# **The Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards 2016**

# **Press Pack Copy – 11 October**

## **Judges Biographies**

### **Rosemary Joshua**

Rosemary Joshua was born in Cardiff and studied at the Welsh College of Music and Drama and at the Royal College of Music, London, of which she is now a Fellow.

Since making her debut at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as Angelica Orlando, it is above all as a Handel singer that Rosemary Joshua has built her international reputation. She has sung Angelica for the Bayerische Staatsoper and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Poppea Agrippina at Cologne, La Monnaie and Théâtre des Champs-Elysées; Cleopatra Giulio Cesare for Théâtre des Champs-Elysées and Dutch National Opera; Ginevra Ariodante in San Diego and Moscow and the title role Semele to critical acclaim for the Aix-en-Provence and Innsbruck Festivals, Flanders Opera, Cologne, the BBC Proms and for English National Opera. Most recently she has sung Partenope for ENO and Nitocris Belshazzar with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants on a European tour including the Aix-en-Provence Festivals.

### **Joan Rodgers**

Joan Rodgers is equally established in opera, concert and as a recitalist. She has appeared in concert with conductors including Solti, Barenboim, Mehta, Harnoncourt, Mackerras, Ashkenazy, Salonen, Rattle, Elder and Bolton. She has appeared in recitals and concerts throughout Europe and the USA. Operatic engagements

have included performances at all the major UK opera houses as well as in Paris, Munich, Brussels, Amsterdam and Vienna and the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Her many recordings include albums of songs by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Wolf, Fauré and Mozart and the three Mozart Da Ponte operas with Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin Philharmonic.

Joan Rodgers received the Royal Philharmonic Society award as Singer of the Year for 1997, the 1997 Evening Standard Award for outstanding performance in opera for her performance as The Governess in the Royal Opera’s production of The Turn of the Screw and an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Liverpool University in July 2005. Joan Rodgers was awarded the CBE in the 2001 New Year’s Honours List.

### **Julian Jacobson**

Julian Jacobson was born in Peebles, Scotland and studied in London from the age of seven with Lamar Crowson (piano) and Arthur Benjamin (composition), and had published four songs by the age of nine. From 1959 to 1968 he studied at the Royal College of Music where his principal teachers were John Barstow and Humphrey Searle. On graduating with the Sarah Mundlak Piano Prize in 1968 he took up a scholarship to read Music at Queen’s College, Oxford. At this time, he was also a founder member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Julian Jacobson is currently a professor of piano and chamber music at the Royal College of Music. He was Artistic Director of the Paxos International Festival, Greece, from 1988 to 2004, is Artistic Director of “Rencontres Musicales à Eygalières”, and teaches regularly at Cadenza Summer School at the Purcell School, North London. He has given masterclasses in Germany, Paris, Budapest (Franz Liszt Academy), Spain, Sweden, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, the Middle East, and on many occasions in Dartington.

### **Saffron van Zwanenberg**

Saffron has been Artistic Director at Jackdaws since 2009. She trained at the RCM and is a 1st class associate, graduating from the Opera Course with Distinction. She then won a prestigious RCM Junior Fellowship sponsored by the Rosemary Bugden Foundation and has worked as a singer for many companies including Garsington, the London Handel society and the Aldeburgh Festival. At the same time she maintains a successful directing career and has directed shows for Garden Opera at the RCM and the RAM, a show at the Cochrane Theatre in Holborn as well as very diverse projects for Mid Wales Opera and ENO Baylis, and of course for Jackdaws.

## **Vocal Awards Copy – Short (224 words)**

The Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards at London’s Wigmore Hall will see Talented young singers from around the world competing for the £2,000 first prize on Friday 28 October at 1pm. Organised annually by Jackdaws Music Education Trust, a Somerset based charity, the award is unique in its recognition of potential as much as achievement; many previous winners have progressed to highly successful singing careers.

Following preliminary auditions held over the weekend of 8th and 9th October, eight shortlisted finalists will each sing a 20 minute programme including works by Handel and Peter Wishart, in addition to two pieces of their own choice, for a panel of distinguished judges - Rosemary Joshua, Joan Rodgers and Julian Jacobson. The panel is chaired by Jackdaws’ Artistic Director, Saffron van Zwanenberg, who said-

“2016 saw more applications than any year previously in the 24 times this Award has been presented. The quality of singing heard during the preliminaries was extraordinarily high, so the competition is sure to be close at the Wigmore Hall final.”

Prizes are – 1st place - £2,000; 2nd place - £1,000; 3rd place - £500; Accompanist prize - £1,000; Audience prize - £500. The 2016 Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards are possible because of the generous support from The Mercers’ Company, The Rosemary Budgen Charitable Trust, Cooper Hall Emerging Artists, Frome Voices and the Jackdaws Trustees.

## **Vocal Awards Copy – Long (411 words)**

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In addition to the First Prize of £2,000 there is a Second Prize of £1,000 and 3rd Prize of £500. The best accompanist on the day will also be recognised with a prize of £1000 and one singer will be presented with the Audience prize, voted for by audience ballot whilst the judges deliberate the overall winner. The 2016 Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards are possible because of the generous support from The Mercers’ Company, The Rosemary Budgen Charitable Trust, Cooper Hall Emerging Artists, Frome Voices and the Jackdaws Trustees, to all of whom Jackdaws are extremely grateful.

Originally launched as the Great Elm Vocal Award in 1992, the competition has undergone several changes in recent years; it was renamed the Jackdaws Vocal Award for 2010 before becoming the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards in 2011 in memory of mezzo-soprano and Jackdaws founder Maureen Lehane Wishart, following her death in December 2010. The newly renamed 2011 awards were combined with a Gala concert at St Georges, Hanover Square, to celebrate Maureen’s life and work. The finals have been held at the Wigmore Hall since 2006 to further their purpose, which has always been to support young singers between the ages of 22 and 30 making their move towards a career in opera.

Previous winners have been Mary Nelson (1995), Sarah Fox (1996), Christopher Maltman (1994), Andrew Kennedy (1999), Anna Leese (2006), Ruth Jenkins (2010) Marta Fontanals-Simons (2011) and Andrew Dickinson (2012).

## **Copy - About Jackdaws (165 words)**

Jackdaws core values are inspiration, access and inclusion, and our mission statement is “bringing music to life by enabling creative expression”.

Jackdaws Music Education Trust is based in Great Elm just outside Frome in Somerset, in an idyllic setting on the banks of the Mells Water.

Jackdaws is dedicated to improving and extending participation in and enjoyment of music. Throughout the year Jackdaws runs a programme of weekend music courses for instrumentalists and singers of all abilities, taught by tutors of the highest calibre.

We promote concerts and run a Young Artists programme featuring an annual opera and the prestigious Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards.

We also have a large youth and community programme which in 2015 saw three major projects make over 5,000 musical engagements with Somerset school children - “The Year of...”, and “Song Story” and “OperaPLUS”, which was voted the 'Best Classical Music Education Initiative 2015' at the Music Teacher Magazine Awards for Excellence. 2017 looks set to be our largest programme yet.