

Ben Connor

Ben grew up on Magnetic Island, off Townsville in North Queensland. From the age of six, he participated in many choirs and amateur stage shows, and tried his hand at different instruments including violin, saxophone and piano. Majoring in classical voice at the ANU School of Music, Ben was the recipient of the Harmony Endowment Postgraduate Scholarship and graduated with a Master's degree in Music in 2009.

This year Ben has performed as a soloist in many of Canberra's events including the role of Joel in the Australian Premier of Raatavaara's *Gift of the Magi* for the Canberra International Music Festival, in Rotary's "Italian Opera Gala" with the Melbourne Opera Orchestra (also in 2009) and in SCUNA's (ANU Choral Society) Mozart concert. In the coming month he will perform the role of Fiorello in Melbourne Opera's Canberra performance of the Barber of Seville and give a recital for Art Song Canberra.

During his studies, Ben performed on numerous occasions for the School of Music and in particular in the title role of the new opera by Joshua McHugh, *Grimm and the Blue Crown Owl* for which he was nominated for a CAT award. Last year Ben also made his professional stage debut in the Street Theatre's production of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*.

Ben has also won several competitions and awards including the Art Song Canberra Prize at the Australian National Eisteddfod, best vocalist in the Margaret Smiles competition, the Australia-Britain award for voice and the Bill Hyslop prize.