

## Turkish Bass Cumhuri Görün Wins Inaugural Post-Pavarotti International Vocal Competition

**Summary:** Former physiotherapist turned opera singer Cumhuri Görün won prestigious Pavarotti Foundation competition, selected from 400 applicants for Florida Opera Naples performance.

By Şefik Kahramankaptan

I love coincidences, sometimes you meet very nice people. That's how I met Cumhuri Görün. While I was in Istanbul in the fall of 2021, I attended a surprise celebration organized by my namesake Şefik Büyükyüksel for the 45th anniversary of his marriage to monumental pianist İdil Biret at his house in Moda. Pianist Gökhan Aybulus and bass-baritone Burak Bilgili were also there. They introduced another younger man with them, Cumhuri Görün . Gökhan took the piano, Burak and Cumhuri sang arias and performed a duet.

When my friend Şefik told me, "This young man is İdil's physiotherapist" I was surprised. A physiotherapist who could sing a duet with Bilgili? From that day on, I started following Cumhuri.

This young man with a physiotherapy degree from Yeditepe University was an opera lover who developed himself with lessons from noted pedagogue Güzin Gürel. Shortly after, he went to America to continue his studies at the Academy of Vocal Arts-AVA, a prestigious opera academy. He has been praised for his performances as the lead in Gaetano Donizetti's Don Pasquale, Collatinus in Benjamin Britten's Rape of Lucretia, Mephistopheles in Charles Gounod's Faust, and Henry VIII in Gaetano Donizetti's Anna Bolena. In the summers, he participated in the İdil Biret Festivals and won the appreciation of the masses.

I just received great news. Cumhuri Görün won the international singing competition organized by the Naples Opera and the Luciano Pavarotti Foundation, held at the Bower School of Music in Fort Myers Florida. With three other winners—Simona Genga (Mezzo-Soprano), Luna Park (Soprano), and Minghao Liu (Tenor)—he will perform in Florida at the Opera Naples Festival Under the Stars concert on 27 February.

Nineteen contestants, selected from over 400 applicants, each sang ten minutes on the first day, 12 minutes on the second day and 15 minutes in the final. The judges evaluated voice, acting, character and personality, as talent alone is not the only characteristic needed to help an artist make a professional career.

At the end of the first two days of the three-day marathon, Cumhuri Görün was among 10 people from all vocal colors who made it to the finals. Then he won the final.

The competition was the first to be held after Pavarotti's death. While he was alive, the famous tenor had organized an international voice competition in Philadelphia to support emerging operatic talent. The Naples Opera and the Luciano Pavarotti Foundation decided to revive it and make it a periodic event. Naples Opera Maestro Ramón Tebar was delighted by the interest the voice competition had garnered in the opera community. From more than 400 applicants, "We selected 20 people from Europe, Asia and America. We will have three rounds with a wonderful jury at Florida Gulf Coast University," Tebar said.

That's how life flows. Four years ago, Burak Bilgili, who sang side by side like master and apprentice at the celebration in Moda, and who had performed in the US for many years, was on the jury, and Cumhur Grgn was one of the 20 singers competing. This event will serve as a platform for the four young singers to be heard by industry professionals.

I congratulate Cumhur Grgn and wish him to continue his climb in his career without interruption.

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