

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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ACHIEVEMENTS FLOW FOR CON STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

2008 is emerging as a new benchmark year for prestigious awards and accomplishments for Sydney Conservatorium of Music students, past and present.

Valda Wilson (DipOp graduate) recently won the 2008 Rockend London National Opera Studio Scholarship, valued at \$55,000.

Of the six finalists for this highly sought after national scholarship, formerly known as the Covent Garden Scholarship, four were from the Con – Valda, **Matthew Thomas** (AdvDipOp graduate) **Helen Sherman** (DipOp graduate) and **Catherine Bouchier** (BMus (Perf) DipOp graduate).

Emma Moore won the Dame Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Scholarship at the McDonald's Performing Arts Challenge. Some 76 singers were assessed for the award.

Two other members of The Con's Vocal Unit – **Amy Corkery and Morgan Pearse** - made it through to the final eight.

The Chairman of the adjudicating panel was Richard Bonyngé.

Natalie Aroyan (DipOp graduate) has continued her trajectory with a No 1 placing in the \$43,000 Opera Foundation, Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship, which will enable her to study in New York with the coaching staff from the Metropolitan Opera.

Natalie established a rapport with Met staff earlier in the year through the Nelly Apt Scholarship she claimed as a result of making the finals of the 2007 Mathy Australian Singing Competition.

Two other Con graduates also finished among the six national finalists for the New York award - **Clarissa Spata** (BMus (Perf) graduate) and **Matthew Thomas** (AdvDipOp graduate).

Caroline Wenborne (BMus (Perf) and DipOp graduate) is to take temporary leave from Vienna State Opera next year to sing Donna Anna for the Victorian State Opera. She is currently preparing for the role of Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung* for a premiere performance at the Vienna State Opera.

David Hansen. (BMus (Perf) graduate) will sing the Britten Canticules with Ian Bostridge, Christopher Maltman and Julius Drake at the Wiener Konzerthaus. Monteverdi-L'incoronazione di Poppea (Nerone) for the Victorian Opera under Richard Gill.

He will also sing the Handel Arias with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Orchestra; Bernard Labadie, conductor.

Meanwhile, **Brad Cooper** (DipOp graduate) was the featured tenor for operatic arias and duets with Anna Netrebko and Ruxandra Donose in a Bel Canto concert with the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra in Moscow.

Last month he sang at the Wexford Festival as the lead in *Pedrotto Tutti* in *Maschera*, then in Paris for Wagner's *Die Feen* as Gunter at the Châtelet under Marc Minkowski, followed by a performance as Lindoro in the *Italian Girl in Algiers* (Rossini) in Cologne, Germany.

In other major 2008 achievements:

- **Catherine Bouchier** (BMus (Perf) DipOp graduate) was runner-up in the 2008 McDonald's Operatic Aria.
- **David Corcoran** is set to join **Andrew Moran** as a Young Artist for Opera Australia in 2009.
- **Kate Tier** (BMus (Perf) graduate) is completing a second year in the San Francisco Young Artists program. She appears in two films as part of the SFO Opera Broadcast series: Madame Butterfly and La Rondine.
- **Russell Harcourt** (BMus (Perf) graduate) has won the Joan Sutherland Society Scholarship and is a Young Artist for the Britten-Pears program for 2008, having won the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Awards.
- **Emma Jayakumar** (MastersOp graduate) recently performed Cherubino (Marriage of Figaro) for the Brighton Festival and Dido (Dido and Aeneas) in Israel.

"This is an outstanding set of achievements and performances, and more beckon," said Dean and Principal, Professor Kim Walker.

"Our students and graduates have done themselves and The Con extremely proud, and we can all feel inspired by these efforts."

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