

THE 2008 ROCKEND NATIONAL OPERA STUDIO LONDON SCHOLARSHIP FINALS CONCERT

Opera Foundation Australia is delighted to announce the sponsor for the *2008 National Studio London Scholarship* is Rockend. Rockend's CEO, John Goddard said, 'Rockend is very pleased to support the personal development of Australia's young opera performers. This association with OFA is a unique opportunity to assist future leaders in the performing arts.'

The winner of the prestigious *2008 Rockend National Opera Studio London Scholarship* will be announced at BMW Edge Federation Hall, Melbourne, on **Monday 5th May 2008 at 7:00pm** during a public recital by the six finalists. The scholarship is valued at approximately \$82,000 in total, and the winner undertakes ten months of study at the National Opera Studio, one of the world's leading opera schools. Additionally the winner will also be eligible to apply for the Robert and Betty Salzer Award which provides a 3 month intensive language program; and the Viola Tait Memorial Award which grants expert vocal tuition from a distinguished teacher.

The adjudicators of the *2008 Rockend National Opera Studio London Scholarship* are Victor Morris and Robert Allman AM OBE, Bermingham OBE.

The evening will feature performances from finalists (see below) Catherine Bouchier, James Roser, Helen Sherman, Matthew Thomas, Emily Uhrich and Valda Wilson. They will be joined on the night by guest artist, mezzo-soprano, Sally-Anne Russell.



Catherine Bouchier, Soprano (NSW) 29 years

Catherine Bouchier is a Soprano from Sydney. In 2006 Catherine was a finalist in the McDonalds Operatic Aria and Opera Foundation Australia's German Operatic Award, Italian Opera Award and National Opera Studio Award (2007). In January 2007 Catherine made her professional operatic debut with Opera Australia as the First Bridesmaid in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and performed in their ensemble of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. As the winner of Opera Foundation Australia's 2007 American Institute of Musical Studies Award, Catherine spent the European summer studying in Graz, Austria.



James Roser, Baritone (NSW) 29 years

James Roser, baritone, was born and studied in Sydney. Operatic roles he has performed include *Rigoletto*, *Don Giovanni*, *Owen Wingrave*, *Dr. Bartolo (Il Barbiere di Siviglia)*, *Sparafucile (Rigoletto)*, *Mr. Gobineau (The Medium)* and *The Bonze (Madama Butterfly)*. He has been a soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Faure's *Requiem* and Saint-Saens' *Oratorio de Noel*, has been broadcast live on 2MBS-FM and is currently a semi-finalist in the 2008 2MBS-FM Young Performer Award. He has also sung in the Opera Australia chorus. James has been a finalist in the National Operatic Aria and a semi-finalist in the McDonald's Operatic Aria and Herald Sun Aria.



Helen Sherman, Mezzo-Soprano (NSW) 25 years

Bathurst born mezzo-soprano Helen Sherman has had extensive experience as a concert soloist and chorister and can be heard regularly around Sydney with groups including Opera Australia, Cantillation and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. Helen has toured internationally with various ensembles and has featured as a soloist and chorister on ABC Classic FM on numerous occasions. She was a finalist in the 2007 Australian Singing Competition and came second in the MacDonal's Operatic Aria. Helen is the recipient of numerous scholarships from groups including The Helpmann Family Trust, performing arts organisation *Ars Musica Australis*, The Opera and Arts Support Group and the Dame Joan Sutherland Society of Sydney.



Matthew Thomas, *Baritone* (NSW) 27 years

Since commencing operatic training in 2004 baritone Matthew Thomas has sung or covered roles with companies including Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, Tokyo Experimental Opera/Canberra Symphony Orchestra, as well as numerous choral societies in Canberra & Sydney. As a chorister, he has sung with Opera Australia, the Victorian Opera and IHOS Opera. Matthew was born and raised in Canberra and, in recognition of his contributions to the arts, he was the 2005 ACT recipient of the Young Australian of the Year Award.



Emily Uhrich, *Soprano* (Victoria) 29 years

Emily Uhrich, soprano was born in Perth. She has sung in numerous productions as a chorister with Opera Australia and Victorian Opera, and performed roles for Oz Opera including Rosina The barber of Seville (2007), Clorinda La Cenerentola (2008); for Melbourne Opera Susanna Le Nozze di Figaro (2008) and for the Lyric Opera of Melbourne roles in Giustino (2006) and Prima la Musica (2007). She has been a place winner in the Armstead Singing award (2005), runner up Singer of the Year (2006), Herald Sun Aria Finalist (2006) & Semi Finalist (2005 and 2007) and also RMP Aria 3rd place (2007). Valda Wilson, Lyric Colaratura Soprano



Valda Wilson, *Soprano* (NSW) 25 years

Valda was born in Sydney. Valda regularly performs in concert and has presented radio recitals on 2MBS-FM. Last year she was a finalist in the National Operatic Aria and the City of Sydney Opera Awards, receiving the Elizabeth Todd Award for Soprano Voice. This year, Valda plays Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera-Australia Schools' Company before beginning postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London. [She has held numerous principal roles for musical societies and through her Opera studies at Sydney University.]

Opera Foundation Australia Scholarships & Awards have provided the springboard for launching the successful international careers of many Australian opera singers over the years. The Foundation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the development and appreciation of the operatic art form in Australia through the awarding of scholarships for study, training and performance to young Australian opera singers and operatic artists.

FOR INTERVIEW REQUESTS & FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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