



Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

It is a pleasure to congratulate everyone involved in the 2026 IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, and particularly this year's five finalists: Hannah Burton, Emily Davis, Leyland Jones, Sky Kim and Aylish Ryan.

Reaching the Finals is a significant achievement. Each of you has dedicated years to developing your craft, guided by determination, discipline and a deep love of music. Tonight, as you take to the stage with the Opera Australia Orchestra, I hope you take great pride in all that has brought you to here. Your families, friends, teachers and mentors will share in that pride.

One of the great joys of this competition is the opportunity to encounter Australia's emerging classical voices. Each of you bring your own interpretation and character to music that has been performed and loved across generations.

There is also a long connection between this competition and the Office of Governor-General. In 1982, Governor-General Sir Zelman Cohen launched the Marianne Mathy Scholarship, speaking of Marianne's 'deep love of music and the human voice'. More than four decades later, that legacy continues in the opportunities this competition gives young singers to develop their craft and take an important step in their careers.

Of course, no young artist reaches a stage like this alone. Behind each of tonight's finalists are teachers, mentors, accompanists, family and friends, and a wider community that has encouraged and supported them along the way. That generosity sustains individual artists and contributes to the strength of Australia's cultural life.

The Finals are an opportunity to celebrate that community, and I am particularly pleased that audiences across the country will be able to share in the occasion through its broadcast on the MBS Network.

I acknowledge the International Foundation for Arts and Culture and its founder, Dr Haruhisa Handa AO, together with the Music and Opera Singers Trust, for their longstanding commitment to nurturing exceptional young singers. Since 1982, the competition has provided generations of Australian and New Zealand performers with opportunities to develop their artistry and pursue their ambitions.

To Hannah, Emily, Leyland, Sky and Aylish: thank you for dedicating your lives to singing and sharing your gifts with us. I hope you enjoy this moment, and the opportunity to perform together tonight. Reaching this stage is something of which you, and all those who have supported you, is an outstanding achievement.

Congratulations to you all and best wishes for your exciting futures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sam Mostyn', followed by a long horizontal stroke.