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## *Dame Kiri comments ...*

It's hard to believe that it is 15 years since we established both foundations. A 15th anniversary is a milestone and it's also an occasion to celebrate and to momentarily look back on a period of hard but very enjoyable and rewarding work. During this period, we have supported over 70 talented singers and related organisations and competitions including the NZ Opera School, the Lexus Song Quest and the Foundation's own Kiri Development Programme – all with the objective of realising my vision of providing financial support, career assistance and guidance for singers with exceptional potential. Based on what I have observed I firmly believe that we are helping to make a difference.

Here in London we have just experienced a wonderful Gala concert at Wigmore Hall which featured five of the very talented singers we are currently supporting. It was a resounding success in every aspect and I want to place on record our thanks and appreciation to Gillian Newson for all she did to ensure this success.

We should be very proud of the recent successes enjoyed by the Kiri Programme participants who have achieved great distinction in their early forays as opera singers and in scooping major prizes in so many prestigious competitions. I'm looking forward to my return to NZ in February to continue my work with the current batch of singers – they are young with beautiful voices but they need time to develop stamina and mental toughness.

I was sad to learn that Stephen Dee had resigned as a trustee – he has been with us since the beginning and has been an integral part of many of our initiatives – he will be missed at our meetings.

Finally I want to thank my Trustees in New Zealand and the UK for their untiring efforts to achieve our goals and to wish them, all our enthusiastic supporters and the singers we are currently helping, a very Happy Christmas and New Year!

*With love*



CREDIT JOHN SWANNELL

## Welcome to the 26th edition of *Aria*

### *Featured in this issue ...*

Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Gala at London's Wigmore Hall	2
UK Foundation announces 2018-19 Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar	
Foundation Trustee Rodney Macann shares his thoughts about the Kiri Te Kanawa Development Programme	3
Kiri Programme singers excel in local and international competitions	4
News from singers supported by the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation	5-7





Jake Heggie, Nardus Williams, HRH The Duke of Kent, Dame Kiri, Phillip Rhodes, Julien Van Mellaerts, Bianca Andrew, Gary Matthewman and Thomas Atkins.

PHOTO: SIMON JAY PRICE

## Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Gala at London's Wigmore Hall

Late last year, the Director of London's prestigious Wigmore Hall, John Gilhooly, asked Kiri if she would welcome the idea of presenting a fundraising evening to celebrate her Foundation. Thus begun a planning project, reaching out to the many New Zealand organisations in London, garnering support for the concert. Matched by the wonderful support from the Royal College of Music, the Royal Opera House, and countless generous individuals, the hall began to fill up with anticipation and excitement. To Kiri's delight, news came that Sir Jerry Mataperae (NZ High Commissioner) and Lady Janine would attend the concert, followed by the announcement that HRH The Duke of Kent would also be coming.

As the musical programme evolved, Kiri asked the American composer and pianist Jake Heggie to join us (on a truly whistle stop visit from San Francisco, to play at the concert), and quickly she decided to bringing soprano Nardus Williams back from Houston Grand Opera, and Bianca Andrew back

to London from Frankfurt. Luckily, Phillip Rhodes was in the UK, as were Julien Van Mellaerts, Thomas Atkins, and music director, Gary Matthewman. Logistics required a thank you to the many people who eagerly bought tickets, and Villa Maria offered some of the finest NZ wines for the event.

The week prior to the concert was one of the busiest for all of the artists; Thomas Atkins sang in two extraordinary concerts of Bernstein's *Candide*, with the London Symphony Orchestra, whilst in rehearsals at the Royal Opera House: Bianca made her role debut in *I Puritani* at Oper Frankfurt before heading to Washington DC for a gala concert, and Julien and Phillip were in rehearsals for upcoming roles. Kiri was interviewed by Classic FM as rehearsals took place the day prior to the sold out concert, marking a significant milestone for the Foundation in the UK. Bravo everyone!



GILLIAN NEWSON

## UK Foundation announces 2018-19 Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar

Following a series of auditions, the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) recently announced British tenor Joel Williams as the Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar for 2018-19 – an annual £10,000 award that the Foundation makes in association with the Royal College of Music to a singer in his/her final year of study.

Joel Williams is a member of the Royal College of Music International Opera Studio where he studies with Tim Evans-Jones. He made his operatic debuts at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera and Glyndebourne as a boy treble with Trinity Boys Choir playing Cobweb in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of *Die Zauberflöte's* Drei Knaben, and peasant-child in Puccini's *Turandot*. In oratorio he performed as the boy-king Joas in Handel's *Athalia* with Paul McCreech, and toured with the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

In 2015 Joel was selected to be part of the Southrepps Young Artists Programme by Ben Johnson. In the summer of 2017 Joel sang Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* as a Young Artist with Opera Holland Park. In 2018 Joel is an Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera.

Additional grants were made to three singers who impressed the audition panel - Colombian soprano Julieth Lozano (£2000), Edinburgh born soprano Catriona Hewitson (£1500) and UK bass-baritone Timothy Edlin (£1500).

## Foundation Trustee Rodney Macann shares his thoughts about the Kiri Te Kanawa Development Programme

As a nation we punch well above our weight when it comes to the production of beautiful young voices with operatic potential. However, converting this into recognition on the international opera stage has probably never been more difficult. It was with this in mind that the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation started discussions in 2014 focused on doing even more, and in a properly targeted form, to equip our young singers for the rigours and demands of an international opera career.

Our trigger was the 2014 Lexus Song Quest and the series of in-depth discussions we had with Kathryn Harries, chief judge of the Song Quest that year. She suggested that often our singers were pursuing overseas study too soon and that there could be intensive, focused work undertaken, post University and Music School, to better equip our most promising singers for what they assuredly face as they set out to build their careers offshore.

What we decided was that, over the course of a year or more, we would work with a very small group of singers who showed outstanding potential; that our programme would be comprehensive and would include vocal coaching, a focus on acting and auditioning, the business of being an opera singer, managing the relationship with an agent and being media savvy.

Furthermore, we made the call at the outset not to set up another fulltime course along the lines of a university degree or diploma programme. So the Kiri Programme (as it has become known) is delivered in the form of a number of modules, extending over a few days or up to a couple of weeks, staged over the course of the year. It is similar in format to the Coach Accelerator Programme run by High Performance Sport in New Zealand. It's a format that allows for considerable flexibility and intensity of focus.

**But of course the trump card has been Dame Kiri herself** with her own vast knowledge of the profession, range of personal contacts and the keen interest she has in the singers and their development. Dame Kiri has gone to great lengths to stay close to and encourage the singers who the Foundation supports in the USA, while the singers based in the UK have the huge extra benefit of being hosted by Dame Kiri at her home where she arranges expert coaching and feeds them (a great plus for young singers!).

Having established that the criterion of "outstanding potential" for entry to the programme is the key consideration, we make no attempt to work with a group that would include a balance of voice types. This meant that with our first intake there were four sopranos – Eliza Boom, Katherine McIndoe, Madison Nonoa, and Natasha Wilson, tenor Filipe Manu and baritone Jarvis Dams. Our second intake includes four tenors – Harry Grigg, Ipu Laga'aia, Manase Latu and Kalauni Pouvalu and bass-baritone Samson Setu. Recently we have also been working with baritone Joe Haddow.

We are proud of the fact that the initial Kiri programme participants have achieved great distinction in both their early forays as opera singers and in scooping the major prizes in the most important New Zealand and Australian singing competitions. Eliza, Katherine, Madison and Filipe have won scholarships to the British Music Colleges and are thus able to benefit from Dame Kiri's hospitality and coaching. Natasha has won a scholarship to work with Cesar Ulloa in San Francisco.

Our current group are younger and at an earlier stage of their development. Dame Kiri was working with them in November and will be back early next year to do further work with them. She very much echoes Kathryn Harries original advice "these singers are young with beautiful voices but they need time and we should be in no hurry to get them to England or the USA, they must be ready. They need stamina and mental toughness".

On our side, we are adapting the work that we are doing with the singers according to the stage they are at and mindful

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"There is tremendous satisfaction and a sense of joy in witnessing something as beautiful as an emerging opera talent"

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Rodney Macann (far right) pictured with the singers and tutors (Teresa Desmarchelier & Kathryn Harries) at the final concert of the first Kiri Programme

that we are part of a much wider team. For example, we strongly encourage the singers in the programme to attend the New Zealand Opera School and we consult with their current teachers. We also acknowledge the great contribution of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation and New Zealand Opera with their programmes for young artists. There are a number of organizations and individuals who also make a vital contribution to the development of our young singers. We recognise, with deep gratitude, our wonderful sponsors without whom this initiative to boost the development of the next generation of outstanding singers would be much poorer.

For those of us who are trustees of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation there is tremendous satisfaction and a sense of joy in witnessing something as beautiful as an emerging opera talent. It's also heart-warming to see the excitement the singers experience as they find they are communicating at the top level on the concert and opera stages.

RODNEY MACANN





*Manese Latu takes out top prize in NZ Aria*

DR TONY WHITEHEAD

## Kiri Programme singers excel in local and international competitions

*Our singers have enjoyed a wide range of recent successes:*

Manese Latu won the top prize in the 2018 Lockwood New Zealand Aria one of Australasia's most prestigious singing competitions. The field of 43 entrants included singers from America and Australia. Fellow member of the current Kiri Programme, Samson Setu, was awarded third place. Filipe Manu was the runner up to Benson Wilson in the Australian Bel Canto aria competition (Richard Bonyng and Joan Sutherland competition); Madison Nonoa won the McCormick Scholarship (value \$20,000) in an inaugural competition organised by Frances Wilson; Eliza Boom won the International Voice Competition which is part of the Les Azuriales Festival in Nice, France and Katherine McIndoe won a package of prizes at the IFAC Australian Singing Competition, normally seen as the prize for the runner up.

## Stephen Dee will be missed

Stephen Dee recently announced his resignation as a Foundation Trustee. Commenting on the announcement Deputy Chair, Diana Fenwick said that Stephen would be greatly missed.



*"Stephen has provided sterling service to the Foundation in NZ and the UK since its inception in 2003. His roles included Founding NZ Chair, UK chair/trustee and more recently administrator of The Kiri Programme. His professional expertise and experience in all these roles have had a significant impact on the development of the Foundation. He is held in high regard by many, especially the young singers who have learned and gained much from his immense knowledge in the world of the arts. The Trustees will miss his thoughtful and insightful contributions."*





Opernstudio of Oper  
Frankfurt – 'I Puritani'

BARBARA AUMÜLLER



Tom – 'The Rake's Progress'  
(Summer Showcase – Royal Opera House)

CLIVE BARDIA

Over the past 15 years the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has provided support to a group of exceptionally talented NZ singers. We catch-up with a number of them prior to their Christmas break.



### Bianca Andrew (Mezzo Soprano)

"I have enjoyed a busy start to my second season in the Opernstudio of Oper Frankfurt. I am currently performing the role of Enrichetta di Francia in a new production of Bellini's final masterpiece, *I Puritani*. This role has been a great opportunity for me to further develop my voice, and I am enjoying playing such a regal woman on stage (being a mezzo, I'm usually playing a bloke of some kind)! Later this season I will also be performing in Händel's *Xerxes*, Strauss' *Daphne* and in a new production of Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*. As well as rehearsing for these pieces, I am also busy preparing my first solo recital at Oper Frankfurt in March 2019, as well as my debut in Offenbach's *Fantasio* with Garsington Opera, scheduled for next summer.

I am thoroughly enjoying my life in Frankfurt, even with the challenges of learning the German language and discovering the many cultural differences. It is an honour to be a member of such an important opera company, and to be able to soak up all the inspiration that I'm surrounded by every day at work. I am delighted to announce that I have recently signed a contract to join the Ensemble at Oper Frankfurt next season, where I will very happily remain until 2021/22.

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation have been so generous in helping me get settled in my new job, and it's a particularly lovely feeling knowing that Gillian and Dame Kiri are always at the end of the phone when I need some advice or have some good news to share. I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year."

**POSTSCRIPT:** As a lead-up to the London Concert at Wigmore Hall concert organiser Gillian Newson asked some of the singers who were performing to create their own short promotional videos which were distributed via social media.

Follow this link to view Bianca Andrew's excellent production – <https://vimeo.com/299421168>.

### Thomas Atkins (Tenor)

"As I sit down to write this report, I can't help but notice that next week will be the 1st anniversary of saying goodbye (or good riddance) to my pesky tonsils. What a year it has been! I guess I should go back even further so as to catch up on everything that happened.

After a year of hardship, or what ENT's liked to call 'Chronic Tonsillitis', it became glaringly obvious that I would need to have them removed. For a singer, this is no easy decision as even the minutest of chances that something would affect my voice felt like too great a risk. I made the decision to have a tonsillectomy but only after multiple hospitalisations, consultations with five different ENT surgeons and many discussions with mentors, vocal teachers and colleagues. In the end it came down to either dealing with almost constant illness or risk a complication with surgery but be sure to regain quality of life. Thinking back, it seems like a no-brainer and was 100% the right choice, but at the time it felt like I was putting everything on the line.

The other thing to factor in was the loss of work and earnings. I ended up needing three full months off before I started to sing again and then a further two months before I felt comfortable with my voice. Luckily, I had the full support of everyone at the Royal Opera House, where I was a Young Artist at the time, and they were willing to release me from contracts and even offered new contracts for when I chose to return. While it was down to me to make the final decision, it was incredibly important to have the advice and support from those that have been so instrumental in my career thus far. I can't thank the Foundation and all involved enough for standing right beside me through this intensely testing period.

I am delighted to say that I have made a full recovery physically and vocally. Since my surgery I have performed multiple concerts, two roles and covered a further two for the Royal Opera, Rodolfo for NZ Opera, and this weekend will sing with the LSO at the Barbican followed by a recital at the Wigmore Hall in celebration of our very own Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.

After this I will return to the Royal Opera House for *La Traviata* and then my season finishes with concerts and recordings for Opera Rara, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Opéra National de Montpellier and *Die Zauberflöte* for Glyndebourne."



The Coliseum – English National Opera

### James loelu (Baritone)

"Prior to writing this short update, my wife Pauline made a passing comment on how quickly plans change in this business. She made this observation because my plans for next year have changed completely in the past week and a half! Keeps me on my toes! Working professionally in the U.K. for a year now, I've got a real sense that opportunities come when you least expect them and not necessarily in a conventional manner – you've just got to go with the flow (and your gut)!"

I started the U.K. summer off this year working with the Garsington Opera Festival. I was one of the Alvarez Young Artists and was given the role of the Second Armed Man in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* as well as the cover of Pistola in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Garsington Opera is a company set on the beautiful grounds of the Wormsley Estate. This season proved very successful with opportunities to perform on a number of platforms including small recitals, masterclasses and cover shows. I even got to sing for the wedding of Mark Getty in his lovely walled gardens. For me, the highlight was on the final day to be called and asked to go on as Pistola for the final show due to sickness. This was a great opportunity as I had quite a different take on the role so was happy to get an opportunity to test out my own interpretation. I also really enjoyed working with so many talented professionals at Garsington – especially many accomplished artists. I feel that I learnt so much even from just observing their professionalism.

Following Garsington, I was able to spend a couple of weeks with my family before I started the new season with English National Opera. We have just finished our run of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, which has been highly acclaimed and I was again lucky enough to go on during the dress with a small cover role. This production of *Porgy and Bess* has not only been acclaimed for the singing but also for the effort ENO went to, to bring artists of colour from around the world to create the bustling and vibrant Catfish Row. And it certainly paid off. A truly stunning production, one that I was extremely proud to be part of. Concurrently, I have been performing in Britten's *War Requiem* which is visually stunning and moving. I've also been very fortunate to sing my first Verdi *Requiem* and perform for the Oceania exhibit at the Royal Academy of Arts.

In a few days, I will return to New Zealand to perform with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra in their Christmas Concerts in Auckland before I head to Amsterdam to continue the run of *Porgy and Bess* with Dutch National Opera. I have a number of engagements next year already with the year filling up steadily – I'm excited to be returning to Garsington to cover Leporello and then to perform the role in a semi-staged version of *Don Giovanni* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and again back to the APO for an Easter concert, and a few other projects throughout next year. I wish all Foundation supporters every best wish for a happy and safe Christmas break."



Thérèse/Tirésias in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* at Les Azuriales Opera

### Eliza Boom (Soprano)

"The winter term at the Royal Northern College of Music is ending, and I am enjoying a rare day off from the college's upcoming production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. As part of my study on the International Artist Diploma I am performing the role of Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* and have had the privilege of covering Artist in Residence Linda Richardson in the title role of *Suor Angelica*. These two roles have been the primary focus of my term and have provided opportunity me to grow both vocally and dramatically. We open in a week, and after we close I will be flying home for some much-needed rest and sunshine over the Christmas break.

Before the study year began, I spent two weeks in Nice, France with Les Azuriales Opera. I had the most amazing time competing in their International Singing Competition, in which I was thrilled to place first, and then quickly putting together a hilarious production of Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, in which I sang Thérèse/Tirésias.

In October I had my first foray into the role of Mimi, singing Act 4 of *La Bohème* in concert with the Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra. The concert had extremely good responses and I can't wait to be able to perform the entire role. Other projects this term have included a music theatre concert, a performance of *Carmina Burana*, a public masterclass with Dame Ann Murray and many various auditions.

Next year I am looking forward to having more time to do some intensive technical work with my teacher Mary Plazas. I will also be busy preparing for my final recital at college, shadowing the role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at Opera North, competing in a few international competitions and auditioning for several Young Artist Programmes in Europe. I'd like to finish this update with a big thank-you for the Foundation's support this year and wish everyone a very Happy Christmas!"





Schaunard (centre) – *La bohème* – NZ Opera

## Julien Van Mellaerts (Baritone)

"It has been an incredibly busy few months, and the season 2018/2019 has gone off to a great start! Having spent some time back in NZ was hugely rewarding. It was a such a pleasure to have been invited home to sing with New Zealand Opera, and get to sing in one of my favourite operas - *La bohème*. The production was incredibly well received, and we had the best cast and creative team! To work alongside my fellow young Kiwi and Aussie colleagues and friends was a real highlight. Schaunard is a great role as well, and I loved playing the energetic musician (ironically the only one of the four that can actually earn them any money!).

Back in Europe it has been non-stop with recital, concert, and operatic engagements. Some highlights have included my first performances of Britten's *War Requiem*, as part of the remembrance services across the UK for the end of WWI. With New Sussex Opera, I performed the title role in Stanford's opera *The Travelling Companion*. This was the first professional performance of this opera since the 1930s, and we made the first ever professional recording of it as well, which will be released in 2019 by SOMM Records.

Simon Lepper and I gave a very successful recital in Barcelona, at the LIFE Victoria de los Angeles Lieder Festival. It was a programme of Schumann, Schubert, Mahler and Wolf, and we were met with such a wonderful reception and standing ovation. To stand there and sing in a beautiful recital hall, and look directly at the *Sagrada Família* out the window while I was singing was incredible! We have been invited back, so I look forward to our next recital there.

Looking forward, I am very excited about performing at Wigmore Hall again with my fellow KTK Foundation singers next week. Then I am taking a couple of weeks off. Time for a little holiday to come back fresh for a very exciting 2019. Early in the year I have several recitals with Julius Drake, most notably we both make our debut at the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin (Daniel Barenboim's new concert hall that he has had built), in a programme of Schubert that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sang back in 1996. More recitals and orchestral concerts in New York, Chicago, Finland, Beijing, a tour with Chamber Music New Zealand (March/April 2019 with James Baillieu), and a tour of Israel singing Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*.

I am eternally grateful for the ongoing support of Kiri and the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. Over the past few months, Kiri and I have been working a lot together preparing audition repertoire and competition programmes. Some exciting things are in the pipeline and I hope I can announce more in the next month or so. In the meantime, I wanted to thank everyone in the Foundation for their ongoing support and tireless effort in helping each one of us to get safely to the next level of our career. Thank you so much!"



Ghost of Hector – Vienna State Opera

## Anthony Schneider (Bass)

"This new season has been very exciting so far! I made my debut at the Vienna State Opera, where I got to portray a spooky Ghost of Hector, who comes to warn Aeneas that he needs to flee to Italy. As you can see from the photograph, I was covered in fake blood, and also emerged from below the stage like a frightening nightmare! It was a fantastic experience to briefly be part of the Staatsoper – everyone was so welcoming, and above all I got to sing in the country I was born with my Dad in the audience!

Directly thereafter, I returned to the USA to make Philadelphia a sort of temporary "Home Base" once more, which required me to first pick up my car and my wife's motorcycle loaded onto a trailer, and drive 3200 kilometres from New Mexico! After finishing the season at Santa Fe Opera in August, I barely had time to put the car and motorcycle in storage following our last performance of "*Candide*" before heading to Austria.

Three days after getting to Philadelphia, I flew to Sydney to visit my brother for a few days, before flying on to Wellington for rehearsals with the NZSO. It was great to have some extra time to overcome the jetlag from all of my flights, and I couldn't wait to sing with the orchestra. I saw many familiar faces among the Aotearoa Voices New Zealand, and sharing the stage with fellow kiwis Kristen Darragh, Madeleine Pierard and Simon O'Neill was such a joy. We all had a delightful experience singing Beethoven's 9th Symphony together, such a work of celebration and humanity. This concert was also very special to me, because I had 8 family members show up at both concerts in Wellington and Auckland! I was especially glad to make both my mum and grandmother proud, as they were such an integral part of my musical education.

I'm currently enjoying a little down time in Philadelphia after all of these travels, having also done several trips up to NYC to sing for various people. I actually squeezed in a competition right before flying to New Zealand, and am excited to announce that I am now a Sullivan Foundation Award Winner! In the next few weeks I'll be busy working on the shows I'm doing in the next six months, as well as having some singing lessons to make sure my voice stays on track. I've gotten pretty good at working out any difficulties that I have, but singers always need another set of ears to monitor what is going on in case there are some imperceptible changes occurring, that could indicate future issues. After all, as we know from listening to our recorded voices, none of us have any idea what we truly sound like! We have to trust the techniques we accumulate over the years, but having someone to help us on the way is always a huge help. I wish everyone in New Zealand a joyful Christmas and holiday season!"



Dame Kiri  
and the Trustees of the  
Kiri Te Kanawa Foundations  
extend their very best wishes for a very

*Happy Christmas*

to all our supporters and their families  
and the singers that we are privileged  
to work with and support.

May the joy and peace of Christmas  
be with you throughout this wonderful season and  
may 2019 bring you continuing prosperity and good health.



Scenes from the Foundation's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert at Wigmore Hall

*Further information about how to make a donation is on the website or contact the Foundation for details.*

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*The next issue of Aria will feature more news about the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.  
If you want information about the Foundation please contact us. However, if you do  
not wish to receive further editions of Aria please advise us by sending an email.*

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