

BARRY ALEXANDER INTERNATIONAL VOCAL COMPETITION

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SOPRANO MARIA CLARK AN “ARTISTIC AND VOCAL TRIUMPH” AS FIRST PRIZE WINNER IN 2008 BARRY ALEXANDER INTERNATIONAL VOCAL COMPETITION

New York, February 4, 2008 — With a voice judges described as “dazzling” and “richly expressive,” soprano Maria Clark performed on the stage of Carnegie Hall last Sunday afternoon as First Prize Winner of the 2008 Barry Alexander International Vocal Competition.

“One seldom finds a voice capable of such beauty across a variety of idioms,” said Cosmo Buono, Executive Director. “A voice this much at home in opera, lieder and spirituals is very rare. She is truly, both artistically and vocally, a triumph.”

Mrs. Clark, a graduate of both the Manhattan School of Music and the Florida State University School of Music, has appeared as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Annina in *the Saint of Bleecker Street*, and Antonia in *Les Contes d’Hoffman* with Georgia State University. Mr. Alexander personally invited her to return to the stage of Carnegie Hall in April of this year, where she will perform as part of the First Annual ABC Gala, a fundraiser which provides scholarships, grants, and other monetary awards for deserving classical singers and pianists (www.abcompetitions.com).

Unique in many ways, the Barry Alexander not only chooses winners in the three different categories of College Adult, Amateur Adult, and Professional Adult, but all winners are given a performance debut at Carnegie Hall as the First Prize. The goal is to help as many qualified singers as possible either launch or sustain careers by creating enhanced exposure and performance opportunities wherever possible, and providing grants for further study.

Second Prize recipients of the BAIVC perform at the C. Bechstein Auditorium and other New York recital venues throughout the year, and all winners are given ongoing career and performance advice through events such as “The Business of Music,” a seminar featuring

managers, agents, publicists, and record industry executives, which was held the day before the Winners' Recital.

By allowing applicants to submit recordings rather than requiring them to travel to elimination rounds where they might not receive a prize, BAIVC helps to reduce some of the financial difficulties of entering a competition. Says Mr. Buono, "Our goal is to make the competition as user-friendly as possible, and once contestants come to New York, they have already been chosen as winners. I remember what it is like to be a student, especially a student of music, and it can be very expensive."

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