

Adelaide: Tuesday 13 August 2013

for immediate release

THE GEOFFREY PARSONS AWARD 2013 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED



The Accompanists' Guild of SA's 29 year old competition, **The Geoffrey Parsons Award**, named in honour of Australia's legendary vocal accompanist, is one of the major events of the 2013 Festival of Accompanists.

In keeping with the Guild's acknowledgement of the professional aspirations of their competitors, the cash-pool is a significant \$7,500 generously supported by The Royal Commonwealth Society of Australia, SA Branch

On Monday and Tuesday August 12/13, several pianists competed in the auditions. Three were selected to take part in the Final. All competitors performed works of their own choice with soloist/s of their own choice. They then completed a sight reading test before performing, without rehearsal, the set work.

For this year's Geoffrey Parsons Award, the set work is *L'air des bijoux* (Jewel Song from *Faust*) – Gounod performed with soprano Gisele Blanchard.

Gisele was born in Australia to French and Italian parents. She graduated with First Class Honours in Music from The University of Adelaide and in the early 90s performed principal roles in Australia including *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Carmen*, *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Gisele Blanchard won many international competitions and it was not long before she appeared in Europe, particularly in France and later Italy in a wide range of operas including *La Finta Semplice*, *Tales of Hoffmann* and, at the time she was Principal Soprano for seven years at the Nice Opera, in *Elektra*, *The Pleasure and the Shepherdess*, *La Traviata*, *Bastien und Bastienne*, *Boris Godounov*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Favorita*, *Thaïs*, *Don Carlo*, *Don Pasquale*, *Pagliacci*, *The Telephone*, *Fidelio* and *Hansel und Gretel*. During the 21st Century, in between frequent performances in Nice, Gisele has been in demand by a range of European Opera Houses in Munich, Rennes, Australia (a triumphant performance of *Nedda* in *Pagliacci*, under the direction of Maestro Nicholas Braithwaite), Marseilles, Toulon, Cannes, Maranello, the Vonnas Festival, Bologna, Pesaro, Rome, Messina and Torino.

Gisele, joined well-known musicians and educators, acclaimed mezzo and Head of Voice at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, **Guila Tiver** and **Dale Ringland** most recently pianist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and principal répétiteur with State Opera of South Australia. They judged the competitors' performances in terms of style, technique, presentation and ensemble skills.

Guild Founder and President, Diana Harris remarked, "We thank the Royal Commonwealth Society for their additional support in 2013 which allows the Guild to offer a first prize of \$5,000 as well as worthwhile second & third prizes of \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively in keeping with the high standard of the pianists reaching the final of the Geoffrey Parsons Award which is now Australia's most prestigious prize for the accompanist/associate artist."

The three Finalists performing in the Final on Saturday evening, who will be competing for cash-prizes totalling \$7,500, are:

- Mark Sandon
- Tully Brookes
- Patrick Keith

The Jury for the Final of the Geoffrey Parsons Award will be chaired by the Guild's Musician in Residence for the 2013 Festival of Accompanists, UK based expat Australian **David Barnard** – a leading young opera répétiteur who began his career in Adelaide. He is in town for his fourth State Opera of SA (SOSA) production, Richard Strauss' *Salome*. His previous productions for SOSA were *Cosi*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Moby Dick*.

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David will be joined by Dale Ringland and Guila Tiver in judging the Award. The Finalists will perform a 25 to 30 minute recital with their own associate artist(s) as well as including the set work with Gisele Blanchard.

The Geoffrey Parsons Award is the culmination of the one day Accompanists' Conference on Sunday August 18 held in The Stables at Marryatville High School with the focus on THE PIANO AS ORCHESTRA.

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Who, What, When & Where?

WHO & WHAT	Accompanists' Guild of SA in association with the Elder Conservatorium of Music presents The 2013 Geoffrey Parsons Award
WHEN	Sunday August 18, 7.00pm
WHERE	Hartley Concert Room, Elder Conservatorium of Music The University of Adelaide, Kintore Avenue, Adelaide
TICKETS	\$20/\$15/\$10 Festival and Conference ticket holders and Elder Conservatorium students free
BOOKINGS	No pre-bookings, tickets only available at the door.
PUBLIC ENQUIRIES	Geoffrey Parsons Award Convenor: Frances Wood 0410 512 414 General Conference Enquiries: Diana Harris 0407 818 838
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www.accompanist.org.au