

BBC CARDIFF SINGER OF THE WORLD ROUND 2 WINNER ANNOUNCED

Lauren Michelle, a 31 year old Soprano from the USA was last night chosen to perform in the final of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2015.

Lauren is one of the 20 finalists who have travelled to Cardiff from across the globe, performing their own programmes of operatic and concert works throughout this week. The singers, who were whittled down from nearly 350 competitors go head to head against each other in four rounds for a place in the Grand Final where they will perform in front of the distinguished jury and enthusiastic audience at St David's Hall, Cardiff on Sunday, June 21.

Lauren said:

'I've always used my voice as a form of expression. And tonight I was just in my own zone, it was about combating my emotions.'

Lauren Michelle was born in Los Angeles and studied at The Julliard School and UCLA. She has won several prizes including the Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition, the 2015 Francisco Vinas International competition/Extraordinary Prize for the Academia Musicale Chigiana de Siena and recently took third place in the Gulf Coast Regional Final of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She recently made her Carnegie Hall debut in Kurt Weill's *The Road of Promise*. Other highlights include *Nella/Gianni Schicchi* in Aspen, *Helena/A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Banff and Lauren's debut as *Lauretta/Gianni Schicchi* at Teatro Romano di Fiesole. Lauren has given solo recitals throughout the USA, South Africa, Italy, France and England.

Judging the main prize is a panel comprising chairman and director of Welsh National Opera David Pountney, music director of The Norwegian Opera & Ballet John Fiore, Finnish soprano, and Cardiff Singer Alumna Soile Isokoski, American soprano Claron McFadden and Welsh operatic tenor Dennis O'Neill.

The four concerts will be broadcast on BBC Four presented by Petroc Trelawny and Angel Blue (Tuesday 16, Wednesday 17, Thursday 18, and Friday 19 June, 7.30pm). Evening highlights are presented by Tim Rhys-Evans with Josie D'Arby and Elin Manahan Thomas on BBC Two Wales at 10pm. And there is also further coverage daily on the BBC Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert with Iain Burnside, BBC Radio Wales with Welsh tenor Wynne Evans, Beverley Humphreys and Nicola Heywood Thomas and on BBC Radio Cymru's Bore Cothi, presented by Shân Cothi.

Also announced were the 5 singers who have reached the Song Prize Final. **Amartuvshin Enkhbat** from Mongolia, **Aviva Fortunata** from Canada, **Ilker Arcayurek** from

Turkey/Austria, **Nadine Koutcher** from Belarus and **Jongmin Park** from South Korea will perform at St David's Hall, Cardiff on Friday, June 19 at 7.30pm.

The Song Prize Final is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 (Friday 19 June, 7.30pm), on BBC Four (Saturday 20 June, 7.30pm) presented by Petroc Trelawny and American soprano Angel Blue, and on BBC Radio Cymru (Sunday 26 July).

www.bbc.co.uk/cardiffsinger

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