

MOST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2022

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen.

And our wonderful finalists.

I am very happy to accept this award on behalf of Simone Young.

Many, quite rightly, think of Simone as the preeminent conductor of her generation.

As Jeffrey Black alluded to in his remarks read by Roland Gridiger OAM, Simone is very much a "singers' conductor".

But we often forget that while conducting the opera and symphonic repertoire around the world, Simone has also championed Australian music and Australian performers, all around the world.

It is no secret that Simone has commissioned the works of many Australian composers including Brett Dean and William Barton, to name but two.

Only two months ago, Simone premiered Barton's *Of the Earth* at the reopening of the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House. Simone had commissioned Barton to write a companion piece utilising the vast orchestral and choral forces which would be deployed in the accompanying work, Mahler's *Resurrection*.

No doubt some of you were there. It was visionary masterpiece of a work. In Barton's words, it was "a work of hope ... bringing people together".

It was, I suggest, a work of reconciliation.

But as with Australian composers, there are many, many Australian singers now performing in the great opera houses of the world whose careers owe a great debt to Simone's patronage, assistance and support.

I hope that our Finalists tonight may one day be among them.

And I might say to you all, when Simone only a little younger than you, she and was teaching the piano at a secondary school in Sydney.

That is a long, long way from conducting in Vienna, Berlin and Paris.

Let Simone be your example of what you can achieve with your talent and your dedication.

I wish you all well.

I spoke to Simone a few days ago. I will leave it to her to tell you via this video where she is at the moment, why she cannot be here tonight, and how she feels about the art of opera.

Thank you.

Robert Titterton OAM
1 October 2022