

[Return to top](#) **Elizabeth Watts (soprano) England**

Schubert Liebe schwärmt auf allen Wegen

Im abendrot

Rachmaninoff Zdes Khorosho

Oni otchevali

Barber Sure on theis shining night

Poulenc C

Fetes galantes

(initial grade 9.6)

age: 28

Superb in all respects.

Great diction, makes sense of phrases, shows that it can all be done with the voice, no particular overt hand or body movements, not stiff though. A beautiful lyric soprano, not a big voice.

Reflections

Heard her in concert first, did a beautiful Handel aria with just cello and continuo, then a fascinating short Symanowski orchestral song. Final was also well-thought out. She can be so charming.

[Return to top](#) **David DQ Lee (countertenor) Canada**

Hahn À Chloris

(initial grade 9, rescaled 9.4)

Quand je fus pris au pavilion

Poulenc Banalites

Isang A letter

age: 29

Schubert Erlkonig

Counter-tenor, very high placement, soprano. A complete performance, carefully though out placed perfectly in stage presentation as well as vocal work. Perfectly clear diction, some notes at the end of phrases not quite as sustained as might be, both Hahn songs were lovely. (Liz would be pleased, I think. The second, Quand je fus pris, had the non-chalance of delivery that our young Discovery singers have not managed.) Then the Banalités of Poulenc was perfect cabaret and beautifully sung. Leading up to an excellent Erlkonig, using his baritone for the father's voice, giving a little extra nasal in the soprano for the erl king, extremely effective and enjoyable performance overall.

Reflections

This was a real mistake on the judges part not bringing him into the song final. It would have forced everyone to really compete! He did win his night with the orchestra program, a program of great variety, a finely supported Haydn Arianna a Naxos and a fun and dramatic Jake Heggie song that was written for von Stade.

I have since gotten his baroque/classical recital CD, recorded two years ago in Toronto. Lives up to the live.

[Return to top](#) **Ryan McKinny (baritone) USA**

Loewe Erlkönig

Die Wandelnde Glocke

(initial grade 9, rescaled 9.2)

Ives Songs my mother taught me

The greatest man

Schubert Der vater mit dem kind

age: 27

Erlkönig

Very clear diction, good voice. Extroverted, likes the "acting" songs, I would like some more sheer beauty of voice, he can seem basicly excellent, without the color that others give, are giving in the competition. Well-constructed 6 song program, here and another, very justifiably in the song final. The best structured of all the programs we have gotten.

Of exceptional note, Llyr Williams (pianist) makes a fabulous piece of work of Erlkönig (talk about "layered" performance).

[Return to top](#) **Ivo Yordanov (baritone) Bulgaria**

Wolf Gesegnet sei, durch den die Welt entsund
Hristov Vino Pia
Rachmaninoff Hristos Vaskyres (christ is risen)
Falla El pano moruno
Brahms Treue Liebe
Britten Down by the Salley Gardens
Faure En sourdine

(initial grade 9)

age: 27

Needed to warm up a bit, the voice started out very much what I think of as the middle baritone sound, but the words were clear. Second song, a Bulgarian folk arrangement was lighter in spirit, drinking song sort of, gave him a little more room to loosen up. The Falla was good and the second "half Brahms - Britten - Fauré was really beautiful, the voice beautifully colored -- a really great half-voiced approach to the Britten arr. of Salley Gardens - made the wistful romanticism of a light song, very sweet, but not at all over the top. As so many non-native English speakers do, he has a little trouble with the "th" sound, but the fact was, you could hear that as well as every other word! (Especially in contrast to preceding singer's English, also an Eastern European.) French was perhaps not quite as clear but understandable and again well-characterized. Easy comfortable on stage.

Reflections

I think he would also have made a real competition out of the song final. I liked his orchestral program to but it didn't give the flair that would it need to take him to next stage. He showed interesting strength in the Donizetti coloratura, but it wasn't going to make that kind of impression in this situation.

With singers that one really likes over a lifetime, it always seems there is an indefinable touch of magic to which one responds, I will have to hear him again, but I think Yordanov might be one. It's the Salley Gardens that sticks with me.

[Return to top](#) **Wiard Witholt (baritone) Netherlands**

Schubert Der musenshon
De Lange Herbstgefühl
Komm jetzt
Duparc Chanson triste
L'invitation au voyage

(initial grade 8, rescaled 8.6)

age: 28

Very tall (later learned the tallest Cardiff participant to date). Clear diction, better pace than singer the previous day for Musensohn, really a fine performance. Dynamics will like even more development, has ranges very well in hand. Sometimes the top needs support, he has the notes he just needs to project more confidence through them. L'invitation needs a little more emphasis. (Since I just heard Maltman do this, tough comparison.) Very beautiful colors overall - Souzay-like. Interesting choice of the De Lange songs, but two of them were perhaps too similar in tone for a competition program like this.

Reflections

He told me that he has recorded a CD of De Lange which will be interesting to hear. Interestingly, his best orchestral piece was a scene from Owen Wingrave.

[Return to top](#) **Helena Juntunen (soprano) Finland**

Kuula Suutelo

Karjapihassa (in the cattleyard)

Haydn Pastorale

Strauss Mein Herz ist stumm

Cacilie

(initial grade 8.4)

age: 31

Lots of personality, round lyric soprano. Light in songs. Something strange in piano in the Finnish songs, yet voice had really good color. Strauss shows positively, as familiar songs she comes through very clear. English needs some more work. Pushes a little at the top.

[Return to top](#) **Johannes Weisser (baritone) Norway**

Schubert Gruppe aus dem Tartarus
Brahms Auf dem Kirchhof
Wolf Auf dem grünen Balkon
Alle gingen, Herz, zur ruh
Grieg Langs ei a (alongside stream)
Varen (spring)

(initial grade 8)

age: 27

Following a hard act with the very extrovert Mr. Lee, this guy was very solid, nice rich baritone, never quite got the coloration or variation of the preceding singers. Perfect diction in German and Norwegian, but even the Grieg weren't as communicated as well as I would like. They didn't really take you away. The Spanish Liederbuch songs need more fun, irony to them. But he seems to have all the equipment, he was always well produced vocally, he may really develop some more.

Reflections

Noting in his bio that Rene Jacob's has used him as the Don in a shortly to be released Don Giovanni, continuing a Mozart opera recording series that has been uniformly superb to date, shows that he has really impressed contemporary artists of stature at a young age. In his orchestral concert, he again sounded well-prepared and finely produced, perhaps he needs a more seasoned interpretative partner to bring out that last degree and make his performance really "live". He certainly did not have such a partner in his orchestral concert where Kaspzyk made an active mess of the Bach aria with an overblown orchestra that he didn't bother to keep together, and gave lazy disinterested accompaniments to Mozart and Wagner.

[Return to top](#) **Shen Yang (bass baritone) China**

Pfitzner Hast du von den Fischerkindern
Wolf Der Feuerreiter
Luting On the jialing
Schubert Prometheus

(initial grade 7.1, rescaled 7.9)

age: 23

I wasn't sure what to make of him, diction is good, is the meaning really there? A beautiful produced bass sound, has some drama, but cool somehow. The Feuerreiter is good, but I just heard Maltman last month, and last year, Genz, do this, where both were really electrifying (on fire one might say). Shows great promise.

Reflections

I was not surprized that he was selected for the song finals, since I left perplexed a bit about how to rank him. In the orchestral program, there was no need for surprize either, other than that a 23 year-old would deliver such a fine Flieder-monologue (Hans Sachs). He did a great job, and with a little seasoning, could equally bowl me over in song.

[Return to top](#) **Miranda Keys (soprano) Australia**

Medelssohn Neue Liebe

Hexenlied

Barber Saint Ita's vision

Sure on this shining night

Rangstrom Flickan kom ifran sin alsklings mote (The maiden's tryst)

Walton Old sir Faulk

(initial grade 7.4, rescaled 7.6)

age: 33

Dramatic soprano, but quite agile, though not completely in control. Walton with its jazzy complex rhythm is not her idiom. These "crossoverish" songs are a difficult challenge for many singers. Very resplendent in Ransgtrom and Sibelius though "Flickan" can be more pointed in the text (re Flagstad).

Reflections

Again inexplicably, chosen for both finals (less so in the orchestral one), she repeated both Walton and Sibelius with orchestra and piano, it just made it clearer how much work this singer is going to have to do to present these as masterworks for her voice. She needs to work more with someone who really knows Swedish.

[Return to top](#) **Jacques Imbrailo (baritone) South Africa**

Schubert Der Musensohn

Schumann Meine Rose

Duparc Phydile

Dvorak Kterak Trojhranec Muj (Ring out triangle)

Rachmaninoff V molchan ji nochi taynoy (In the silence of the Night)

trad. Op my ou ramkiekie

(initial grade 7, rescaled 7.5)

age: 28

Very pretty tenorish baritone. He his personable on stage. Languages/ diction clear but not telling, overall interpretation wasn't quite there, Musensohn not as pointed rhythmically as I expect, Phydilé, fine, but not close to Maltman's. Rachmaninoff, In the silence of the night was probably his best. Of course this Afrikaans folk song is interesting.

Reflections

Would have won his opera night, but for Moriya's coloratura thrills. So he won the audience prize.

Was very interesting in the Hagegaard masterclass working on the Don Giovanni Deh vieni a la fenestra. Hagegaard's interpretation is not the only one, but allowed Imbrailo to show a very winning side of his voice.

[Return to top](#) **Luciano Botelho (tenor) Brazil**

Wolf Fussreise

Verborgtheit

(initial grade 8, rescaled 7.4)

Faure Nell

Fleur jetee

Villa-lobos Nhapope Lundu da

age: 32

Marquesa de santos

The voice seems less comfortable than in the opera evening , maybe it's the day or the theater. He is nevertheless language is completely clear, just not communicatively compelling somehow. With just a small exception everything is mezzo-forte.

[Return to top](#) **Anna Victorova (mezzo-soprano) Russia**

Rachmaninoff Ya zhdu tebya
trad Crane
Schubert Gretchen am Spinnrade
Granados La maja dolorosa 1, 2, 3
Musorgsky Gopak
Sviridov Russian song

(initial grade 7)

age: 26

Typical Russian Mezzo sound, sometime a little nasal, pinching on top. Sviridov folk song most interesting Schubert has good shape: Granados, less so. Russian songs more dramatic, language (knowing whereof and whatfor makes all the difference).

Reflections

Fassbaender also worked with this singer in the masterclass. She encouraged again to relax the throat and pay attention to the diaphragm, never letting it all go. Reminded her that the voice is young still, not to rush into repertoire that is too heavy, used her butterfly example: -- the dust on its wings is there to keep it flying, if it is rubbed off then the butterfly fails, for the singer, not rubbing it off can keep the voice into one's later life.

She also suffered in orchestral program from the inattentive Kaspszyk, who couldn't follow her Saint-Saens, drowning any piano phrases she attempted.

[Return to top](#) **Mari Moriya (soprano) Japan**

Debussy Pantomime

Clair de lune

Pierrot

Apparition

Strauss als mir dein Lied erklang

Strauss Amor

(initial grade 7.5, rescaled 6.9)

age: 29

high soprano, excuses some lack of differentiation in coloring words. I can tell it's French, but no recognizable. Pretty some lovely half voice at close of Clair de lune. Good coloratura, yet as recitalist not at that communicative, she would work if paired with another vocal type, in duo recital.

Reflections

She won her evening, edging out Imbrailo, with a Queen of the Night that was impressive, despite a few slight intonation squeaks and continuing unstylistic accompaniment from Kaspzyk in Bellini, Verdi, Mozart -- but he didn't drown her out.

[Return to top](#) **Evelina Dobraceva (soprano) Germany**

Mozart Abendmfiindung

Strauss Standchen

Schoenberg Waldsonne

Rachmaninoff Son (dreams)

A-oo

(initial grade 7, rescaled 6.6)

age: 32

Nasal, gets hard when pressed. German of course is clear, but at her best in last Rachmaninoff.

[Return to top](#) **Owen Gilhooly (baritone) Ireland**

Schubert An die leier

Der Wanderer

Saint-saens L'attente

Poulenc La maitresse volage

Vaughan Williams Silent noon

Strauss Cacilie

(initial grade 6.5)

age: 31

Has a certain cry in the voice, basic attractive baritone. His mid upper is too nasal, in the higher piano phrase loses something. Can become a bit squally. Language's are a bit general, witness the Vaughan Williams, English should be natural but it's not clear. He pushes his the top.

[Return to top](#) **Ida Falk Winland (soprano) Sweden**

Schubert Rastlose liebe

Fruhlingsglaube

Faure toujours

Enescu Languir me fais

Nystroem Det enda (the one)

Sibelius flickan kom ifram sin alsklings mote (maidens tryst)

(initial grade 7, rescaled 6)

age: 25

Voice on the brittle side, high soprano. Odd unfocused look throughout, slight intonation problems. Sibelius sounded natural, but not telling.

Reflections

Concert work was not particularly telling either, but Kaspzyk messed up the Massenet, coming in too hard and loud on the dominant twice(!) eliciting applause before the scena was over. The next evening in the opening announcement, the audience was encouraged to watch the conductor's hands to be sure when a piece was over, I don't think it was their fault.

[Return to top](#) **Juhan Tralla (tenor) Estonia**

Schubert Ganymede

Schumann Widmung

Saar Vaikus (Silence)

Must lind (Blackbird)

Tchaikovsky v etu lunnuyu noch (in this moonlit night)

Rachmaninoff Zdes Khorosho (how fair this spot)

Nye vyer Mnye Drug (Don't believe, my friend)

(initial grade 7, rescaled 6.5)

age: 33

Somewhat thick throaty sound, especially in medium to piano volume. Characterization seems operatic. He strikes me as a good "Russian second" tenor character.

Reflections

Fassbaender worked with him in the masterclass. She jumped right in to the production problem -holding such a tight embouchure that he makes the voice nasal, not open and relaxed. She repeatedly would stroke this throat to get him to loosen the jaw and come out with a rounder sound. If he could consistently do this, or get this level of honest coaching, he could have a very nice voice.

[Return to top](#) **Julia Griniuk (mezzo) Ukraine**

Rachmaninoff O ne grusti (do not grieve)

Britten Cradle Song

When you're feeling like expressing your affection

Strauss Das Rosenband

Befreit

(initial grade 5.5)

age: 30

Definite mezzo sound (chest?). Languages again a bit general. I could just get her English in the Britten Cradle song and she did some lovely soft phrases. But in the comic cabaret Britten, the language was completely lost, no one chuckled at what was clearly intended to be a funny song. The Strauss was all line but not really soaring. She could have been doing a Russian translation, for most of what I could hear. I heard the word "Gluck" at the end of the stanza. I kept wanting the voice to open up on top.

[Return to top](#) **Levente Molnár (baritone) Hungary**

Schubert Erlkonig

Kodaly Kit kene elvenni (who should be my bride)

Bartok Elindultam szep hazambul (I left my homeland)

Kodaly Elmeyek

Bartok Attal mennek en a Tisan ladikon

Schubert Der Sturmishce morgen

Brediceanu Cantec Haiducesc

Kodaly Toborzo

(initial grade 5, rescaled 5.1)

age: 24

Pushes a big voice into the nose, even in the Hungarian. Major memory lapse in Erlkonig -- and overacts. Cant' do it with the voice, will lighten the voice but...

Interesting rep, Kodaly and Bartok, but as a presentation in this setting doesn't show enough variety, or he doesn't anyway -- lacks command of the voice and what a recital should be, communicatively.

Reflections

Obviously, some one was hearing something that I was not, because he was chosen for both finals -- **odd**. He is already so full of "business" while doing his arias, I had to wonder if a director would be able to mold him into a good production. Although seeing him on these repeated occasions, with each successive one, he did less of what I objected to and was trying for more of what I thought he lacked -- less overacting, throwing his arms around, less barking, more varied dynamic singing. So some one was telling him to **tone it down**. But still, he took up space that more accomplished interpreters were there to fill, and who would have made the finals much more competitive.

[Return to top](#) **Sae Kyung Rim (soprano) Korea**

Respighi Storia Breve

Notte

Povero cor

Strauss An di Nacht

Schlechtes Wetter

Cäcilie

(initial grade 5.5, rescaled 5)

age: 32

Respighi songs with little emotion and differentiation. It's nice voice, but takes the line very generally, loses the words. how can you do Schlechtes Wetter that way? Well, turns out she can't. She has to wait until she can belt something.