

DEBUT

CONCERTS

DEBUT Classical Singing Competition celebrates an important anniversary

DEBUT, the highly regarded international Classical Singing Competition, will be celebrating its first round number birthday this year: in September 2020, numerous young opera singers will be appearing for the tenth time before a distinguished judging panel and captivating large audiences from the local area with their voices. April 1 was the opening date for applications and also the official start of the anniversary season, with a selection of highlights from the world of classical singing.

Connecting business, technology and culture has always been a matter close to the heart of DEBUT initiator Dr. Manfred Wittenstein (Chairman of the WITTENSTEIN SE Supervisory Board), and this is reflected in the Classical Singing Competition which he founded in 2002. His longstanding commitment to provide opportunities to young soloists starting out on a musical career, network them together and introduce them to a broad public has since been emulated by a good many other sponsors in the lovely Tauber Valley – which is why this tenth edition of DEBUT, like its predecessors, will manage without any form of public funding. From September 13 to 19, 2020 Weikersheim Castle, the Deutschordensschloss (Castle of the Teutonic Order) in Bad Mergentheim and – for the first time – the TauberPhilharmonie in Weikersheim will be the venues for this globally acclaimed Classical Singing Competition, which serves as a kind of launching pad for young singers of opera music aged 32 (female) or 34 (male) or under in five vocal categories: soprano, mezzo-soprano & alto, tenor, countertenor and baritone & bass.

Patrons and judging panel confidently awaiting young talents

Clarry Bartha, Artistic Director of DEBUT since 2016, is visibly proud of the reconstituted judging panel: “Thanks to our extensive network and the high esteem in which the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition is meanwhile held in the international opera world, we have once again succeeded in persuading eminent personalities from the classical music scene to support this year’s young soloists with their vast experience and assess their opera singing abilities. The judging panel for the anniversary season will be chaired by

April 6, 2020

DEBUT, the Classical Singing Competition, supports young opera singers embarking on an international career. It is open to the following voice types: soprano, mezzo-soprano & alto, tenor, countertenor, baritone & bass. Held every second year since 2002, DEBUT has earned itself a reputation as a launching pad for talented newcomers in the world of opera music.



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Berlin soprano Professor Christine Schäfer and composed of the following experts:

- Per Boye Hansen, Director of the National Theater and State Opera, Prague
- Professor Christiane Libor, soprano, Karlsruhe
- Professor Stefan Mösch, musicologist and theater historian, Karlsruhe
- Professor Gerd Uecker, lecturer, Munich
- Evamaria Wieser, Casting Director, Salzburg Festival
- Eva Wagner-Pasquier, theater manager, Munich

Professor Harald Stamm, Kammersänger, will act as patron for the 2020 edition of the biannual Classical Singing Competition together with Professor Dieter Spath, President of acatech. The two men have in common a rather special relationship with DEBUT, albeit from different perspectives: whereas Harald Stamm – a member of the judging panel for many years (2004-2018) including several as chairman (2010-2018) – has mainly experienced the competition from behind the scenes and is one of its foremost architects, Dieter Spath enjoyed the international participants' high standard of singing sitting in the audience during his time as Chairman of the Board and CEO of the WITTENSTEIN Group (2013-2016).

Packed calendar for the anniversary season

The DEBUT 2020 season will kick off with a **matinée** in the Red Hall of the Deutschordensschloss in Bad Mergentheim on September 6. The question "Quo vadis, singing? – The most human of all art forms as a reflection of our times" will be critically examined during an open round table discussion. Enrico Calessio, Music Director and principal conductor of Würzburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Clarry Bartha, Artistic Director of DEBUT, and Giorgio Battistelli, the Italian composer who has written a contemporary lieder especially for the competition, will be among the guests.

The regular **competition week** will take place from September 13 to 19 and will no doubt attract numerous talented newcomers from all over the world to the Tauber Valley in the late summer. Both the qualifying rounds and the semifinal in the Arsenal of Weikersheim Castle will once again be open to interested members of the public at no cost.

It is an established tradition that six young opera singers will also be nominated by the judging panel for the **lieder recital** on September 17 at the Deutschordensschloss in Bad Mergentheim, where they will

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compete for the two lieder prizes “Best Performance of a Contemporary Lieder” and “Best Performance of an English / American Lieder / Song”.

The competition will end with a **gala concert** given by the finalists and hosted by Felix Seibert-Daiker on September 19. The TauberPhilharmonie Weikersheim has been announced as the new venue for this concluding event.

The same evening, the judging panel will select the winners of the Gold Victoria worth 10,000 euros as well as several other cash and engagement prizes. The gala concert will be accompanied by the Würzburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Enrico Calessio.

The DEBUT 2020 season will culminate on December 4 with a big **anniversary concert** at the TauberPhilharmonie Weikersheim.

Under the artistic direction of Clarry Bartha, a selection of DEBUT finalists from past years will give some very varied performances in what, by all accounts, will be an exceptional program.

The **masterclass** originally planned for April 2020 with Brigitte Fassbaender, the world-famous singer, stage director, theater manager, festival director and Kammersängerin, has unfortunately had to be postponed until spring 2021 owing to recent developments surrounding the coronavirus. “We deeply regret this, of course, but our duty of care towards the singers takes priority. We’re keeping a close watch on events as they unfold and will adapt our plans for the competition accordingly. However, as things stand today, we hope that DEBUT will be able to go ahead as scheduled”, said Edith Wittenstein, Managing Director of DEBUT Concerts GmbH.

Applications for the 10th DEBUT Classical Singing Competition will be accepted up until June 14, 2020 on the competition website: www.debut.de. Information on advance ticket sales for individual events will follow shortly.

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01-debut-schirmherr-harald-stamm

Professor Harald Stamm, Kammersänger and for many years a member of the judging panel including several as chairman, is joint patron of the 10th DEBUT Classical Singing Competition taking place this year.



02-debut-kuenstlerische-leitung-clarry-bartha

Clarry Bartha has been Artistic Director of the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition since 2016.



03-debut-key-visual

DEBUT, the highly regarded international Classical Singing Competition, will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.



04-debut-logo

Texts and photographs in printable quality can be downloaded from <http://www.debut.de>.

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