Chamber Philharmonic. She completed her master's degree *summa cum laude* with Fenna Kügel-Seifried in Munich. In 2021 Philippe Herreweghe invited her to attend a Bach workshop in Ghent. She also holds bursaries from the Deutscher Bühnenverein and from the Richard Wagner Society in Munich.

Martina Russomanno



Italian soprano Martina Russomanno was born in Livorno and was only eleven when she began her artistic career as an actress and as a pop singer. She then began to train as a classical singer in her home city and by the age of fifteen was singing minor roles in operas by Puccini and Mascagni. By 2017 she had joined Michèle Crider's class at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. In 2020 she made her debut as Juliette (*Die tote Stadt*) at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels and in 2021 appeared as Vitellia in a college production of *La clemenza di Tito* at the Mozarteum. Her most recent appearances have been as Fortuna and Drusilla (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) for the Opéra de Dijon and at the Théâtre de l'Athénée in Paris. Martina Russomanno has won prizes in

several competitions, including the Concorso Lirico Internazionale di Portofino, the Duschek Competition, the Concorso AsLiCo and the Vincerò International Singing Competition. Since September 2021 she has been a member of the Opera Academy of the Paris Opéra, where she will make her debut as Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*) in the autumn of 2022.

Jasmin Delfs



Jasmin Delfs was born in Eutin in Schleswig-Holstein and studied singing with Manuela Uhl at Lübeck's Academy of Music. She made her debut at the Eutin Festival in 2019 as Fatime (*Abu Hassan*). Her repertoire also includes parts such as Linfea (*La Calisto*), the Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*), Viktoria (*Viktoria und ihr Husar*) and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*). She won third prize in the Maritim Music Awards in 2019 as well as the audience prize, a sponsorship

award and an engagement with the Hamburg Chamber Opera. At the 2021 Concorso Lirico Internazionale di Portofino she was awarded the 'Under 25 Prize' and also won the third prize



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and a special prize at the International Cesti Competition at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. She has been a member of the Opera Studio of the Bavarian State Opera since the start of the 2021/22 season, appearing in a number of roles that have included Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Vespina in a new production of Haydn's *L'infedeltà delusa*. As a concert artist she has been heard in Hamburg's Laeiszhalle and elsewhere.

Alma Neuhaus



Mezzo-soprano Alma Neuhaus completed her studies at New York's Juilliard School in 2021 and made her stage debut as Jenny Reefer in a co-production of Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All* staged jointly by the Juilliard School, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Philharmonic. She has also been heard as Arcane in a college production of Handel's *Teseo* at New York's Lincoln Center and at concerts in Alice Tully Hall. As a concert singer she has appeared with the ensemble Juilliard415. In 2020 and 2021 she was a member of the Music Academy of the West in California, where she appeared as the Sandman in a video-streamed production of *Hänsel und Gretel*, was featured in *Mirrorflores: Cinematic Opera* and participated in several concerts. In 2021 she received the Liederkrantz Foundation's second prize in the competition organized by the Gerda Lissner Foundation in New York. From September 2022 Alma Neuhaus will be joining the Opera Studio of the Vienna State Opera, where she will be appearing in productions of *La Cenerentola* and *Madama Butterfly*.

Sofia Vinnik



German mezzo-soprano Sofia Vinnik was a finalist in the 2018 International Cesti Competition at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. That same year she was also awarded a scholarship by the Federal Singing Competition in Berlin. From 2020 to 2022 she was a member of the Young Ensemble at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna, where her roles included Albine and Myrtale in Massenet's *Thaïs* and Afra in Catalani's *La Wally*. She also sang Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Orphée in Gluck's *Orphée et Euridice* and Asteria in Vivaldi's *Bajazet* with the Chamber Opera of the Theater an der Wien. In October 2021 she sang songs by Franz Liszt at a concert given in Vienna by Jeunesse – Musikalische Jugend Österreichs alongside Thomas Hampson and under the musical direction of Martin Haselböck. Sofia Vinnik holds a bursary from the 2020 Heidelberg Spring Festival's Song Academy and also from the Cecilia Bartoli Music Foundation. She was initially taught by Christoph Strehl at Salzburg's Mozarteum University and is currently studying for a master's degree with Florian Boesch and Edith Lienbacher at Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts.

Nicole Chirka



Mezzo-soprano Nicole Chirka was born in Kharkiv (Ukraine) and studied with Alexander Vostryakov at the National Academy of Music in Kyiv, where her roles included Laura (Iolanta), Maddalena (Rigoletto), Marcellina (Le nozze di Figaro), Olga (Eugene Onegin) and Lyubasha in excerpts from Rimsky-Korsakov's The Tsar's Bride. It was as Olga that she made her debut at the Kyiv National Opera in 2020. Since the start of the 2021/22 season she has been a member of the Young Opera Ensemble at the Dresden State Opera, where her roles to date have included the Third Lady (Die Zauberflöte) and Kate Pinkerton (Madama Butterfly).

Seungwoo Simon Yang



Seungwoo Simon Yang was born in South Korea in 1997. Since October 2018 he has been studying with Carolyn James at Hamburg's University of Music and Theatre and since the start of the 2020/21 season he has been a member of the International Opera Studio of the Hamburg State Opera. He has already won numerous prizes in competitions in South Korea and Germany. These include first prizes in the 2014 Ewha Kyunghyang Music Competition, the Shin Youngok Singing Competition and the Shinhan Music Awards. In 2018 he won the second prize at the Maritim Music Awards and in 2020 was awarded the first prize at the Mozart Prize Awards at Hamburg's University of Music and Theatre. Seungwoo Simon Yang has appeared in numerous concerts in South Korea and Europe. In college productions he has sung roles that include Ferrando (Cosi fan tutte) and Pilade in Handel's pasticcio Oreste.

Niklas Mayer



Niklas Mayer was born in Heidelberg and gained his earliest experience of music in the world of rock and pop, performing with a number of local and national bands. It was the mezzo-soprano Astrid Siebe-Wagner who first trained him in classical singing. He began a teacher-training course at Karlsruhe's Pedagogical University, while continuing to have singing lessons. He resumed his studies in Salzburg in 2015 and joined Mario Antonio Diaz-Varas's class at the Mozarteum University the following year. Since 2021 he has additionally attended Kai Röhrig's class in 'musical and dramatic portrayal'. In September 2021 he sang Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni) in the Vienna Konzerthaus with the ensemble of the Vienna Philharmonic's Angelika Prokopp Summer Academy.

Liam James Karai



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Bass-baritone Liam James Karai, who has Scottish, Irish and Indian roots, is currently studying for a postgraduate diploma at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester under the tutelage of Quentin Hayes. In September 2022 he will join the International Opera Studio of the Hamburg State Opera. His operatic experience includes covering Parsi Rustomji in Philip Glass's *Satyagraha* at the English National Opera and appearing as Martino in Rossini's *L'occasione fa il ladro* with British Youth Opera. His repertoire also includes Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), the Badger and Priest in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the Footman and Major-Domo in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Most recently he has been heard as Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at the Royal Northern College of Music and as a member of the chorus in Opera North's touring production of Wagner's *Parsifal*. Liam James Karai has been

awarded an Andrew Lloyd Webber Scholarship in addition to winning a Frederic Cox Award and the Silver Medal of the Royal Northern College of Music. In 2021 he represented the College in the Joaninha Trust Competition.

Pete Thanapat



Thai bass-baritone Pete Thanapat completed his bachelor's degree at the Salzburg Mozarteum University, where his teachers included Mario Antonio Diaz-Varas (singing) and Pauliina Tukiainen (lieder). He is currently studying for a master's degree in Krassimira Stoyanova's class at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Pete Thanapat was a finalist in the 2019 International Otto Edlmann Singing Competition and won the Perry Nelson Special Prize in the International Hilde Zadek Singing Competition that

was held in Vienna that same year. In 2014 he appeared as Maestro Spinelloccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) at the Bergenhus Fortress Summer Festival in the Norwegian city of Bergen and in the following years sang Ottone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) and Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in college productions at the Mozarteum. In October 2020 he appeared as Belcore in the Thai premiere of *L'elisir d'amore* in Bangkok. Among the experienced singers, directors and conductors with whom he has worked are Karoline Gruber, Alexander von Pfeil, Christof Loy, Kai Röhrig, Bruno Weil, Andreas Schmidt and Andreas Scholl. He has given recitals in Norway, Sweden, Italy, Germany and Austria.

Vladyslav Buialskyi



Bass-baritone Vladyslav Buialskyi grew up in Berdiansk in Ukraine. In 2015 he began studying at the Reinhold Glière Institute of Music in Kyiv and in 2021 completed his bachelor's degree in Nikolai Koval's class at Kyiv's National Academy of Music. In 2019 he won a special prize at the International Stanisław Moniuszko Competition at Warsaw's Teatr Wielki and the Brian Dickie Young Singers Award at the New Voices International Singing Competition in Gütersloh. In 2020



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he was a finalist in the Tenor Viñas Contest and as a result was invited to join the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He made his Met debut in February 2022 as a Flemish Deputy (Don Carlos) and was heard as the Captain in Eugene Onegin.

Alexander Fritze



Bass Alexander Fritze initially studied percussion at the Saar University of Music in Saarbrücken before turning to singing and joining Rosemarie Bühler-Fey's class. He made his professional stage debut in 2017 as the Second Man in Armour (*Die Zauberflöte*) with Longborough Festival Opera. He completed his master's degree summa cum laude in Rudolf Piernay's class at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2020 and the following year completed a postgraduate course at Vienna's Music and Arts Private University, where he was awarded the institution's 'certificate of performance'. Also in 2021 he sang the Commendatore in a production of *Don Giovanni* mounted by the

Vienna Philharmonic's Angelika Prokopp Summer Academy. Two years earlier he had sung Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Ettlingen Palace Festival. He has been a member of the International Opera Studio of the Zurich Opera since the start of the 2021/22 season and during this time has appeared in productions of *Salome*, *Dialogues des Carmélites* and *Macbeth*.

Aleksei Kulagin



Russian bass Aleksei Kulagin was born in Orel and was a soloist with the Zazerkalie Theatre in St Petersburg in 2018/19. He completed his studies at St Petersburg's Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in 2019 and joined the Young Artist Programme at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, where his teachers have included Dmitry Vdovin. He has also attended masterclasses given by Neil Shicoff, Sergei Leiferkus, Ernesto Palacio and Ildar Abdrazakov and worked with musicians such as Luba Orfenova, Mzia Bakhtouridze, Semion Skigin and Ivori Ilja as well as the conductors Tugan Sokhiev, Dmitry Korchak and Mikhail Sinkevich. Aleksei Kulagin won the fourth prize at the 2022 Tenor Viñas Contest in Barcelona. In 2021 he won first prizes at the Opera Crown International Singing Competition in Tbilisi and the Galina Vishnevskaya International Singing Competition in Moscow, the

second prize in the Elena Obraztsova Singing Competition in St Petersburg and the first prize in the José Carreras Grand Prix in Moscow.

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