

Carnegie Hall is prize in Talents of the World singing competition

By Keith Powers Correspondent

Posted Nov 9, 2017 at 4:02 PM

Your applause might send someone to Carnegie Hall.

There will be judges too, but the Talents of the World singing competition — open to the public at the Newton City Hall on Nov. 18 — will field “hundreds of singers, or more” according to Olga Lisovskaya, director of the United States branch of the organization, and one of the judges.

So the applause might help.

The competition winner does indeed get to sing at Carnegie Hall in a December program highlighted by three operatic tenors: Raúl Melo, Benjamin Sloman and Adam Klein. The organization will cast a wide net for talent — competitions like this, usually reserved for singers at the beginning of their careers, will be open to anyone, with no age limit.

“This is our first competition in the United States,” Lisovskaya says. “We’re planning for it to be annual. We don’t have an upper age limit, because for an opera singer, experience in life is very important.

“You get brilliant singers, genius singers in their 20s,” she says. “But the opera voice blooms in the 30s, and 40s. A lot of my colleagues” — Lisovskaya is a competition-winner soprano herself — “have a much better voice than they did 20 years ago.

“Also, opera is very dramatic. Sometimes you get young singers, in roles that require life experience, but they don’t have that baggage. I don’t see the point of limiting it to young singers. Mark Reizen was 90 years old when he sang Onegin at the Bolshoi Theatre and he still sounded fresh.”

Entry to the competition remains open until Nov. 11 — “I know how it is with competitions,” Lisovskaya says, “everyone waits till the last minute. I always did.” Entrants are asked to submit a recording that includes one aria and one other selection, either from the American songbook, an art song, or a folk song. Four selections will be required in the finals, which not only include the Carnegie Hall appearance, but a December program in Cambridge as well, and cash prizes.

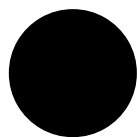
Judges include Lisovskaya, Talents of the World president David Gvinianidze, conductor Joseph R. Olefirowicz, and conductor/flutist Orlando Cela. A pianist (Yukiko Oba) will be provided for the finals, but entrants are allowed to bring their own accompanist if they wish.

When it comes to making a decision, Lisovskaya says, “the foundation of a healthy voice is excellent technique. And we are not limiting it to opera genres. You have so much music across America — the American songbook is so rich — and operetta, folk songs, Broadway, there are talented individuals in all genres. We’ll examine breath support, and control, and other criteria.

“But one of the most important things will be, when faced with a world-class stage, how is he or she going to sound in their choice of repertoire. It could be a standard aria, but done in a nuanced way that will make them a winner.”

The Talents of the World Voice Competition finals, open to the public, will be Sat., Nov. 18 at 3 p.m. in Newton City Hall. Entrants must be received by Nov. 11. Visit www.talentsoftheworld.org or call 857-919-4832.

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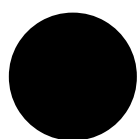
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