

## How to manage your own career!

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**NEUE STIMMEN**

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## 1. How to manage your career

### Introduction

Congratulations! You have made it this far – applied for the NEUE STIMMEN competition, passed the live auditions, qualified for the final round, and can now consider the next steps of your career development. This brochure has been put together to give you some tips and resource lists as well as aspects to think about as you move forward.

As you have probably already found out, the days of singing well, doing a few auditions, getting a job and then an engagement without much more effort, are over. Competition on all levels has increased, the number of traditional engagements at opera houses and concert halls has gone down. On the other hand, there are more opportunities in other areas, and we want to show you where to look.

### Artistic profile

Let's start, however, with a look at your very own artistic profile – what makes *you* unique. It helps to think of yourself in the third person in order to be objective. You may want to take a good photo of yourself and simply describe what you see and then add your vocal and individual qualities. Mind mapping is a very useful tool for doing this.

Are you tall or short, how do you describe your own voice – quite apart from your Fach – husky, clear, sexy. What do you feel most comfortable doing – singing, acting, dancing, playing a dramatic role, being a clown, or maybe a combination of all these? The combination of all these factors is *YOU* – your very own *unique selling point* (USP) and brand. This USP may very well change over time, as you gain more experience, but keep it in mind at all times.

Another important point to remember is to stay authentic – don't try to bend yourself into an artificial persona, just because someone else may be successful being that way. You are yourself and that is your best asset.

A very useful (and fun) exercise is asking friends to describe you – make a game of it, ask them to write adjectives (positive and negative) that they can think of to describe you on pieces of paper (without their names) and put them in a box. You can then read them out loud and discuss them or just collect them and reflect on them in private.

On the contrary, it is also most helpful to consider all the things that you are *not* and do not feel comfortable doing. These factors are just as important. Especially in today's more liberal interpretations of opera libretti – do you feel comfortable being naked on stage or how far would you go? Would you consider singing upside down? These are essential items that you should at least consider. Getting paid a larger fee for going topless may not make up for your feeling uncomfortable – this feeling will surely influence your vocal performance. So be sure you are clear about your limits and when you need to say no.

## Goals

In order to set goals, take into account the realistic USP you have set out above. If you are overweight now and want to lose some weight, give yourself a realistic time frame in order to achieve this goal.

Have you thought of your long-term goals - do you want a partner, children? Do you want to travel all over the world, or would you prefer to stay in your own country and hometown? Consider the realistic life-span and optimal condition of your vocal cords – coloratura sopranos have a shorter life-span than dramatic basses. Where do you want to be in 5 years, in 10? There is a great saying “every thought I think is creating my future” – so think positive thoughts!

## Lifestyle

As you start out on your career, you will have to think about the circumstances under which you will live working as an opera singer. How do you cope with being alone? Do you have a support network of family and friends whom you can talk with about everything at all times of the day and night, especially after an audition, rehearsal, or performance? How do you deal with negative reviews of your performance? How do you react to rejection and criticism? Can you evaluate it objectively?

As you get more engagements, you will undoubtedly travel more. This is as much a wonderful chance to get to know more places and meet more people as it is a challenge to cope with new environments, cultures, food, accommodations, routines, etc. All of this while working most likely on a very tight rehearsal and performance schedule at the opera house/performance venue.

In this day and age of active social media participation – especially Facebook – it is a lot easier to connect to new contacts in a new place as well as keeping in touch with friends and family. The opera community is generally one of the most active on FB (see below for more tips → 5. Social Media).

## Self-Discipline

The logical consequence of all these requirements is the necessity of a large amount of self-discipline. Can you work out a schedule for yourself and then stick to it? Are you good at keeping – self-imposed and external - deadlines? Do you learn quickly or slowly? Have you found your optimal style of learning – can you learn a role on your own or do you need constant coaching?

## The business aspect of self-management

Unless you are very lucky and an agent approaches you and wants to help your career from the very beginning, you will have a challenging time getting an agent to represent you until you have made a certain name for yourself and gained experience. The fact

that you have taken part in the NEUE STIMMEN Competition is already a great recommendation, but it can only be viewed as one of many factors.

In any case, even if you have an agent (see below), you will need – and hopefully want – to have full control of your professional calendar, time planning and finances and online presence (see below)

## 2. Professional calendar and time planning

This may be the easiest to handle. Whether you use Outlook or Mail, there are good calendars and planning tools available that let you have an overview of your appointments, even years ahead. Just be sure to keep the calendar up to date! And don't forget to plan in buffer-time – especially when travelling. Give yourself the luxury of not having to rush from A to B all the time!

## 3. Finances

- a. **Fee negotiation:** Most opera houses or presenters will have a fairly tight budget and the fee range for you to negotiate will be quite limited. It always helps to be well informed before going into a negotiation. Try to find out in advance what the normal range is. This includes fee negotiation for contracts, be it for one concert or an entire season.

If you are negotiating for an entire season, give yourself time to truly understand the contract and that you are in agreement with it. There are no stupid questions! If you don't agree with a certain paragraph – such as a soprano being asked to sing all soprano roles – you can negotiate to have it specified to say only roles of coloratura soprano if that is your Fach. Ask to see the future planning and what types of roles would be for you. Covering roles in your Fach are definitely an advantage as you learn them and may have an opportunity to sing them.

- b. **Taxes and social deductions:** Be sure to find out about taxation and deductions (unemployment insurance, health insurance, etc.). Every country has different regulations. If this is not your home country, what laws are in place regarding double taxation exemption, etc? Of course, you can get a tax consultant to do all of this for you, but it is good for you to know and have control over your finances – after all it is your hard-earned money! The administrators at the opera house or a reputable promoter will have these answers or be able to find them out for you.
- c. **Keeping records:** At the very least, keep any receipts that may be used later for your tax filing – no bill, no money! Every country has different rules, but most have laws in place that allow for deductions of expenses in conjunction with your profession if you are a free-lancer. This includes any travel, taxi, hotel, music material, etc. The simplest way is to put all receipts belonging to one engagement in one envelope (don't forget to label it), that way it is already pre-sorted.

#### 4. Agents

Getting an agent is not the answer to all your problems nor will it guarantee you a full calendar! A good agent will only take you on if he/she thinks he/she can get you work and is able to assess your potential. And only after you and he/she have established a good personal contact. Beware of “empty” promises (“I will have you singing at La Scala in a year if you sign exclusively with me” and the like)!

Also, be sure to clearly – and in writing – state the responsibilities of each party. Are you granting exclusivity for certain countries, for example your home country, Germany or the United States? What are the commission fees for solo recitals, concerts, opera performances? Are these commissions payable after the performance has taken place or when you actually get paid? What if the performance gets cancelled, either by the presenter or yourself? Are there monthly retainer fees for publicity/marketing and what does this include? What if there are two or more agents involved, who gets how much? What if you get the work but the agent negotiates the contract?

At this point in your career, keep your options open and especially, keep trying to get work on your own.

**Large or small agency:** This is a matter of personal preference. Is it better to be part of a large agency where you are one of many, but the phone is constantly ringing with offers? Or is it better to be part of a small agency where the agent gives more personal attention to career development? In the end, it is a question that you must answer for yourself and how you feel the interpersonal relationship with the agent will be and your own personality. Just remember that agents are also only human beings with only 24 hours at their disposal and much of their success depends on their personal relationship with the various opera houses and promoters.

## 4.1. Agency application

### Example in English

Nina Wunderlich  
Grand Avenue 3  
10623 Anywhere  
Anycountry

[nina.wunderlich@gmail.com](mailto:nina.wunderlich@gmail.com)  
+49-172-123-4567

ZAV-Künstlervermittlung  
Abteilung Oper  
z. Hd. Fr. Christine Strasser  
Kapuzinerstr. 26  
80337 München

February 14, 2022

Re: Application

Dear Ms. Strasser,

I am a lyric mezzo-soprano and am looking for an engagement at a German opera house as of the season 2022/2023 or later.

Enclosed you will find my CV including current repertoire list, as well as a DVD with several recordings, where you can get a first impression. Under the link [www.xxx.com](http://www.xxx.com) you will further examples. As you can see from my CV, I have taken part in the NEUE STIMMEN 2021/22 competition.

Please let me know when I can have an audition appointment. I will be traveling in Europe in November 2022 and can come to Munich during that month.

Sincerely,

Nina Wunderlich

## Example in German

Nina Wunderlich  
Grand Avenue 3  
10623 Anywhere  
Anycountry

[nina.wunderlich@gmail.com](mailto:nina.wunderlich@gmail.com)

+49-172-123-4567

ZAV-Künstlervermittlung  
Abteilung Oper  
z. Hd. Fr. Christine Strasser  
Kapuzinerstr. 26  
80337 München

February 14, 2022

Betr.: Bewerbung

Sehr geehrte Frau Strasser,

ich bin lyrischer Mezzo-Sopran und suche für die Spielzeit 2022/23 oder später ein Engagement an einem Opernhaus in Deutschland.

Anbei erhalten Sie meinen Lebenslauf inklusive Repertoireliste wie auch eine DVD mit einigen Aufnahmen, damit Sie sich schon einen ersten Eindruck machen können. Unter dem Link [www.xxxx.com](http://www.xxxx.com) finden Sie weitere Beispiele.

Wie Sie aus meinem Lebenslauf entnehmen können, habe ich an dem NEUE STIMMEN Wettbewerb 2021/22 teilgenommen.

Über einen Termin für ein Vorsingen würde ich mich sehr freuen. Im November 2022 bin ich in Europa und könnte dann nach München kommen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Nina Wunderlich

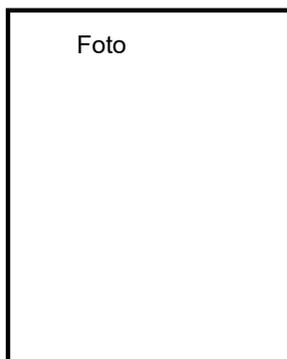
## Portraits



## 4.2. Examples of CVs // Personal Data Sheets

### Example 1 – Nina Wunderlich (in German)

**Nina Wunderlich**  
Mezzosopran



#### Persönliche Angaben

Geboren: 12.04.1995  
Staatsangehörigkeit: deutsch  
Stimmfach: Mezzosopran

#### Sprachkenntnisse

Deutsch, Spanisch (Muttersprache)  
Englisch, Französisch, Italienisch  
(fließend)

#### Aktuelles

**12/2021 WDR- Rundfunkorchester**  
Bach: Weihnachtsoratorium I-VI (Alt)  
**01/2022 Tonhalle Düsseldorf**  
Beethoven Symph. IX (Alt Solo)  
**06/2022 Mozartfest Würzburg**  
*La Cenerentola* (Angelina)

#### Ausbildung

- 2018 – 2020** Opernstudio Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf
- 2016 – 2018** Master: Oper, Universität der Künste Berlin  
Abschlussnote: xx
- 2013 – 2016** Bachelor: Gesang/ Musiktheater, Universität der Künste Berlin  
Abschlussnote: xx /Vertiefung: xx
- 2013** Abitur: Evangelisch Stiftisches Gymnasium Gütersloh  
Abschlussnote: 1,5

#### Stipendien/ Wettbewerbe

- 2019** Gewinnerin der Titelpartie, Internationaler Gesangswettbewerb Oper Schloss Hallwyl
- 2017** Sonderpreis der Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Stiftung, 43. Bundeswettbewerb Gesang, Berlin
- 2016** Sommerkurs-Stipendium, DAAD
- 2014** Stipendium der Richard-Wagner Stipendienstiftung (Bayreuth), Richard-Wagner-Verband Frankfurt am Main e.V.

#### Auswahl Auftritte/ Engagements Saison 2019/20

Oper Danzig: *Carmen* (Carmen)  
Rheingau Musik Festival: *La Cenerentola* (Angelina)  
Theater Gießen: *Die Zauberflöte* (2. Dame)  
Konzerthaus Duisburg: Mozart, große Messe in c-moll (Sopran 2)

#### CD Aufnahmen

Beethoven Volksliedbearbeitungen, Brahms Kindervolkslieder/ Op. 58, Sony Classical, 2018  
Xxxx, 2017

## Nina Wunderlich

Mezzosopran

### Repertoire Oper/Operette/Musical

La Speranza	L'Orfeo (italienisch)	C. Monteverdi	studiert
La Penitenza	Il Giardino di Rose	A. Scarlatti	Landestheater Niederbayern
Paoluccia	La Cecchina (deutsch)	N. Piccinni	Ekhot Festival Gotha / Nymphenburger Sommer
Belisa	Il Re Teodoro in Venezia (italienisch)	G. Paisiello/ H. W. Henze	Schwetzingen Festspiele / Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
Cherubino	Le Nozze di Figaro (italienisch)	W. A. Mozart	studiert
Mädchen	Le Nozze di Figaro (italienisch)	W. A. Mozart	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
Dorabella	Così fan tutte (italienisch)	W. A. Mozart	Konzerthaus Karlsruhe / Monschau Klassik
Zweite Dame	Die Zauberflöte (deutsch)	W. A. Mozart	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe Theater Aachen
Sesto	La Clemenza di Tito (italienisch)	W. A. Mozart	Landestheater Niederbayern
Rosina	Il Barbiere di Siviglia (italienisch)	G. Rossini	Monschau Klassik
Angelina	La Cenerentola (italienisch) „Aschenputtel“ (deutsch) „Aschenputtel räumt auf“	G. Rossini  Bearb. U. G. Schäfer	Junge Oper Schloß Weikersheim Stuttgarter Philharmoniker NDR Hamburg/ NDR Hannover Rheingau Musik Festival
Weilgunde	Rheingold (deutsch)	R. Wagner	studiert
Roßweiße	Walküre (deutsch)	R. Wagner	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe / Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, Sardinien
Metella	Pariser Leben (deutsch)	J. Offenbach	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
Barbara	Eine Nacht in Venedig (deutsch)	J. Strauss	Landestheater Niederbayern
Carmen	Carmen (französisch)	G. Bizet	Schlossoper Haldenstein, Chur Tonhalle Zürich Oper Merzig
Mercedes	Carmen (französisch)	G. Bizet	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe Oper Schenkenberg
Olga	Eugen Onegin (russisch)	P. I. Tschaikowskij	Theater Pforzheim
Charlotte	Werther (französisch)	J. Massenet	studiert
Wowkle	La Fanciulla del West (italienisch)	G. Puccini	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
La Badessa	Suor Angelica (italienisch)	G. Puccini	Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
Lucienne	Die tote Stadt	E. W. Korngold	Landestheater Niederbayern
Bessie	Mahagonny Songspiel (deutsch/englisch)	K. Weill	Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe IMT
Aldonza	Der Mann von La Mancha (deutsch)	M. Leigh	Landestheater Niederbayern

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## Example 2: Vicky Vocalist

### Vicky Vocalist, Soprano

4444 W Walton St. #2  
Chicago, IL 60622  
(773) 773-7349  
michelle@michellesantiago.com  
www.michellesantiago.com

Insert  
Headshot  
here

**Performance Experience**

**Roles Performed**

Pamina	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	Utah Opera	2012
Adele	<i>Die Fledermaus</i>	New England Conservatory	2011
Jenny	<i>Down in the Valley</i>	Boston Lyric Opera	2010
Laeticia	<i>The Old Maid and the Thief</i>	New England Conservatory	2009
Witch	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>	Milwaukee Opera Theater	2008
Celie	<i>Signor Deluso</i>	Lawrence University	2008

**Scenes Performed**

Polly	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	New England Conservatory	2009
Donna Elvira	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	New England Conservatory	2009
Belinda	<i>Dido and Aeneas</i>	Lawrence University	2008

**Musical Theater Roles**

Maria	West Side Story	Papermill Theatre, Lincoln, NH	2006
Meg	Little Women	Papermill Theatre, Lincoln, NH	2006
Anne	Anne of Green Gables	Papermill Theatre, Lincoln, NH	2006

**Concert Performances, Boston Area**

- Handel *Messiah*, Trinity Church
- Mozart *Requiem*, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Solo Recital, Federal Reserve Bank Concert Series

**Education**

New England Conservatory, Master of Music in Vocal Performance, 2011  
Lawrence University, Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, *Cum Laude*, 2008

<b>Principal Teachers</b>	<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Masterclass</b>
Patricia Misslin	John Moriarty	Martin Isepp
Susan Clickner	Dale Morehouse	

**Awards/Honors**

- Prizewinner, Rose Palmai-Tenser Scholarship Awards Competition, 2007
- Second Prize, NATS Southern Regional Competition, Graduate Division, 2007

**Special Skills**

Fluent in German and Italian; 14 years of piano, 7 years of dance training

Source: Angela Myles Beeching: *Beyond Talent. Creating a Successful Career in Music*. Oxford University Press, 2010

### 4.3. Example short biography

A turning point in soprano Nina Wunderlich's career has been taking part in the 2021/22 NEUE STIMMEN Competition in Gütersloh, Germany. After finishing her vocal studies at the Juilliard School in 2018, she was asked to be part of the Young Singers at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where she was able to gather valuable stage experience and expand her repertoire. She has continued to perfect her skills by attending master classes of Joyce DiDonato and Christa Ludwig. One of the highlights in the past past season was singing the role of Barbarina in the new production of Mozart's **Marriage of Figaro**, (at BlaBla opera) conducted by Donald Runnicles and directed by Dieter Dorn.

Even as a little girl, Nina Wunderlich walked around her family home singing. Soon, her talents were recognized by others, and she started to take lessons in school and was part of the church choir. She continues to enjoy church singing and baking cakes for her choir's rehearsals.

Find out more about Nina Wunderlich on her website [www.ninawunderlich.com](http://www.ninawunderlich.com), on Facebook or Instagram (@ninawunderlich).

#### 4.4. Examples of well-structured websites

In today's digital opera market, it is essential to present yourself online. Building your own website is a very effective way to do that. Agents, theatre managers and the public from all over the world can see and hear you, contact you, engage you!

Here are some examples of good web pages:

##### **In connection with an agency:**

<http://www.askonasholt.co.uk/artists/singers/bass/jonathan-lemalu>

<http://www.askonasholt.co.uk/artists/singers/bass/alexander-vinogradov>

<http://www.tact4art.com/de/artist/Mauro-Peter-7-10.html#tabs-1>

<http://www.sorekartists.com/Artist.aspx?id=45>

##### **Singers Websites:**

<http://www.marinarebeka.com/>

<http://burakbilgili.com/>

<http://www.liangli.de/index.php/de/>

<https://www.maximmironov.com/>

<http://www.annasamuil.de/>

##### **Facebook Sites:**

[https://www.facebook.com/MaximMironovTenor/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/MaximMironovTenor/?ref=br_rs)

<https://www.facebook.com/NadineSierra/>

#### 4.5. Selection of good photos

<http://www.harrisonparrott.com/artist/profile/camilla-tilling>

<http://www.harrisonparrott.com/artist/profile/golda-schultz>

<http://www.harrisonparrott.com/artist/profile/jonathan-mcgovern>

## 5. Online platforms and data bases

Thankfully, there are alternatives to having agents. We have listed Operabase below. On these platforms – most of which have free and fee-based options – you can upload your repertoire, photos, videos, and audio materials and create a professional looking mini-website. Of course, you can create mini-sites *and* have your own website. Just be sure to keep all these outlets up to date and “fresh” – a recent, dated posting will give the reader the impression that you care and that you are actively interested in promoting yourself.

### Operabase

[Operabase](#) | [Opera Singers](#) | [Artists](#) | [Opera Companies](#) | [New & Rare Opera Performances](#)

### Building a network

Even though the internet is nowadays the all-powerful and all-present source of information, the decision makers in the opera world still like to have personal recommendations. In fact, a personal recommendation is the most important factor in making a casting decision. This means that you first have to be known by a number of people who can recommend you positively. And that is where building your network-building skills must be activated.

Fortunately, you are already a part of a great community – the NEUE STIMMEN family – which is active world-wide. So be sure to connect and stay in touch with this group. But that is not enough ...

What does it take to be a good networker? Certainly, a good sense of “give and take”. Networking is a two-way street – you give information and emotional support and get the same in return. How you give and take is just as important – a smile will always open more doors than a rude comment. Good manners – starting with a basic “please” and “thank-you” – are essential in any culture and in any language. Remember – how you treat other people is how you are going to be treated. Respect and be respected. Be a good team player and don’t only insist on “me, me, me or I, I, I”.

Since it is perfectly normal to forget details, you may want to have a “networking book” or section in your address list. Here you can keep any business cards you get – it helps to mark them with information when and where you met the person. Be sure to note also any small, personal detail – is she a cat lady? Does he have an allergy? Is he an early music fan?

And remember to listen – you may learn something interesting!

## 6. To-Do: Self-Evaluation

### You have a great voice, but are you a good team player?

In addition to your unique qualities as a singer – your appearance, your stage presence, the colour of your voice, your interpretation of the role – there are several other factors that need to be considered, especially at the start of your career.

In any opera production, you will be working with many other persons – other singers, the stage director, the conductor, their assistants, the stage manager, the rehearsal pianist, the wig- and make-up staff, the props and costume staff, the administration of the opera house and so on. One very important person is going to be the porter/concierge/stage door attendant. Make him or her your friend and you won't regret it!

It all comes down to being a good member of the opera family, the opera team. Here are some aspects you should consider – and remember, as you answer the questions, be honest with yourself, these questions are just meant for you, to make you aware of the various situations you will encounter:

- Are you respectful of others?
- Do you listen well to others?
- Are you discreet about your own matters?
- Can you keep a secret or confidence that someone tells you?
- Do you go out of your way to help others?
- Do you arrive on time for rehearsals and appointments?
- Is it easy for you to keep deadlines set by others?
- Can you keep deadlines and promises to yourself?
- How good are you at self-discipline?
- Do you believe in yourself?
- Can you plan ahead and stick to a plan?
- Are you good at giving and taking with your friends and colleagues (not just thinking and speaking of "I or me")?
- Do you regularly work on the business side of your career?
  - answering emails
  - returning phone calls
  - exploring opportunities
  - being pro-active about your own brand
- Do you believe in making small but realistic progress?
- How do you react to criticism?
- How do you react to rejection?
- Do you like to learn new material and techniques – not just new roles?
- Do you like to try something new?
- Are you good at focusing/concentrating your attention?
- Are you pro-active and seek opportunities and information?

- Do you take feedback from trusted persons seriously and try to implement it?
- regarding a performance, your appearance, business matters

You will be working in very close proximity to other bodies, both male and female. After all, most operas are about love and hate, power, and revenge!

- Do you feel comfortable touching other people of the same sex?
- Do you feel comfortable touching people of the opposite sex?
- Do you use a good deodorant?
- Do you brush your teeth or use a mouthwash?
- Are your hands clean?
- Are your clothes clean and comfortable in rehearsals?

For the following questions, the answer should be “no”:

- Do you like to gossip?
- Do you start most of your sentences with “I”?
- Are you easily offended?
- Are you often late for rehearsals and appointments?
- Do you let yourself be easily distracted (by emails, messages, etc.)?

In order to realize your full potential, the above points are just a beginning. You know yourself best. Writing down your strengths, your dreams and goals, is a good way to visualize them and make them seem more real, more likely to come true.

- Where do you see yourself in 1 year?
- Where do you see yourself in 3 years?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- Do you want to have a family?
- If you have a family now – spouse/child, how do they fit into your opera lifestyle?
- What do you need to achieve a good work-life balance?
- What do you need on a day-to-day basis to make you happy?

Remember the old and wise saying “where the mind goes, the energy flows”. You will invest time and energy in topics and activities that interest you. These then have a good chance of becoming real. If you visualize yourself singing on the stage of the Vienna Staatsoper and really invest your energies, time, and talent for that goal, then your chances of this vision becoming reality will be increased.

## 7. Promotional Material

By promotional material we mean

- a. Your CV or resumé plus CD or DVD plus photos which you will send to agents, theatres and promoters
- b. Your website (4.4. below)

### Let us start with your CV or resumé:

- A well written CV or resumé is one that has all the relevant, necessary information and not more.
- At this point in your career, it should not be longer than one page.
- Please always include contact information: email (best if it includes your name, such as [mary.smith@gmail.com](mailto:mary.smith@gmail.com)) and phone number with country code.
- You do not need to include elementary or high school information. Nor do you have to put in military service, names of your parents, or the name of your spouse.
- It should include the music education and diplomas you received, your teachers and/or master classes you attended.
- The roles you have learned but not yet performed.
- The roles you have already performed.
- Good photos of you in regular street dress – a close-up and a full body one.
- If you have some good photos of you in costume, add 1 or 2.
- A CD or DVD of your best performance is a must, also. If you have a limited budget, invest in either a good CD or DVD – this is your most important calling card. You can also use this material on your website, of course.
- This does not have to be a live recording of an actual performance.
- It can be just you with a pianist, singing your best audition arias.

Then there is the cover letter/letter of introduction. This should be simple and direct. Agents, theatres and promoters receive hundreds of these letters. Be polite and precise, that is all that is needed. See below for some examples.

Remember to put your name and date on any photos, CDs or DVDs. Your CV or resumé should also have a date (usually at the end). That way the reader can immediately know how “new” this information is.

We refer here to biography if it is written out in prose form. We recommend having two different ones:

- A short one for theatres and promoters to put in their programs, along with your photo.
- Not more than 200-300 words, it includes just the most important points: Where you are from, where you studied, your most important teachers or events (be sure to include the NEUE STIMMEN Competition!) and most recent engagements.

- If you don't write this short version, you risk someone else writing it and leaving out points that are important to you.
- The longer one can be used on an agent's or theatre website as well as your own.
- In both cases, mention the most recent (newest) events first.
- Be sure to mention your own website at the end and your social media contacts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Please, abstain from adjectives like "one of the greatest young singers of her generation" and such terminology.
- It is always nice to include something personal at the end – a hobby, something that you have done that makes you special, how you discovered opera, that sort of thing.

## 8. Social Media

In addition to having a website, a presence on social media is pretty much essential nowadays. Here, we will consider Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, since these are the most important ones. LinkedIn, Snapchat, Periscope, Tumblr, Google+ and the others seem to come and go and are not as relevant for building your career.

What is the purpose of a professional page on any of the social media websites? Free publicity for you and awareness building of you as an artist, creating a profile that shows you as caring for the opera community at large and giving you more personal depth.

The number one rule with any social media is consistency. By this, we mean that – even if you post only once a week – make it every week. If you put aside one hour a week to keep all your social media channels “alive”, you will see that it pays off in terms of free publicity and awareness of you as an artist. You can also use tools such as IFTTT <https://ifttt.com/> that take one post on just one channel and post it to other channels.

Studies have found that readers react much stronger to posts that have photographs or images. This does not need to be a high art photo but can be an instant photo taken with your smartphone. If you are taking photos involving persons, be sure to ask them beforehand if they are ok to have their photo taken and posted. Everyone has different sensitivities about privacy, and it is important to respect them.

Be sure to check out all the privacy settings available on every platform. Here you can control who sees your posts and how much of your personal information you want to make public. You can set everything to private and make your content available only to your friends or you can make everything public. It is up to you to find the right balance. The middle way is to allow “friends of friends” see your posts, which makes them available to most interested persons, but not the entire Facebook community of over 700 million users, for example.

When you chose a name for your professional pages and sites (and email!!!), we highly recommend you use your own name – if you decide on a stage name, use that. What we do not recommend is to choose a fantasy name like “galaxy star” or “star123xyz”. The whole point of using social media platforms is to make you findable by both potential employers and followers.

And remember the one rule that is valid on all platforms: Be kind! Do unto others as you would others do unto you. No trolling, no negative comments about other colleagues!

**Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>**

Practically everyone has a private Facebook site, and opera singers in particular are very well connected. In addition to your personal page, please consider having a professional page. The difference: On your personal page, you can post the funny

photo of you and your cat/dog/bird, on your professional site you concentrate on your professional activities, upcoming engagements, roles you are learning, etc.

But don't just write about yourself, if you find an interesting article, share it. If one of your colleagues or opera friends is doing something interesting, share it. If you are in a rehearsal (and the other persons in the picture do not mind), share it. If you are taking photos of yourself and others in a new production, be sure to ask for permission first, since the theatre may not want to have photos of their production made public before the premiere.

Engage and give back to the community – that will make your page more interesting and will attract more likes and visitors. Take the trouble to look up the opera house you are mentioning and include them with their @-address (for example @wiener.staatsoper) and then your message will also be sent to them.

### **Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/>**

This is a “fun” website, driven by hashtags #. It is a very popular site with opera singers. Anna Netrebko @anna\_netrebko\_yusi\_tiago for example, has over 755,000 followers and has posted over 5800 times. She is a good example of using this platform to inform her fans of her everyday life. You may feel more comfortable being more private – that is absolutely ok and is a matter of individual preference.

### **YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/> or Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/>**

When you have a good video or audio selection, create a YouTube or Vimeo channel and post it there. YouTube is by far the more popular option, but Vimeo is used by more professionals.

### **Twitter <https://twitter.com/>**

Although the statistics are showing that Twitter is not growing as fast as Instagram, for example, it is still an important channel for communication. Important political figures use this channel almost exclusively for news.

## Appendix

### 9. Entrepreneurial Checklist – Self-Evaluation

#### 9.1. Skills to manage your music career

	excellent	good	o.k.	poor
interpersonal skills   people management				
presentation skills   written and spoken articulation				
ability to speak to an audience and to showcase projects				
basic budgeting, finance and fundraising skills				
research skills				
skills in dealing with the press				
basic computer skills				
foreign language skills (English, German, French ...)				

#### 9.2. Personal qualities

	excellent	good	o.k.	poor
readiness to take initiative				
passion for your cause				
imagination and creativity				
determination				
belief in yourself   trust in success				
ability to deal with rejection and failure				
ability to learn from your own mistakes				
conscientiousness, reliability				
ability to see things through to the end				
accuracy				
will to develop yourself				
optimism				
individuality / authenticity / charisma				
ability to communicate				

### 9.3. Promotional material (up-to-date)

	existing	non existing
website		
Facebook / twitter etc.		
CV (tabular and in full)		
photos		
(demo)-CD, audio files, etc.		
(demo)-DVD, YouTube, etc.		
press quotes, reviews, and articles		
list of recent and upcoming events		
repertoire-list / opera, operetta, musical, concert, Lied		
address-lists (agents, opera casting directors, conductors, promoters, label managers, journalists, supporters, etc.)		
basic business equipment (mobile voicemail, email signature, letterhead)		

### 9.4. Self-management

	yes	no
Do you work regularly on the business side of your career?		
Do your days have a structure?		
Are you often interrupted or distracted?		
Do you often arrive late for appointments and rehearsals?		
Do you make time for your most important goals and projects?		
Do you regularly investigate potential opportunities?		
Do you speak with friends/colleagues etc. about your career?		
Do you regularly read arts supplements, music magazines and musicians' biographies?		
Do you act promptly upon promises made or intentions stated?		
Do you regularly cultivate business contacts?		

## 9.5. Professional business support

	yes	no
Do you speak with your teachers or mentors about your career?		
Do you regularly seek feedback after performances or competitions (artistic matters, stage presence, comportment, and small talk after performances, at receptions or meetings?)		
Are you represented by an agent?		
Do you receive regular support and advice on business matters (repertoire, networking, PR & media relations, website, tax, etc.?)		

## 10. Suggestions and Moving Ahead – To-Do-List

How do you picture success? What does success mean to you?

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What specifically do you like about being a singer?

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What are your long-term goals? Where do you want to be in 10 years (job, income, family...)?

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What are your goals for the upcoming season?

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What is on your to-do-list for this month?

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## 11. Reading list and useful resources

### 11.1. Career development books

Marita Knobel, Brigitte Steinert: *Opernsänger. Ein Ratgeber*. Bärenreiter, 2002 (in German).

Marita Knobel, Brigitte Steinert: *Singing Opera in Germany – a practical guide*. Bärenreiter, 2002 (in English).

Opera America Perspective Series:

- *Audition Advice for Singers*
- *The Singer/Manager Relationship*
- *Making Choices: A Singer's Guide from Classrooms to Contracts*
- *Building and Managing Your Network*

The above 4 titles can be purchased via the website <http://www.operaamerica.org/content/about/publications.aspx>.

Angela Myles Beeching: *Beyond Talent. Creating a Successful Career in Music*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Gerd Uecker: *Traumberuf Opernsänger: Von der Ausbildung zum Engagement*. Henschel Verlag 2012 (in German).

Ina Ross: *Wie Überlebe ich als Künstler? Eine Werkzeugkiste für alle, die sich selbst vermarkten wollen*. Transcript Verlag, 2013 (in German).

Dawn Bennet: *Life in the Real World: How to make music graduates employable*. Common Ground Publishing, 2012.

Carol Kirkpatrick: *ariaready: The business of singing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Bancroft Publications, 2012.

Bernhard Kerres und Bettina Mehne: *Be your own agent. A Career Handbook for Classical Musicians*. HelloStage, 2017.

Norina Nachtigall & Marcello Meistersänger: *Vom Ton zum Lohn, ein praktischer Ratgeber*. Donatus Verlag, 2017 (in German).

Donald George and Lucy Mauro. *Master Singers – Advice from the Stage*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Claude Webster: *Atteindre sa Zone d'Excellence – Guide pour performer sous pression*. Les Editions de l'homme, Canada, 2016 (in French).

Andreas Hiller, Christina Lemnitz, David Molnar: *Opernsänger – Überlebenstraining – Was Sänger nicht fragen aber wissen sollten* Verlag Neue Musik, 2016 (in German).

Julia Cameron: *The Artist's Way A spiritual path to higher creativity* Tarcher/Perigee, (25<sup>th</sup> edition) 2016.

Richard N. Bolles: *What color is your parachute? 2017 Edition*. The Speed Press. A practical manual for job hunters showing how to develop a winning strategy in tough economic landscapes.

*Musical America* | [www.musicalamerica.com](http://www.musicalamerica.com) extensive data base with information on foundations, scholarships, competitions, opera houses, festivals. Basically the „bible“ for information worldwide. USD130 for either the book or online access.

*Deutsches Bühnenhandbuch* | <http://www.buehnengenossenschaft.de>  
Database (in book form, in German) of all German, Austrian and Swiss opera houses and theatres, choirs, orchestras, festivals. The database provides short explanations and contacts and is updated every year. Costs €52,00 for about 1100 pages.

### 11.2. Biographies & interviews

There are many good biographies of singers and it is worthwhile to read as many as you can. Here are three that deal especially with the “making of an opera singer”

Renée Fleming: *The Inner Voice: The making of a Singer*. Penguin Books, 2005

Michael Wessel: *Üben, Proben, Karriere*. Bärenreiter, 2012 (in German)

Jerome Hines: *The Four Voices of Man*, Proscenium Publishers, 1997

### 11.3. Online websites

*Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum (MIZ)* | <http://www.miz.org/musical-life-in-germany/institutions.html>

Extensive information database about institutions, music industry, statistics. Good for research.

*YAP Tracker* <https://www.yaptracker.com/> become a member for USD 55/year and have access to an extensive resource, including auditions for opera roles, chorus, oratorio, information on competitions, master classes, tools to keep track of all these activities, etc.

*Classical Singer* <https://www.classicalsinger.com/> Monthly publication, very United States centered.

*Auditions Plus* <https://www.auditionsplus.com/> (sub-site of Classical Singer)

*Musical Chairs* <https://www.musicalchairs.info/jobs> Very comprehensive site, mainly aimed at instrumentalists, but also has a section for singers

*Theapolis Jobs - Theapolis* (in German) Job portal for German theaters, some musical, some opera.

*MyCast* <https://mycast.is/> Database, based in Austria

*Hello Stage* <https://www.hellostage.com/start/hellomusicians> Network for classical musicians with microsites for artists, free and paid plans. Based in Vienna.

*Bachtrack Artist Microsite* [Welcome to Bachtrack, The classical music website for live & on demand | Bachtrack](#) Largest website for reviews of events. The Artist Microsite gives additional information on artists including future performances.

Angela Myles Beeching: The Professional Musician's Roadmap <http://angelabeeching.com/category/monday-bytes/> (Newsletter)

*Lauri's List* [Singerpreneur – The business of classical vocal](#) - Southern California/Orange County based but has good information

*Opera America* <http://oacareerguide.tumblr.com/> Career Guide information

*Zenaida des Aubris, Opera Career Coach* <https://www.operacareercoach.com/> Website for individual coaching and blog

## 11.4. Young Artist Programs

### 11.4.1. Germany

Young Artist Programs in Germany are often called “Opernstudio”.

These *Opernstudios* are part of the local theatres and are sometimes connected with the local University of Music/Music Conservatory (*Musikhochschule*)

An *Opernstudio* offers a practice-oriented training and education for opera singers on a very high level, preparing them over a period of one or two years expressly for a career on stage.

Members get the chance to connect with renowned artists and work on stage in opera productions. Some opera houses are interested in building long term relationships with these highly talented young artists from the *Opernstudios*.

The programs often include regular masterclasses, coaching, role preparation and German language classes if necessary.

In order to become a member of an *Opernstudio* you have to

1. apply directly to the theatre
2. get an invitation to audition
3. pass your audition successfully and be offered a position

Each *Opernstudio* has its own application deadlines. Look carefully and do not miss these!

## **Berlin**

*Staatsoper Unter den Linden*

<https://www.staatsoper-berlin.de/en/staatsoper/international-opera-studio/>

*Komische Oper Berlin*

[Opernstudio | Komische Oper Berlin \(komische-oper-berlin.de\)](https://www.komische-oper-berlin.de/)

## **Dresden**

*Semperoper Dresden/ Saxonian State Opera*

<http://www.semperoper.de/en/ensemble/junges-ensemble.html>

## **Düsseldorf**

*Deutsche Oper am Rhein*

[http://operamrhein.de/en\\_EN/opernstudio](http://operamrhein.de/en_EN/opernstudio)

## **Frankfurt**

*Oper Frankfurt*

<https://oper-frankfurt.de/en/ensemble-guest-artists-opera-team/opera-studio/>

## **Hamburg**

*Staatsoper Hamburg*

<https://www.staatsoper-hamburg.de/en/people/IOS/ios.php>

## **Hannover**

*Staatsoper Hannover*

[Internationales Opernstudio - Staatstheater Hannover \(staatstheater-hannover.de\)](https://www.staatstheater-hannover.de/)

## **Köln**

*Oper Köln*

<https://www.oper.koeln/de/opernstudio>

## **Mannheim**

*NTM Nationaltheater Mannheim*

[NTM - Nationaltheater Mannheim - Oper - Opernstudio \(nationaltheater-mannheim.de\)](https://www.nationaltheater-mannheim.de/)

## **München**

*Bayerische Staatsoper, München*

<https://www.staatsoper.de/en/operastudio.html>

## **NRW (Dortmund, Essen, Gelsenkirchen and Wuppertal)**

*Opernstudio NRW (Oper Dortmund, Aalto-Musiktheater Essen, Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen and Oper Wuppertal)*

[Home - Opernstudio NRW \(operstudio-nrw.de\)](http://www.operstudio-nrw.de)

## **Nürnberg**

*Staatstheater Nürnberg*

<https://www.staatstheater-nuernberg.de/index.php?page=oper,opernstudio>

## **Stuttgart**

*Oper Stuttgart*

[HMDK Stuttgart - Studios und Ensembles \(hmdk-stuttgart.de\)](http://www.hmdk-stuttgart.de)

## **11.4.2. Europe**

### **Gent (Belgium)**

*International Opera Academy Gent*

<http://www.ioacademy.be/>

### **Kopenhagen (Denmark)**

*The Royal Opera Academy Copenhagen*

[The Royal Opera Academy — Study in Denmark](http://www.the-royal-opera-academy.dk)

### **London (United Kingdom)**

*Royal Opera House Covent Garden, London*

<http://www.roh.org.uk/about/jette-parker-young-artists-programme>

### **Lyon (France)**

*Opéra de Lyon*

<http://www.opera-lyon.com/pages/artistes-et-coulisses#2343>

### **Paris (France)**

*Opéra national de Paris*

<https://www.operadeparis.fr/en/academy/about>

### **Straßburg (France)**

*Opéra national du Rhin*

<https://www.operanationaldurhin.eu/en/l-opera-national-du-rhin/l-opera-studio>

## **Zurich (Switzerland)**

*Opernhaus Zürich*

[Opernhaus Zürich - Official Website](#)

## **Brussels (Belgium)**

*Théâtre La Monnaie*

<https://www.lamonnaie.be/en/sections/40-mm-academy>

## **Milano (Italy)**

*Teatro alla Scala*

<https://www.accademiascala.it/en/home-en/>

## **Copenhagen (Denmark)**

*Royal Opera Academy Copenhagen*

<https://kglteater.dk/en/about-us/the-royal-opera-academy/about-the-royal-opera-academy/>

### **11.4.3. Opera Centers International**

#### **The European Opera Centre**

Aims:

- to offer a **professional pathway** helping talented Europeans from **education to employment in opera**
- to **develop audiences** for opera across Europe, including in **places where opera is rarely performed**

It is one of a handful of organizations directly funded by the European Union. It takes an innovative and modern approach to training. Successful candidates receive both practical experience in imaginative projects of international standing, and expert guidance. The Centre works through a series of projects leading to performance, whether in fully staged opera productions or in the recording studio. To help singers reach the highest possible professional standard, the Centre also runs an annual intensive training programme. Many trainees have successfully gone on to secure high quality employment in European opera houses.

<http://www.operaeurope.eu/>

## **Accademia Europea Dell'Opera**

AEDO, the Accademia Europea Dell'Opera, is a uniquely focused European opera experience, created in collaboration between Western University Canada, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini, centred on the preparation, creation, and performance of full operatic roles. The international program brings together selected singers from around the globe to work with pianists, conductors, and directors from some of the world's most celebrated opera institutions, during an intense period of musical and dramaturgic study and rehearsal, followed by a series of public European performances.

<http://www.aedopera.org/>

## **The National Opera Center America**

Used to be called just Opera America. It is a centre for finding news and resources about opera in the United States only.

<http://www.operaamerica.org>

## **National Opera Association**

NOA is purely United States based. The most important event is an annual convention featuring performances, panels, workshops, and other continuing-education opportunities for opera educators, professionals, and students.

<http://www.noa.org/convention.html>

## **11.5. Agencies**

If you are looking for a suitable agency, do not hesitate to contact us, the **NEUE STIMMEN – Creating Careers team**. We will help you with individual recommendations and advice.

## **Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung (ZAV)**

The German state agency for artists. After an audition, you may receive information support in your job search. It is connected to the German Bühnenverein (association of German theatres) and provides information on engagements all over Germany. Most useful for chorus and con-primario roles at

[http://zav.arbeitsagentur.de/nn\\_462294/kv/Navigation/Oper-Operette.html\\_nnn=true](http://zav.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_462294/kv/Navigation/Oper-Operette.html_nnn=true)

## **Contact for Opera in different cities:**

Berlin:

Berenike Jürgens Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-8028

Email: [zav-kv-berlin@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-berlin@arbeitsagentur.de)

## Cologne:

Axel Mendrok Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-2176

Thomas Burger Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-2175

Email: [zav-kv-koeln@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-koeln@arbeitsagentur.de)

## Hamburg – Hannover - Rostock:

N. N. Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-8038

Email: [zav-kv-hamburg@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-hamburg@arbeitsagentur.de)

## Leipzig:

Gabriele Kodama Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-4091

Steffen Piontek Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-6003

Email: [zav-kv-leipzig@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-leipzig@arbeitsagentur.de)

## Munich:

Christine Strasser Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-4012

Inge Wiesner Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-4005

Email: [zav-kv-muenchen@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-muenchen@arbeitsagentur.de)

## Stuttgart:

Martin Geißler Tel. +49 (0) 228 50208-4066

Email: [zav-kv-stuttgart@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:zav-kv-stuttgart@arbeitsagentur.de)

## **11.6. Scholarships**

### **11.6.1. Young Concert Artists**

A non-profit organization dedicated to discovering and developing the careers of extraordinary classical musicians. Winners of the Auditions are selected by a Jury of distinguished musicians. The sole criteria are exceptional musicianship, virtuosity, and individuality. The musicians compete against a standard of excellence – not each other. There is no limit to the number of First Prize Winners each year, and the Jury has the right to select none if none qualify.

<http://www.yca.org/about/>

### **11.6.2. Deutscher Akademischer Auslandsdienst DAAD**

International students can apply for scholarships at numerous institutions. The extensive DAAD scholarship database for foreign students, graduates and academics offers a wide range of scholarships and additional Information to help them with their application.

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/en/>

### **11.6.3. Richard- Wagner- Verband International**

Wagner's concept of his festival in Bayreuth was of a people's festival, like those that took place more than 2000 years ago in Greece. Admission, as at those festivals, should be free. For obvious reasons, this was not possible, and so in 1882, a year before he died, he instigated a new form of 'patronage'. This should at least offer 'to talented friends of my art free admission to the festival and, in cases of need, reimbursement of travelling costs and free accommodation'.

<http://www.richard-wagner.org/rwvi/en/>

#### 11.6.4. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people. One of the most suitable types for singers and musicians is **Donation-based Crowdfunding** where funds are raised by individuals or companies to support personal or artistic causes.

There are over 500 different platforms, but the main ones for artists and music projects are:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/>

<https://www.indiegogo.com/>

<https://de.gofundme.com/>

<https://www.patreon.com/>

subscription-based website where fans pay the artist a subscription amount of their choice in exchange for exclusive content, such as behind the scenes, etc.

Both **Kickstarter** and **IndieGoGo** are the most established platforms. If you have a specific project, you need funds for, creating a good video and script and posting it on either of these sites is a method to try to get funds. Costs are reasonable, ranging between 3 to 5%.

But putting together a good video and posting it is not enough. You will have to actively "nurse it along" during the time of the campaign. This means you have to work out a strategy campaign, which includes being active in your network, advertising it on your social media channels and generally advertising the campaign by sending updates, etc. There are many books and information on the internet about how to run successful crowdfunding campaigns.

**Whatever you do – we wish you the best of luck and do keep in touch!**