



The Taunton Festival of the Arts

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TAUNTON FESTIVAL OF ARTS

with Somerset Opera and the Ronald Tickner Educational Trust

Somerset Song Prize – Information for singers (January 2015)

Summary

Promoted and organised by Taunton Festival of the Arts, Somerset Opera and the Ronald Tickner Educational Trust, the Somerset Song Prize (SSP) is a biannual singing competition that is becoming part of the national landscape. The SSP 2015 competition will be organised across three days, beginning with regional rounds on 10 May 2015 in the following locations:

- ☐ Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham
- ☐ Royal College of Music, London
- ☐ Taunton School, Taunton

The competition is open to any singer who is aged 18-26 years old on 17 May 2015 and who presents an initial programme of 8-10 minutes including no extracts from opera or oratorio and at least one song that is not in the singer's native language.

The cost of entering the competition is £35.00 which is non-refundable. Your payment will be returned if there are no spaces left.

More details are included below. The application form will be available for download from the Somerset Song Prize webpage accessible via: www.tauntonfestival.org.uk or on request from info@tauntonfestival.org.uk. Please refer to the website for the latest information. This sheet replaces any information previously available. The closing date for applications is 13 April 2015.

Who can enter?

Open to any singer who

- is aged 18 -26
- prepares an initial programme of 8-10 minutes including no extracts from opera or oratorio and at least one song not in the singer's native language
- includes with their Application Form:
 - a personal statement of 300-500 words
 - a short biography of 200-300 words
 - a recent picture
 - £35 fee

What could you win?

First:	£1000 and the Lentells Trophy
Second:	£500 – Somerset Opera Award
Third:	£250 – Harold Mead Award
Accompanist's Award:	£200 – Ronald Tickner Trust Award
Most Promising Young Singer Award	£200 – supported by Friends of the Somerset Song Prize (aged 21 years or under on 17 May 2015)

Regional rounds

- Will be held on Sunday 10 May 2015 in London, Birmingham and Taunton.
- Singers will be greeted by an SSP rep on the day. Singers should provide a copy of the music they are performing to the SSP rep, which will be returned (photocopies should be destroyed). Any photocopies retained by SSP will be destroyed.
- Adjudicators will mark from an agreed list of criteria.
- Without including extracts from opera or oratorio, the programme must be 8-10 minutes in length and include at least one song not in the singer's native language.
- Singers are encouraged to work with their own accompanist. For those who do not have an accompanist, this should be stated on the application form.

The finals weekend

- Semi-finals will take place on Saturday 16 May 2015 at Temple Methodist Church, Taunton.
- Those selected to participate in the semi-final will be informed via email on 12 May and a list published on the SSP webpage on the Taunton Festival of the Arts website.
- For the semi-final (if selected) without including any extracts from opera or oratorio, the programme must be 10-12 minutes in length, include at least one song not in the singer's native language and at least one British Art Song composed since 1900.
- As before, singers should provide a copy of the music they are performing to the SSP rep, which will be returned (photocopies should be destroyed). Any photocopies retained by SSP will be destroyed.
- It is envisaged that six singers will be selected for the Final, announced at the end of the semi-final. Accommodation will be provided for all participants chosen for the Final.
- The Final will take place on Sunday 17 May 2015, provisionally starting at 2.30pm, in the Music Room at the Castle Hotel, Taunton, TA1 1NF.
- For the Final (if selected) without including any extracts from opera or oratorio, the programme must be 12-15 minutes in length, include at least one song not in the singer's native language and at least one British Art Song composed since 1900.
- Applicants may present some of their earlier round repertoire, should they be selected, but changes to the submitted programme are not advised.
- Following the final, there will be an interview with soprano star **Elizabeth Watts**, who in recent months has been in our cinemas in Don Giovanni, on our TV screens in the Last Night of the Proms, and on our stages in concerts too numerous to mention.
- Thereafter, the awards ceremony, followed by a guest recital by counter tenor James Hall, winner of the SSP 2013, and a finger buffet from the Castle Hotel's renowned kitchen.

Accompanists for semi-final and final

An official accompanist for the semi-final and final will be available at an additional cost of £15 payable on Saturday 16 May on arrival. Arrangements for rehearsing with official accompanists would be made directly with the accompanist. If you are working with an official accompanist, it is your responsibility to ensure the accompanist has all necessary music.

The Adjudicators

All adjudicators will work from agreed marking criteria. The proposed adjudicating panel for the finals weekend includes: **Neal Davies**, **Lorna Anderson** and **Malcolm Martineau**.

For more information and the application form visit: www.tauntonfestival.org.uk