



Benson Wilson

Baritone

New Zealand-born Samoan baritone Benson Wilson is the winner of the prestigious 64th Kathleen Ferrier Award. That same year he was awarded the Most Outstanding Overseas Performer of the Royal Overseas League Competition, the Worshipful Company of Musicians Award, and was the 2018 winner of the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Foundation Award and the People's Choice Award.

In 2020/21 Benson joined English National Opera as a Harewood Artist, opening the season as Schaunard *La bohème* for their Drive & Live production at Alexandra Palace. Further engagements last season were due to include his debut as Figaro *Le nozze di Figaro* for Queensland Opera (now postponed).

This season and beyond sees him return to ENO main stage to sing Schaunard and Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* and his house debut in the title role of Orpheus *Orpheus and Eurydice* for New Zealand Opera. He will make further debuts for Longborough Festival Opera, as Frank/Fritz *Die Tote Stadt*; and for Opera Holland Park in the role of Friedrich Baer *Little Women*.

Benson has given a recital tour of New Zealand at venues including Auckland Chamber Concert Hall and Hawkes Bay Opera House. In the UK he has recently given recitals at the Brighton, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder, Kings Lynn and Ludlow Song festivals, at Wigmore Hall and St Martin in the Fields, with pianists Iain Burnside, Lucy Colquhoun, Ella O'Neill, James Baillieu and Joseph Middleton. He has appeared in concert with the Orchestra of Opera North, and for Auckland Opera Studio, and most recently performed Finzi *In Terra Pax* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sakari Oramo.

Previous operatic roles include Marullo *Rigoletto* for Glyndebourne on Tour, John Shears *Paul Bunyan* (ENO), Mirza *Der Gesang der Zauberinsel* at the Salzburger Festspiele as a 2019 Salzburg Young Singer, Count Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro* (Bloomsbury Opera), Schabernack *Le Grand Macabre* with London Symphony Orchestra, and Demetrius *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a scholar on the Guildhall School of Music & Drama Opera Course.

Benson regularly appears in concert in repertoire including Handel *Messiah*, Mozart *Requiem*, Faure *Requiem*, Duruflé *Requiem* and Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, and in 2016 he joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra for a Total Immersion Concert featuring works by Richard Rodney Bennett.

Prior to relocating to the UK, he won New Zealand's premiere singing competition, the Lexus Song Quest, and graduated with a BMus from the University of Auckland. Benson is a former young artist of the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto, the Samling Young Artist Programme, the International Vocal Arts Institute, New Zealand Opera School and the National Opera Studio in London.

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