



GARSINGTON OPERA  
AT WORMSLEY

## THREE SINGERS AND ONE CONDUCTOR WIN AWARDS

Winners of this year's prestigious **Leonard Ingrams Foundation** awards are baritone **Benjamin Lewis** and conductor **Jack Ridley**. These awards support, encourage and nurture the best young artists involved in the creative process of bringing opera to the stage, and are made in memory of Garsington Opera's founder Leonard Ingrams, to ensure the continuity of his vision. Two further awards to rising young artists have also been won: the **Helen Clarke Award** by soprano **Lauren Zolezzi** and the **Simon Sandbach Award** by tenor **James Way**. These awards are made in recognition of their extraordinary talent, musical skill and contribution to the 2016 Garsington Opera productions.

All three singers were part of the Alvarez Young Artists' Programme that aims to provide invaluable training and performance opportunities to those selected. They perform on stage in the chorus, in small roles and understudy major roles, working alongside eminent and inspiring principal artists. This year a full length schools' performance of *Eugene Onegin* was sung by the understudies. Further opportunities are given to participate in masterclasses, training seminars on professional development and public recitals.

In 2017 **James Way** returns to sing a principal role in Roxanna Panufnik's **Silver Birch**, and both **Jack Ridley** and **Lauren Zolezzi** will be taking part in the 2018 opera season.

**Benjamin Lewis** who understudied the title role of Eugene Onegin said:

*I am enormously flattered and grateful to be given the Leonard Ingrams Award, which will provide invaluable financial support for my continued studies at the National Opera Studio, allow me to audition in places I would not otherwise be able to afford to go, and continue to increase my proficiency with languages which will be essential if I am to further my career both in the UK and abroad.*

Assistant conductor of Eugene Onegin, and conductor of the schools OperaFirst performance, **Jack Ridley** said: *It's a huge privilege to receive the Leonard Ingrams Award after spending a wonderful and rewarding summer working at Garsington. This award will be of great value to my professional development, enabling me to afford to buy scores and travel abroad for research, masterclasses and auditions.*

**Lauren Zolezzi** who understudied the role of Ilia in *Idomeneo* said: *To receive coaching from Susanna Stranders, attend talks and masterclasses with industry professionals as well as spend time on an idyllic estate in Oxfordshire, was a wonderful experience. Support like this award for young singers is a lifeline as it is tricky to make ends meet at the beginning of a singing career.*

**James Way** who understudied the role of Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* said: *This year was my second year on the Alvarez Young Artists' Programme. The opportunity that the understudies were given by performing Eugene Onegin on stage, with full orchestra, sets and costumes, as part of the OperaFirst programme was a highlight of the season for me. The reception the show received from the auditorium full of enraptured school children is something I'll never forget. I'm thrilled to have been awarded the Simon Sandbach Award.*

The 2017 season that runs from 1 June to 30 July features four opera productions – Handel's *Semele*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Rossini's *Il turco in Italia*. Roxanna Panufnik's new opera *Silver Birch* commissioned by Garsington Opera, for professional singers and over 180 amateur performers, completes the season.

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