



Every two years, Acclaim conducts its prestigious two-week Italian Opera Masterclass. The Acclaim Awards Masterclasses objective is to provide intense teaching by one of Australia's and Europe's foremost sopranos and teachers, Michelle Cook. Please see a brief bio of Ms Cook on the second last page.

The 2024 Masterclass will be conducted in Melbourne with Michelle Cook and with renowned repetiteur, David Lempriere-Laughton. The Masterclass will be held from Monday 23rd September to Saturday 5th October 2024. Please see a brief bio of Mr Lempriere-Laughton on the last page.

The Acclaim Italian Opera Masterclass is provided free to the eight selected artists.

Acclaim invites all members of the Australian opera community to encourage talented individuals who meet the criteria to apply for the Masterclasses. All Masterclass attendees will then be required to attend and perform at The Acclaim Awards Opera Dinner in Melbourne on Saturday 5th October 2024.

The Acclaim Awards Partners

The Acclaim Awards is proud to work with some of the most significant and elite individuals and organisations in the Italian opera world. The Acclaim Awards Italian partners include for example the following:

- Accademia Teatro alla Scala (Milan)
- Accademia del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Florence)
- "Fabbrica" Fondazione Teatro Dell'Opera Di Roma
- Accademia dell'Opera di Bologna (Bologna)
- Fondazione Festival Pucciniano
- The Teatro Regio (Turin)
- Teatro Comunale Modena
- Professor Valerio Esposito [Conservatorio Statale di Musica Gioachino Rossini - Pesaro]
- Maestro Carlo Morganti [Teatro GB Pergolesi-Jesi]
- Sara Mingardo
- Sherman Lowe
- Patrizia Pace

Previous Winners

Since 1989, the Acclaim Awards has been fortunate to have worked with and provided funding/scholarships to many talented artists and to be able to assist them in their development towards an international opera career. Some of these artists have included:

- Antoinette Halloran
- Stacey Alleaume
- Siobhan Stagg
- Nathan Lay
- Nicole Car
- Emily Burke
- Kiandra Howarth
- Michelle Buscemi
- Tomas Dalton
- Adrian Tamburini
- Michelle Cook
- Elena Zanthoudakis

Are you eligible?

The Acclaim Masterclass is open to any:

- Australian Opera singer
- Australian citizen
- Singer aged between 18 and 34
- Singer who has had some professional performance experience
- Singer with 2 Italian arias prepared
- Singer who commits to attend at least 90% of the teaching components of the Acclaim Masterclass.

The Masterclass is designed so that up to 8 artists will receive a significant benefit by attending the Masterclasses with intensive one-on-one teaching by Michelle Cook. This will be an invaluable experience for all participants. As part of the Masterclass, Acclaim will be offering singers the opportunity to compete for Acclaim prizes including the Acclaim Awards Academic Scholarship and the Acclaim Awards Fellowship.

The Acclaim Awards Academic Scholarship comprises 1-3 Scholarships per annum. The Scholarship generally will include two components, 1) Italian language lessons via Skype with Acclaim's Italian language partner, Italiano & Co, and 2) six months of weekly singing lessons with Michelle Cook.

The Acclaim Awards Fellowship is available for 1-2 individuals every year. A Fellowship comprises an Italian Program. It can include time at an Academia and/or with a singing teacher in Italy or related activities such as a Festival, Masterclass, Summer School, etc.

A Fellowship will only be granted if Acclaim believes there is a singer of a high enough standard. It is expected that the Fellowship Grant recipient will also provide some of their own funds to be able to undertake the Grant prize.

The Selection Process

Stage 1. The first stage involves submitting an Application Form with a Preliminary Audition CD/DVD/YouTube link presentation. The presentation must include two contrasting arias and be sung in Italian. The CD/DVD/YouTube will be reviewed by Acclaim as a Stage 1 Preliminary review.

Selection Process. All applicants will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Quality of the voice
- Vocal technique
- Age and Potential
- Musical skill and knowledge
- Artistic interpretation
- Demonstration of comprehension of the pieces
- Italian Language skill

Stage 2. Acclaim will then review all applications and recommend eight finalists whom she believes would best benefit by participating in the Acclaim Masterclasses.

Applications

All Applications should be sent between Monday 8th April 2024 and be received by Acclaim no later than 5.00pm on Friday 19th July 2024.

Acclaim Awards Masterclass 2024

Rules & Regulations Acclaim Awards Ltd. (Acclaim) invite Australian opera singers to participate in the Acclaim Awards Masterclass 2024 in accordance with the following rules & Regulations. By returning an Application Form to Acclaim each Applicant acknowledges and agrees to be bound by those rules.

1. Entry Form

1.1 All Applicants must submit a signed Application Form.

1.2 Applicants CD/DVD's or YouTube link will to be sent to Italy where the final participants will be selected by Acclaim.

No more than 8 applicants will be selected.

1.3 Acclaim will email an acknowledgement of each applicant's entry form within seven days of receipt of that entry form.

2 Eligibility

2.1 The Acclaim Awards Italian Opera Fellowship is open to any:

- Bel Canto Opera singer
- Australian citizen
- Singers who have had some professional operatic performance experience
- Aged between 18 and 34 years as at 30th July 2024

3 Entry Process and Requirements

3.1 All Applications must be sent by mail to the address shown on the Application Form.

3.2. All Applications must be completed in full as shown on the Application Form.

3.3. All Applications must be received by Acclaim no later than Friday 19th July 2024. Any applications received after this date may not be accepted for the Competition. Any incomplete or inaccurate Application may not be accepted. This will be fully at the discretion of Acclaim.

3.4 To complete a valid Application, Applicants must submit the following:

- i. The Application Form
- ii. A CD/DVD/YouTube link of their performance of two Italian arias (with piano accompaniment only);
- iii. A copy of a birth certificate (or similar official document e.g. passport) confirming the date and place of birth to verify the nationality and age of the Applicant;
- iv. A curriculum vitae, setting out the Applicant's particulars of training, Fellowship, diplomas and degrees and recent stage performances;
- v. A written submission of at least 500 words detailing their opera career objective and why the Acclaim Prize would be an important component in their career development;
- vi. Two recent high-resolution quality colour photos of headshots of the applicant;
- vii. A signed Declaration Form
- viii. Proof of payment of the \$50 Administration fee.

3.5 Applicants should retain copies of all material sent with applications. Acclaim will not return applications or material submitted with Applications.

3.6 The Applicant agrees to obtain clearance from anyone who has rights to the submitted photographs and to indemnify Acclaim for any loss, liability or expense arising from Acclaim's use of the photographs for publicity purposes.

3.7 In submitting an application form, each Applicant certifies that the information contained in the application documents submitted is true and correct and is not misleading or deceptive and that no material information has been omitted or deleted.

3.8 The Applicant, by the submission of their application, agrees that Acclaim may use any information submitted including names and photographs for promotional and other purposes without payment of any fee to the Applicant or their agent.

3.9 Payment of the \$50 entry fee should be sent by cheque with Application or via EFT to: Bank: ANZ Account Name: Acclaim Awards BSB: 013 128 Account Number: 497 402 055 Description: Surname MClass 24

4 Repertoire

4.1 Each Applicant will be required to prepare three operatic arias which must be set out in the Repertoire List.

4.2 Two arias must be sung in Italian.

4.3 If selected as a Finalist for the Masterclass Series, the Applicant must provide two copies of the printed piano score of the chosen repertoire - one for the accompanist and one for Michelle Cook.

5 Performance Rights (Australia)

5.1 Applicants, by submission of their application, agree that Acclaim has the right, without payment of any fee to the applicant, to televise, film, record, broadcast or photograph Applicant for any reasonable purpose. All rights, including copyright in such media, shall vest in and be owned by Acclaim worldwide and in perpetuity.

5.2 Acclaim has the right to produce and distribute recordings, either in whole or in part, without limitation and without payment of any fee to the Applicant.

5.3 Applicants are expected to make themselves available for media, sponsor and promotional performances as required during the Masterclass Series. All approaches to and from the media, sponsors and others must be made through and with the approval of the Acclaim Awards.

6 Performance Contract

6.1 Acclaim will not negotiate with or pay any fee to any artist's agent, or other management in respect of or on behalf of an Applicant.

6.2 Should a Finalist perform in Australia within two (2) years for the Acclaim Awards immediately following the Masterclass Series, Acclaim reserves the right to negotiate directly with the Applicant for performance or promotional activity or both for the benefit of the Acclaim Awards without payment of any fee to any promoter or artistic agent.

7 Ongoing Acknowledgment of Acclaim Applicants, by submission of their application, agree that they shall always acknowledge in their bio's/CV's etc, that they were a Finalist in the Acclaim Italian Opera Masterclass. Additionally, should they receive any award, prize, Fellowship or financial assistance from Acclaim, that these will also be so ever mentioned and acknowledged in their bio's/CV's etc.

Acclaim Awards 2024 APPLICATION FORM

To be received by mail or email no later than Friday 19th July 2024.

Full Applications should be sent by email:

Name:

Address:

State: Postcode: Mobile:

E-mail address: (please print clearly)
.....

Date of birth:/...../..... Voice type:

Applicant Signature:

Applications are open to Australian citizens between the ages of 18 and 34 as of the 30th July 2024. Please provide a copy of your birth certificate or passport for verification with this Application.

The following must be included with this Application:

- CD/DVD/YouTube link of the performance of two Italian arias (with piano accompaniment only)
- Curriculum Vitae
- 2 Photographs ID (photocopied)
- Biography
- Written submission of at least 500 words
- Payment of application fee of \$50. The Application fee of \$50 can be paid by cheque or by making a direct bank deposit to: Bank: ANZ Account Name: Acclaim Awards BSB: 013 128 Account Number: 497 402 055 Description: Applicant's Surname MClass 24 e.g.: Smith MClass 24.

All Applications are to be emailed to: acclaimawards@yahoo.com.au

If you have any questions, please contact Bernadette Blair, Director, Acclaim Awards on Ph: 0412 240 948

Michelle Francis Cook

Italo-Australian soprano, Michelle Francis Cook, studied at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) Australia, where she received her degree in opera and won the award for Best Voice. She continued operatic studies at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), Campus Opera, Gran Canaria, where she studied with professors of notable prestige including Erik Halfvarson, Cristina Gallardo-Domas, Margaret Baker Genovesi, Paolo Washington and Deborah Polaski.

Shortly after graduation, Michelle performed the roles of Mimi, Giorgetta, in the Melbourne City Opera (CitiOpera) and Anne Trulove for Opera Australia (OzOpera). She has won several awards, including the Acclaim Awards, which included a scholarship in the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Formazione, Italy where she sang the role of Madama Cortese, *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Rossini, for the Florence Opera, Italy. Michelle performed *Le Donne Di Giacomo Puccini*, Australia, and roles in the Puccini Festival, in Torre del Lago, Italy. Other roles include Leonora, *Il Trovatore*, Tosca and Santuzza, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which she has performed on several occasions with great success.

Michelle has recorded a CD with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Czech Republic, and has sung at the Opera de Oviedo performing the role of *Donna Elvira* in *Don Giovanni*, Mozart. Since 2007 Michelle has sung roles in the Gran Teatro del Liceo: 4th Magd and Schlepträgerin of *Elektra*, Strauss, and later returned with *Pepa Tiefland* and *Prilepa* in *The Queen of Spades*, Tchaikovsky, roles in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*, and *Flower Maiden* in *Parsifal*, Wagner.

Also in the Gran Teatro del Liceo, Michelle was cover of *Donna Elvira* and *La Pepona La Cabeza del Bautista*, and other small roles. Throughout 2012 and 2013 Michelle sang various concerts and toured with concert *Viva Verdi* with Orchestra, singing the repertoire of *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Ernani*. She also was the soprano for *Un Dia En La Opera* orchestral concert series, singing dramatic soprano repertoire throughout Spain.

Her most recent performances were the title role in *Carmen* (Bizet), in the Palau de la Música Catalana Barcelona; the role of *Tosca* for Opera 2001 touring France and Spain, and the title role *Aida* in Barcelona.



David Lempriere-Laughton

David Lempriere-Laughton is a highly sought after solo and collaborative pianist who maintains a successful career across Europe, the USA and Australasia. He has appeared in recital at Carnegie Hall, New York; Wigmore Hall, London; the Louvre, Paris; Jubilee Hall, Singapore; the Cologne Philharmonie; the Royal Concertgebouw of Amsterdam; the Dimitri Mitropolous Concert Hall of Athens and the Palais des Beaux Arts of Brussels.

He has performed as concerto soloist and chamber musician at the festivals of Ravinia, Van Cliburn, Caramoor, Brisbane and Bad-kissingen and collaborated with many of the world's most celebrated artists, including cellist Alisa Weilerstein, violinist Karen Gomyo, blues musician Corky Siegel, soprano Valeria Esposito and actress Dame Harriet Walter.

His performance of the Grieg Piano Concerto won the 1994 3MBS FM Performer of the Year Award and he was one of the top ten finalists in the 1997 Cincinnati World Piano Competition.

Mr Lempriere-Laughton graduated from the Juilliard School in 2001 with a Master of Music Degree and is a Fellow of Trinity College London. His students include finalists and prize winners at international competitions in the UK and Japan.

