



ARIA

The newsletter of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

In a break with tradition, we focus this edition of Aria on our Foundation Founder, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, who recently celebrated her 80th birthday, and on the many young singers we support.

Issue 32 | Special 80th Birthday Edition | June 2024



KIRI TE KANAWA
FOUNDATION

Singer of the World

Dame Kiri's International Milestones

April 1971 – Covent Garden debut as a Flower Maiden in Parsifal. The next month she goes on to sing the role of Xenia in Boris Godunov, again at the Royal Opera House.

December 1st 1971 – stars as the Countess in the famous Covent Garden production of The Marriage of Figaro. The response is sensational and, at the age of just 27, she is launched on the path to being counted the greatest lyric soprano of her generation. After her audition for the role, the great conductor Sir Colin Davis says: "I couldn't believe my ears, it was such a fantastically beautiful voice."

From 1971 over the following four decades – she goes on to give more than 250 performances on the Covent Garden stage, in 19 roles in operas by Mozart, Verdi, Puccini, Johan and Richard Strauss, Bizet and Gounod. Amelia in Simon Boccanegra is the role she sings most frequently – two productions, six runs, 33 performances.

1974 – debuts at the Metropolitan Opera as Desdemona in Verdi's Otello, stepping in at a few hours' notice for the indisposed Teresa Stratas. She goes on to sing at The Met 135 times in 11 different roles.

1975 and onwards – sings at the Opera de Paris and further international debuts follow at the Sydney Opera House, the Teatro all Scala in Milan, Glyndebourne, the Vienna State Opera, the San Francisco Opera ...

1981 – 600 million people worldwide hear Kiri sing Handel's Let the Bright Seraphim at the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. This performance secures her place as a global star. "Everyone wanted to hear her sing" (BBC Radio star James Naughtie).

1984 – sings the lead role of Maria in the only recording (for Deutsche Grammophon) Leonard Bernstein ever directed of his own classic work West Side Story. "There he was (Bernstein) with this glass of water that was actually vodka. He was incredibly demanding but I didn't mind because he helped me achieve things that I'd never done before".



Singer of the World

Dame Kiri's International Milestones

2002 – she founds The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation to assist outstanding young New Zealand singers with mentoring, financial support and career assistance to help them develop international careers at the highest level. At last count the Foundation has made more than 160 grants to 33 talented New Zealand singers. During Covid 19 the Foundation maintains a line of support to 18 singers whose ability to make an income have been affected by the pandemic.

2013 – Dame Kiri appears in an episode of the hit television series *Downtown Abbey*, taking the role of the Australian opera legend Dame Nellie Melba.

2014 – she comes out of semi-retirement to take the mainly speaking role of the Duchess of Crakentorp in Covent Garden's production of Donizetti's *La Fille du Regiment*.

2003 – The Foundation is launched at a gala concert at the Aotea Centre, featuring Dame Kiri supported by her good friends Dame Malvina Major, Simon O'Neill and Helen Medlyn, along with young singers from The Opera Factory. Video messages with good wishes are screened from HRH Prince Charles, Placido Domingo, Sir Edmund Hillary, Jackie Stewart and Neil Finn. The concert is broadcast nationally and CD and DVD formats are marketed world-wide.

2019 – to commemorate a stellar international career, spanning more than 45 years, the Aotea Centre renames its main concert hall The Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre.





Dame Kiri celebrates

Two extraordinary events in New Zealand marked Dame Kiri's celebration: a birthday function hosted by Her Excellency the Governor General, and a unique parliamentary tribute in Wellington.

Their Excellencies The Right Honourable Dame Cindy Kiro, and Dr Richard Davies, hosted a black-tie birthday celebration at Government House in Auckland on 14 March.

The evening included an impressive performance by Samson Setu, a New Zealand-born bass-baritone of Samoan descent, who had flown from the UK especially for this event. The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has supported Samson for a number of years including his move to Zurich, Switzerland last year when he joined the opera studio at the Zurich Opernhaus. In fact, he flew back to the UK the following day to fulfil engagements. He was accompanied on piano by Professor Terence Dennis, a trustee of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and long-time accompanist of Dame Kiri's. The Aotea Orchestra Ensemble (Dame Kiri is their Patron) also performed. A very special surprise highlight for Dame Kiri came when Dame Cindy, at the conclusion of her speech, read a letter from His Majesty The King wishing Dame Kiri a very happy birthday. When approached by the Foundation, His Majesty immediately agreed to write to Dame Kiri despite his current health issues.



On 19 March, the first parliamentary sitting day following Dame Kiri's birthday, a unique tribute took place in Parliament, the first time for a living New Zealander.

While Dame Kiri, the trustees of her Foundation, and many supporters sat in the Speaker's Gallery in Parliament, the House assembled and representatives of all the political parties stood and delivered moving tributes to her. These highlighted her extraordinary international career, her significance to New Zealand and the contribution made over the last 20 years by her Foundation in supporting young NZ classical singers. Some comments were more personal, recalling hearing Dame Kiri sing while growing up, or meeting her as school children.

The tributes were led eloquently by Hon Paul Goldsmith, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, who initiated this special event and obtained the consent of the Speaker, Rt Hon Gerry Brownlee (who also hosted a reception for Dame Kiri in the Speaker's Chambers).

Following the tributes, the young baritone Kawiti Waetford, a grant recipient of Dame Kiri's Foundation, stood and sang a waiata – Pokarekare Ana, a song closely associated with her. Dame Kiri spontaneously joined in, and her voice floated above the chamber. It was an emotional moment, and the first time she has sung in public, albeit briefly, since 2016.

A very fine way to conclude the first stage of Dame Kiri's birthday celebrations.



Watch Kawiti Waetford and Dame Kiri sing at Parliament



On the eve of Dame Kiri's 80th birthday, tributes from around the world were flowing in from many of the young singers – the stars of tomorrow – who have the support of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.



"Your unwavering dedication to the arts and profound impact on the lives of artists like myself have been a beacon of hope and inspiration. Thank you for lighting the way with grace, wisdom and boundless generosity." **Filipe Manu**

"You have not only personally mentored many singers like myself but also provided a platform for opera lovers around the world to engage with our learning processes and to watch us grow as young artists. You have said that it takes a village to raise a singer, and I can only wholeheartedly agree with that!" **Bianca Andrew**

"I still look back fondly on my stay with you and the garden that became an obsession. I appreciate your support, words of encouragement and wisdom. There are many paths to Rome and thinking outside the box definitely gets you there." **James Ioelu**

"I send all my love to you on this day. It's a time for us to acknowledge everything you have achieved, the relationships you have garnered throughout an enduring career filled with excellence to the highest degree, and a time to be thankful for all the hard work you continue to put in for the next generation of opera singers." **Phillip Rhodes**

"Can't wait to celebrate with you in person this summer at Opera Holland Park. So much to celebrate! Thank you for everything you do for us all. Happy Birthday, Dame Kiri!" **Julien van Mellaerts**

"You have been a role model for me and so many others across the world since I was the tiniest little girl hoping to sing one day. We love you and we celebrate you today. Not just for your work as a mentor and leader and not only for your legacy as one of the most talented singers in the world but for you, as our Kiri. And on a deeper, personal level, I will never forget the Skype sessions you insisted on having during the pandemic when all hope was very lost. You held us together." **Madison Nonoa**

"Thank you for being a daily inspiration to people like me, just by being you and from doing and achieving the things you have. A little West Auckland Māori girl sat in front of her dad's TV twenty years ago and repeatedly rewound Dame Kiri Te Kanawa singing a song intended for the sequel to Phantom of the Opera for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's birthday celebration concert. That same Maori girl, twenty years later, has just debuted her first Pamina, in Germany, a role which you have inspired for over a decade." **Natasha Wilson**

"It has been one of the greatest honours of my life to know, conduct and accompany Dame Kiri over a period of almost two decades. Not only does she possess the most beautiful voice I've ever heard – one which matches her physical beauty – her artistry, musicianship and absolute focus on 'perfection' have been an inspiration in my own career as a conductor." **Brian Castles-Onion AM**

Read more birthday messages from our singers here



Dame Kiri – 80th celebrations

Dame Kiri's 80th birthday attracted significant international media coverage, especially in the UK. Highlights there included 2 feature-length programmes recorded on Classic FM, the UK's most popular classical music radio station with a weekly audience of several million people – an indepth interview with Aled Jones, and a programme hosted by Dame Kiri featuring classical singers she has enjoyed over the years. The BBC World News television channel with broadcaster Zeinab Badawi hosted a special documentary on Dame Kiri, even flying a crew from the UK to Dame Kiri's home in the Bay of Islands.

[Watch 'Take Me to the Opera' here](#) ➤

New Zealand's media ran a number of special programmes and features to celebrate Dame Kiri's milestone birthday, ranging from interviews and tributes on TVNZ, TV3, Radio NZ, Newstalk ZB, the NZ Herald, Stuff, regional newspapers and the NZ Woman's Weekly.

The Royal Opera House Covent Garden dedicated four pages of its magazine to Dame Kiri's birthday and career.

Many tribute blogs were written and one of the best appeared on the very popular blog 'The Oldie' written by Mark McGinness a well-known Australian writer and columnist.

[Click here to read](#) ➤



Invitations were accepted from St Mary's College in Auckland where Dame Kiri was famously taught singing by Dame Sister Mary Leo, and from Macleans College, also in Auckland, where 'Te Kanawa House' has been named after her.



Memories



TOP: Kiri Te Kanawa Retirement Village, Gisborne opening in 2012

MIDDLE: Royal visit to New Zealand, 2015

ABOVE: Dame Kiri, 2023 (NZ Woman's Weekly)

LEFT: MacLeans College assembly tribute

NZ and UK Foundations pay their tribute to the Foundation's Founder

Happy 80th Birthday dear Kiri. Yet another wonderful milestone. Heartiest congratulations from your friends and fellow Trustees of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. You have achieved greatness with grace and dedication and are acknowledged as a world renowned operatic Soprano. "Success isn't just about what you accomplish in your life. Its about what you inspire others to do." Your inspiration, mentorship and support for young singers who wish to succeed in the operatic world is legendary and continuing. We respect, admire and love you and it is so special that we share in your 80th celebrations.

Bless you Kiri

TRUSTEES OF THE KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION (NZ)
PAUL BREWER, TERENCE DENNIS, DIANA FENWICK, IAN FRASER,
PAUL GLEESON, PAUL HARROP, IAN LOWISH, ROBERT WIREMU

Beloved Kiri, we greet you on your 80th birthday! You have been and remain an inspiration for us and for the many artists whom your Foundation has supported. Your own beginnings and subsequent career are an example for aspiring singers, even though they are likely to fall short of your level of achievement and length of tenure. Under your guidance, the UK Foundation, on which we serve as trustees, seeks to identify and support artists at that early stage of their professional life when expert training and performance opportunities are vital to their advancement and endurance. That need is even greater today than it was 20 years ago, so thank you for your dedication and your endurance.

With admiration and love,

TRUSTEES OF THE KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION (UK)
NICHOLAS PAYNE, DAVID JACKSON, GARY MATTHEWMAN,
GILLIAN NEWSON, ANDREW ROBINSON, FIONA ROSE





Dame Kiri extends her heartfelt thanks ...



Click here to view her message

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation news

Tosca, Wellington Opera, 11-15 September

Wellington Opera, in association with The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, is bringing a new production of Tosca to the St James Theatre, Wellington, in September directed by Jacqueline Coates with set design by Michael Zaragoza and costume design by Rebecca Bethan Jones.

Well known Australian conductor Brian Castles-Onion leads a stellar cast of world-class New Zealand artists including Madeleine Pierard (Tosca), Jared Holt (Cavaradossi), Teddy Tahu Rhodes (Scarpia), Wade Kernot (Sacristan), Samson Setu (Angelotti), Manase Latu (Spoletta) and Morgan King (Sciarrone).

Wellington Opera continues to provide performance opportunities for young people including career development pathways for emerging singers, directors and creatives, and rich engagement with students and young people with access to rehearsals and supported by educational media.



Diana Fenwick QSO (1938 – 2024)

It is with the greatest sadness that we advise the passing of Diana Fenwick. She was a trustee of the Foundation almost from the beginning and our Chair from 2013 to 2024.

Diana had a deep love of music and theatre and served, at various times, as Chair of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Chair of the Aotea Centre Performing Arts Trust and board member of the Aotea Centre Board of Management. She was naturally at the centre of things for a busy Foundation and we benefited constantly from her judgement and experience and her boundless, practical sense of responsibility. Diana was a kind person – a quality attested to by many of the Foundation's young singers – and we appreciated her level-headedness, her generosity and her humour.

We will miss her greatly.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and the Foundation Trustees.

Semi-finalists and Head Judge announced – 2024 Lexus Song Quest in association with The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

New Zealand's premier biennial opera singing competition, the Lexus Song Quest announced earlier this year that The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation would be the major Co-Presenting partner with Lexus New Zealand for the 2024 Lexus Song Quest.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa is delighted to uplift the Foundation's support reflecting that the Lexus Song Quest has embedded itself in the affections of New Zealanders and launched many international careers, including her own.

"The Foundation supports young New Zealand classical singers with exceptional potential. With its invaluable and prestigious on-stage experience and support for our country's finest young singers, the Song Quest is a perfect fit for the Foundation's work. My Foundation has supported the Song Quest for the past 10 years in a number of different ways, but the announcement today raises that support to a new level."

As *Aria 32* was about to be published the preliminary judges Andrea Creighton and Peter Lockwood announced the 10 semi-finalists from a pool of 29 top-quality applications.

Commenting on the preliminary judge's selection Dame Kiri Te Kanawa said "Right back to my time singing in the Song Quest, it's been a marathon. Sustained pressure is one of the factors that makes this such a unique and worthwhile test of young voices. Talent is on

trial but so is character. The judges have done a great job in whittling the field down to 10 semi-finalists. But it won't be until early August that the marathon is decided once and for all. I wish all the singers well as they face the joys and rigours of what lies ahead."

The 10 semi-finalists will present their repertoire before the International Head Judge Grammy Award-winning South Korean lyric coloratura soprano Sumi Jo on Saturday 27 July and Sunday 28 July. From the semi-finalists, Sumi Jo will select the five finalists who will go on to perform with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra at the Grand Final Gala at the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington on Saturday 3 August.

Find out more about the semi-finalists and follow their journey at www.songquest.nz

Follow this link for exclusive presale tickets:



Lexus Song Quest – 2022 Finals



CREDIT HAGEN HOPKINS

The 2024 Lexus Song Quest semi-finalists:

Austin Haynes (countertenor) – from Kā-Muriwai/Arrowtown and moved to Oxford to study a BA and Masters in medieval and renaissance literature in 2019.

Felicity Tomkins (soprano) – from Te Puke, currently based in London and Europe having completed her Artist Diploma in Opera Vocal Performance at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Runner-up in the 2022 Lexus Song Quest.

Madison Horman (soprano) – from Palmerston North, currently living in London, is a recent graduate at the Royal Academy of Music. She attained her Master of Music and Postgraduate Diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music.

Katie Trigg (mezzo-soprano) – from Hamilton. Received her Bachelor of Music from the University of Waikato, before continuing her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, USA.

Morgan-Andrew King (bass) – from Tahaaroa. Currently studying a postgraduate degree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, USA.

Alfred Fonoti-Fuimaono (baritone) – from Flaxmere, Hastings, he completed his musical education at the University of Waikato, before a Masters in Advanced Opera Studies at The New Zealand Opera Studio.

Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono (tenor) – from Flaxmere, Hastings. His musical journey took a significant turn in 2013 when he joined Project Prima Volta, an experience that introduced him to the world of classical music. 2022 Lexus Song Quest finalist.

Samuel McKeever (baritone) – from Hastings. Bachelor's degree in music (Classical Performance) graduating from the New Zealand School of Music Victoria University of Wellington.

Tayla Alexander (soprano) – born in South Africa, raised in Auckland. A 2024/2025 Bicentenary scholar at the Royal Academy of Music in London. 2022 Lexus Song Quest Semi-Finalist.

Manase Latu (tenor) – Auckland based-Tongan tenor who has recently completed the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. 2018 Lexus Song Quest Finalist.



UK celebrations for Dame Kiri at 80 !

The UK Foundation have a number of Birthday initiatives planned to coincide with Dame Kiri's visit to the UK later this year including a special day honouring her on 20 June in the beautiful grounds of Holland Park, London during Opera Holland Park, one of the UK's leading summer Opera Festivals.

James Clutton, CEO and Director of Opera Holland Park said: "It is a great privilege to have Dame Kiri with us in person this summer and to celebrate the 80th birthday of this legendary and beloved performer with a masterclass and gala concert as part of Opera in Song."

Dame Kiri will give a public masterclass in the afternoon with members of Opera Holland Park Young Artists programme, followed by a Gala concert that evening. On stage with Kiri will be alumni of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation since its creation in 2004. These will include Thomas Atkins, Julieth Lozano, Madison Nonoa, Phillip Rhodes, Madeleine Boreham (Royal College of Music current Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar), Samson Setu and Julien Van Mellaerts, in a programme of opera scenes and arias curated by Julien Van Mellaerts and Gary Matthewman. The concert will be presented by radio broadcaster, Petroc Trelawny and will be followed by a reception with Dame Kiri.

"As a celebration of quality and Dame Kiri's commitment to developing talent, the events at Opera Holland Park on 20 June 2024 will be unmissable."

– JAMES CLUTTON



New Trustee brings broad artistic experience

Dame Kiri was delighted when Emma Sloman recently accepted her invitation to become a Foundation Trustee.

Emma is a trained opera singer who studied in Auckland, London and New York. A soloist and chorus member with NZ Opera for over thirty years she is a former Emerging and Resident Artist and has experience as an arts administrator, singing teacher, youth tutor and event producer. Emma was a member of the Opera Factory ensemble which performed in the concert that launched the Foundation in 2004.

Emma told Aria that she was delighted and very proud to be invited to take up this new role, "I cannot think of a better fit for my personal skills and passions. I have worked with many of the young singers who have been inspired by Dame Kiri, sung with NZ Opera or Opera Factory, moved on to university studies then carried on careers which have been supported by the Foundation."

News from
Foundation
supported singers
all around the
world highlighting
their successes
and resilience



Bianca Andrew as Xerxes

CREDIT: BARBARA AUMUELLER

Bianca Andrew

I had a lovely 2023 here in Frankfurt, with some important role debuts including Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and the title role in *Xerxes*, along with reprising some roles from previous seasons such as Tebaldo in *Don Carlo* and the Tsarina in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*. Oper Frankfurt was awarded 'Opera House of the Year' for 2023 by Opernwelt, and I was particularly proud to also be awarded 'World Premiere of the Year' for our opera *Blühen* by Vito Zuraj, in which I played the lead role of Aurelia. I have just finished singing the Page in a run of *Salome*, and in a week I will start rehearsals for a new production of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, in which I'm singing Sesto. Later, in the summer, I'll be making my Wagner debut at the Tiroler Festspiele in Austria, singing the role of Fricka in a Brigitte Fassbaender's production of *Der Ring*.

I am so happy to be here in Germany and working at such a brilliant theatre – it had always been my dream to make a living from life on the stage. It's a dream that came true because of the work of Dame Kiri, the Kiri Foundation, and the countless generous supporters and friends who encouraged me. I often think of the people who helped me get here, and I feel that somehow I am taking them all with me as I step out into the light and music of the stage.



Tom Atkins - RakesProgress at Glyndebourne.

CREDIT: RICHARD HUBERT SMITH

Thomas Atkins

My 2023/24 season has been wonderful so far. With a few role/house (sometimes both!) debuts it has been challenging but greatly rewarding and there are more just around the corner before the season comes to a close. Highlights include Carmen in Rouen and La Traviata in Hamburg (both of them role and house debuts). A European tour of Elijah throughout December took me to some major concert halls in France, Austria, Germany and Netherlands but also brought me home to the UK just in time to spend Christmas with my family. My season continues in Copenhagen (*Madama Butterfly*), Lisbon (*Lobgesang*), and finally back in the UK for Katya Kabanova at Grange Park Opera. More importantly though the beginning of this year brought a new arrival to our family. Our daughter, Mathilda, was born in January bringing much joy and happiness to us all. With more role and house debuts coming next season there are lots of exciting things on the horizon. But for now we continue this season as a family of four!



CREDIT: FELIX GRÜNSCHLOSS

Eliza Boom

Hello from Stuttgart! 2023/24 was my first season fully freelance, and as one can expect, it had already had many twists and turns. My season started off with the kind of phone call that sets every singer's heart pumping: I was asked to jump on a plane the next day and fly to Copenhagen to learn the role of Vitellia (*La Clemenza di Tito*). I nervously agreed and spent the next week crash-learning the role. In the end the original cast was able to perform, but I jumped in to sing the last two performances. It truly was a wild time, making a role and house debut with one day of staging rehearsals and of course no orchestral rehearsals or run through, but it went extremely well... that said, I look forward to singing the role one day without so much stress!

Later last year I returned to New Zealand for two concerts with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, singing Strauss' beloved *Four Last Songs* and also enjoyed an intimate recital with the Auckland Opera Studio. Upon returning to Germany, I went straight into rehearsals for *Così fan tutte* in Karlsruhe, which was very successful. I also performed Mahler's 2nd Symphony with the Badische Staatskapelle in Karlsruhe. And now, in-between *Così* performances I am rehearsing *Hansel and Gretel* in Stuttgart, and thoroughly enjoying becoming a 13-year-old girl again.

This year I will be returning to the Munich State Opera, singing supporting roles in *Parsifal* and *Il Trittico* before coming back to Stuttgart to sing Woglinde in *Götterdämmerung*. Although jumping from Mozart to Humperdinck to Puccini and so on is not for the faint of heart, I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to perform such incredible music and feed the artistic portion of my soul.

Eliza Boom as Fiordiligi at Karlsruhe Staatstheater



Sid Chand

I am currently in my second and final semester of the Professional Studies Certificate at SFCM studying with Cesar Ulloa. I've loved every second of it! I've performed my first role as Rinuccio in Puccini's 'Gianni Schicci' which was a great challenge but equally a great way to dip my toes into what it is like to perform a full role. This semester I'm performing as Miles in Missy Mazzoli's 'Proving Up' and I'm confident that with the guidance and teaching I'm getting at the Conservatory; it will be another rewarding experience. I've recently been offered a place at the 'Manetti Shrem Opera Program', a summer program in California. This experience will mean that I get to cover the role of Pedrillo in the program's production of Mozart's 'Die Entführung auf dem Serail', as well as perform in their opera scenes and recitals.

STOP PRESS: As *Aria* went to print Sid announced that he had been selected for one of the two coveted spots in the prestigious Artist Diploma Program at the San Francisco Conservatory. The Foundation confirmed that they would be supporting Sid on his two-year journey.



Samuel Downes Gianni Schicchi in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*

Samuel Downes

I have made a significant vocal transition as I have started studying and performing Heldentenor repertoire. Cesar Ulloa has been a constant support since the moment I first contacted him in 2022 and had guided me through this transition slowly. I have made a huge leap vocally and as a performer through my time with Cesar at the Conservatory. As I look to the future I will be staying in San Francisco to keep studying with Cesar and to continue to build on my work as a Heldentenor. Thank you to Dame Kiri and The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for their support to enable me to follow my dreams in San Francisco.

I am currently in my last semester of my Master of Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Cesar Ulloa, tying off a very successful two years at the Conservatory. I have had the pleasure to play significant roles in five of the Operas while here. These have included Le Podestadt in Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle*, John Sorel in Menotti's *The Consul*, Le Fauteuil and l'Arbre in Ravel's *l'Enfant et les sortilèges*, Gianni Schicchi in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Pa in Mizzoli's *Proving Up*. I have helped premier new works, participated in collaborative concerts, and also performed in Masterclasses with Lester Lynch and Jamez McCorkle.



Morgan King

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has supported me at the Curtis Institute of Music. My first year was both challenging and rewarding – working new opera compositions at the Mostly Modern Festival in Saratoga Springs, USA where I debuted the role of 'Jay' in *A Manic Proposal*. Later I travelled directly to Sicily for the Mediterranean Opera Festival where I debuted 'Raimondo' in *Lucia Di Lammermoor*, 'Don Magnifico' and 'Alidoro' in *La Cenerentola* and 'Dottore' and 'Marchesi' in *La Traviata*. I participated in every performance since there were no understudies, which enabled me to develop new skills and gain valuable experience. My next move was to Philadelphia to start my Masters at the Curtis Institute of Music. It proved to be a wonderful opportunity to grow as a singer and as an artist, with opportunities to work with many amazing coaches and teachers. Later, I felt privileged to sing in a Strauss themed concert with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conducting. Currently I am in tech rehearsals for Monsieur Lacouf and Mother in a Curtis double bill production of *Les Mamelles des Tiresias* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* respectively.



Bonjour à tous! – Filipe Manu

This time, it's "bonjour" from a rather rainy Paris, where I'm thrilled to be for my role and house debut as Eduardo at the National Opera de Paris in a new production of Thomas Adès' "The Exterminating Angel," conducted by Thomas himself and directed by Calixto Bieito. The Kiwis are well represented at the Opera de Paris at the moment, with Amina Edris and myself playing the young newlyweds in this production, and across the hall, Amitai and Pene Pati are rehearsing for "Beatrice di Tenda" — it's practically an official Kiwi takeover.

Once things wrap up in Paris, I'll be returning to Hamburg for my role debut as Ernesto in "Don Pasquale," before heading over to Vienna for my house debut at the Wiener Staatsoper in a new production of "Cosi fan tutte," directed by Barrie Kosky and conducted by Philippe Jordan. A house debut at Opera Australia in the revival of David McVicar's "Cosi fan tutte" will wrap up the 2023-2024 season. And while I'm not quite back on New Zealand soil, I'll happily settle for being within a 3-hour flight.

On the competition front, I was in Barcelona for the International Tenor Viñas Competition, which is always hotly contested and brings together some of the best young singers from all over the world. After four gruelling rounds over two weeks, I was awarded shared first place in a final of 18 singers. It was a proud moment to have been able to represent both New Zealand and Tonga at such a competitive level. While competitions provide only a glimpse into what we do as opera singers, they are invaluable not just for testing our mettle but also for providing essential support in managing the considerable upfront costs of starting out as a freelance artist. At the 2018 Lexus Song Quest, I was awarded the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation scholarship to help with my studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, which was invaluable. Since then, through Kiri's vision of nurturing and supporting young talents to achieve their full potential in the opera world, the Foundation has been a steadfast source of support. A definite highlight was the "Coffees with Kiri" via Zoom, where, even amidst the uncertainties of the pandemic, Kiri was able to offer support and inspiration from the other side of the world — something I think we'll all always cherish.

Filipe Manu (Memorino) in L'elisir d'amore, Glyndebourne



Manase Latu

Last summer, I performed Don Ottavio at the Aspen Summer festival lead by Patrick Summers and Renee Fleming under the baton of Dame Jane Glover.

Since then, I have finished my time on the Lindemann Program where I performed as one of the players in Brett Dean's North American premier of *Hamlet*, Trojan Soldier in *Idomeneo* and Armed Guard in *Magic Flute*, all on the Met mainstage. I was also part of several recitals and concerts throughout the season. Over the summer, I did something a bit different and went on National tour of Croatia singing Croatian folk songs, Māori and Pacific Waita, a range of Operatic classics and popular tunes with The Shades, including Samson.

Late last year I returned to New Zealand married to my beautiful wife, Ella Latu. We married in NYC and planned a celebration in Auckland with family and friends. Along with preparing for various auditions, I am also getting ready for Le Comte Ory with NZ Opera. I am excited to be performing alongside colleagues whom I admired when I first started my musical journey.



CREDIT: NICK RUTTER

Katherine McIndoe

I have recently been performing Poulenc's monodrama *La voix humaine*, which was part of the 2023 Grimeborn Festival at the Arcola Theatre in London – I have been nominated for an Offie Award for Best Opera Performance, and am thrilled to be preparing to perform the opera again next month, at the King's Head Theatre. 2023 was an exciting year of performing for me, as I sang the title role in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* in a tour around the UK with English Touring Opera (ETO). During the same season, I also performed a role in ETO's opera *Zoo!*, a new piece written specifically for children with special educational needs, which we performed throughout the UK and in Luxembourg.

In recent years in the UK, I have been lucky to perform with companies like ETO, Glyndebourne, Garsington, If Opera, the Richard Alston Dance Company, and at the Aldeburgh Festival and Oxford Lieder Festival. When back in New Zealand at the start of this year, I was also thrilled to work again with New Zealand Opera, singing the title role in their children's opera *Red!* I'm looking forward to more work with English Touring Opera in their autumn tour later this year, as well as hopefully returning to New Zealand for more performances soon.

Katherine McIndoe, La voix humaine 2023



Julien Van Mellaerts

It has been a crazy past year to reflect on, and an exciting one ahead. I am now living in Paris and loving my new life here. I made the move mid-2023 and it has been fantastic. year saw some wonderful debuts in leading roles in the UK, France, Austria and New Zealand, with some proper time at home being a particular highlight - Guglielmo in *Così* with NZ Opera, and *Wozzeck* with Orchestra Wellington (recording to be released in the coming months).

Preparations are well underway for the fourth edition of "Opera in Song", and we are particularly excited about hosting Dame Kiri and several foundation artists to celebrate her 80th birthday in a gala concert at Opera Holland Park, as part of our series, on 20 June 2024.

The rest of the season will have me in the UK, France, Portugal and Spain, with a varied mix of recitals, concerts and opera. Particular highlights will be Bach and Vaughan Williams with Harry Bicket and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, in concert and recording; the release of my next disc of Poulenc songs and opera with the Manchester Camerata on Resonus Classics; role debuts of Frederic in "Lakmé" at Cadogan Hall, and Frank in Puccini's "Edgar" with Opera Holland Park this summer.



Kieran Rayner (2nd from left) *Dido and Aeneas*

CREDIT: ELLIE KURTTZ

Madison Nonoa

I am writing to you from a very sunny Lisbon, which is the city that I am lucky enough to call a home away from home. The last few months have been a whirlwind of special triumphs: my debut at the Salzburg Festival as Amore in Orfeo alongside Cecilia Bartoli; being the Voice of Heaven in Monte Carlo for Don Carlo and the completion of a wonderful Porpora Opera, Polifemo, in Strasbourg. This year is a year of change for me as I seek to establish myself as a Europe based artist and so it is still a little uncertain. Concerts here and there, a residency in Aix-en-Provence and with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in the UK. I am optimistic and happy, and I look back on the last few years with an immense amount of pride and gratitude to you for your unwavering support and for the life changing aid and advice you have offered me. Without you and the Foundation none of this would have been possible.

Kieran Rayner

I had a busy British summer, with multiple opera contracts in which I played a bullfighter (Escamillo), a pirate, a bohemian artist and an evil sorcerer. Couldn't have asked for a more fun combination of characters! I've also been further developing my interactive play/song recital, *What If*: we had a residency funded by Samling Arts in November, for which we worked intensely with a director and music coaches, developing the show into its final form. We've just filmed a trailer – watch out for that footage coming soon.

2024 saw me in European and UK auditions – one of which included bumping into fellow Kiwi and friend Anthony Schneider completely by chance in Vienna! I'll also be making my debut in Israel as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in June, with other opera and concert engagements in the UK being negotiated as well (including a concert hosted by Stephen Fry!). Watch this space...

Despite living in London for almost ten years now, New Zealand will always feel like home to me. The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation's constant work to support us Kiwi singers – not just abroad, but also by fostering our home-grown industry, so we can come back to perform – is so important and so valuable. As the NZ industry continues to grow and adapt, it is reassuring to know that the Foundation is there at the forefront.



Anthony Schneider

The last few months have brought me several exciting and fulfilling artistic ventures. I made my debut at the Dutch National Opera, singing King Henry in Lohengrin. This marked the start of a transition to full-time freelancing, after 4 years in the Ensemble of Oper Frankfurt. And what a stellar experience it was! Amsterdam was so welcoming, and I got the chance to work with Lorenzo Viotti on his first ever Wagner opera, as well as Christof Loy as the director, and an incredibly experienced and talented cast of singers.

What's more, after our 6th performance I was asked to jump in as Sarastro in their Magic Flute production, and ended up singing one dress rehearsal from the pit, the final dress rehearsal with the staging learnt in 24 hours, and five more of the performances as well. In between, I got the call to jump in with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, this time for a Messiah. This was even televised on the national Television Rai 5! For that performance, some climate change protesters surprisingly joined us on stage to bring awareness to the global warming issues we are facing, and I was very grateful that they let us keep going without major interruption until the end of the show while delivering their message.

Suffice to say, these three months have been a whirlwind, and they brought the kind of intense activity that one hopes for as an opera singer wanting to make their mark on the international stage. Among all these travels and experiences, making new connections and reconnecting with old friends is one of the most satisfying and grounding aspects of this work. For instance, Kieran Rayner and I ran into each other just last week at an audition in Vienna! We hadn't seen each other in person for at least 13 years, though we had kept track of each other in part due to the work of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation supporting us through the difficult Covid times. How wonderful to meet another kiwi again!



Samson Setu - Government House Reception 2024

Samson Setu

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren;
Greetings from Zürich, Switzerland.

I've been in Zürich since the end of September 2023 and it has been a great experience so far. I have had great opportunities to work with some of the Opernhaus music staff and some very experienced visiting coaches and teachers, including the opportunity to sing for Brigitte Fassbaender in a three-day workshop.

Besides the daily coaching and lessons, I am currently preparing the role of 'Nick Bottom' as we soon begin rehearsals for Britten's, A Midsummer Night's Dream and we opened the show earlier this month. This will be my first role here in Zürich. Following this production, I will be preparing the role of *Mathieu* in Giordano's Andrea Chenier and the *Mandarin* in Puccini's Turandot. I am excited for these upcoming projects!



Oliver Sewell - Theater Bremen production of Orpheus in der Unterwelt. Theater Breme.

CREDIT: JORG LANDSBERG

Oliver Sewell

I have been based in Bremen now for six months and so far things have gone well - the bureaucratic side of things has been slow and complicated but the opera side of things has been great. I have had a gentle but busy start to life at the theatre with three medium sized roles (Wilson in Dr Atomic, Orpheus in Orpheus in the underworld and Narraboth in Salome). This has given me time to find my feet and get used to the vast array of new things all around me. I am slowly gearing up for my first large role at the theatre with Tito in La clemenza di Tito which opens on 28 March.

Christmas and New Years was particularly busy with 6 performances of Orpheus in the underworld in a week and a performance of Doctor Atomic thrown in for good measure. In addition to this I was staging Salome and also in musical rehearsals for Tito! Rehearsing and performing multiple operas at once is certainly keeping me very very busy and on my toes!

This Summer I am hugely looking forward to singing Edoardo in Un giorno di regno at Garsington Opera with the amazing Tobias Ringborg conducting. I will then return to Theater Bremen in August for what is looking to be an exciting 2nd season.



Phillip Rhodes

2023/2024 has been filled with many ups and downs. As companies still struggle to come to terms with the hangover that was the pandemic, and the current rise of the overall cost of living making opera even far more expensive to present than it already was, ripples through the business. I'm grateful that during that time, the majority of work I have had has remained, and only some have fallen at the last hurdle. During those times, I'm so grateful to have had The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Laureate award to fall back on in order to keep walking forward and to weather the difficult times.

As I enjoy the final run of La Traviata with Opera Australia, in the iconic Sydney opera house, looking over the gloriously sunny harbour from the comfort of my dressing room, I reflect with gratitude to all those that have been there for and with me to this point, none more so than Dame Kiri, and the members of the Foundation in which supports so many young singers.



Natasha Wilson

The 2023/2024 season was full of great performance moments. I've made two role debuts so far, being Nannetta in Staatsoper Stuttgart's 'Falstaff', and Pamina in Barrie Kosky's popular production of 'Die Zauberflöte'. Both of these roles have been awesome challenges, and I've loved every second of performing them. Later this year, and while I can't say too much before the Staatsoper announces the season first, I'm really looking forward to another wonderful role debut, alongside other roles I've recently performed.

Joining the Ensemble at Staatsoper Stuttgart has been wonderful, and has felt rather like putting on a glove that fits quite nicely. I'm surrounded by colleagues who inspire me every day, and am constantly surrounded by incredible artistry. I'm looking forward to the rest of the year

We need your help, to help them achieve their dreams

Donations and bequests to the Foundation of any size are always welcome and very important for the continued support of young singers who have exceptional potential.

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (CC 34307) and The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) (1098213) are registered charitable trusts which offer a wide range of opportunities to support their work.

Further details about how to make a donation or leave a bequest in your will can be obtained from the Foundation office – see contact details below or visit www.kiritekanawa.org

There are many convenient ways to make donations electronically including direct debit, automatic regular payments, direct credit and telephone banking.

For all these arrangements you will need to know the Foundation's bank account details:

Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation
BNZ – 020192-0112452-00



The newsletter of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

THE KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION TRUSTEES:

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ, DBE, AC, CH | Paul Brewer LVO | Terence Dennis MNZM | Ian Fraser OBE
Paul Gleeson | Paul Harrop ONZM | Ian Lowish | Emma Sloman | Robert Wiremu

THE KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION (UK):

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ, DBE, AC, CH | Gary Matthewman | Gillian Newson
Nicholas Payne | Andrew Robinson | Fiona Rose

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

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

ADMINISTRATOR: Paul Gleeson
POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 38387, Howick,
Auckland 2145, New Zealand
MOBILE: +64 275 944534
EMAIL: foundation@kiritekanawa.org
WEBSITE: www.kiritekanawa.org

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)

C/- Gillian Newson
23B Prince of Wales Mansions
Prince of Wales Drive,
London SW11 4BQ, United Kingdom
MOBILE: +44 (7768) 166381
EMAIL: gilliannewson@outlook.com

THE KIRI TE KANAWA
FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS



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.

It is believed that the contents of this newsletter are a full and fair representation. Interested parties should make their own enquiries to satisfy themselves on all aspects. **PRIVACY POLICY:** Under the Privacy Act 1993 any address or information you supply us will be held in secure circumstances by The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and used to communicate with you about the Foundation's events, associations and activities. Our mailing lists are available only to The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and are not available to any third parties or organisations.



Birthday Messages from singers supported by The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation *continued*

Happy birthday Dame Kiri! I hope that you have a delightful day of being celebrated in many ways, including your vibrant life and legacy, and wish you many more milestones and joys to come!

Anthony Schneider

I send my best birthday wishes and most sincere thanks to Dame Kiri. On your day I hope the celebrations will be extravagant and I'll have a beer to celebrate you with utmost admiration and respect. I have been a part of the foundation as a singer for several years now and I very much appreciate the support you willingly continue to give me and so many others. Manuia lava lou aso fanau! **Samson Setu**

Wishing you an absolutely fantastic 80th birthday, may your year ahead be filled with much happiness, celebration and champagne. Huge Love, **Claire Egan**

I am sending you all my very best birthday wishes! What a legacy you have, both on stage and with the impact you have had on young singers across the world. Thank you so much for your support of me, both in encouragement and allowing me the opportunity to train and develop my skills. I am so grateful for the direct feedback and advice you give, particularly when we were able to meet a couple of months back. I hope to meet again when I am back in the country next! In the meantime, I wish you a wonderful, happy year ahead in the beautiful Bay of Islands. With love, **Eliza Boom**

Happy birthday Dame Kiri! As part of the community of Kiwi singers based in the UK, your support has been invaluable, and I'm so grateful to you for your warmth and advice as we have navigated a tricky few years. Sending lots of love from London – and I hope New Zealand is treating you well! **Katherine McIndoe**

Happy 80th Birthday Dame Kiri, What an incredible milestone! It was wonderful to spend time with you whilst back in New Zealand and hear about some of the amazing experiences you have had throughout your life. **Madison Horman**

Kia ora Dame Kiri, Wishing you a very happy 80th birthday!! I've missed seeing you in the UK, but I'm also really glad that you're back in NZ to help support and develop our industry (and to enjoy the weather I hope). I'm in awe of your ongoing personal dedication to supporting all of us Kiwi singers at home and abroad – we're so lucky to have you. Have a wonderful day, and I hope to see you very soon! Ngā mihi, **Kieran Rayner**

Happy Birthday, Kiri! Hoping you have the most wonderful day. Lot's of love from **Tom, Lizzie, Charlie and Mathilda Jenkins**

Time can be a hard concept to comprehend especially as we are in it and for the most part it moves by so swiftly. At certain moments in life I believe we are able to sit outside of it long enough to reflect, take measure and zoom out far enough to view things in a slightly bigger picture. Often it is moments of witnessing new life, witnessing the end of a life, or reaching a significant birthday that can pull us out of our day to day thinking and perspective. I hope that today is one of those days - where you can look back and see all the good and beauty that you have put into the world. All the very best wishes and love to you on your 80th birthday, **Oliver Sewell**

Happy 80th Birthday Dame Kiri I am so grateful to have had the brief chance to get to know you. It means the world to have my potential as a singer be recognized by you – and it is nothing short of a privilege and honor to now sing as an extension of the Dame Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. Your guidance as fostering of young talent has been crucial to not only me, but several other singers to whom even I look up to. I would have never thought that when I started singing, I would have the backing of someone who is considered by many if not all to be operatic royalty. I have every intention of making you all proud. With Love and a big Happy Birthday, **Sid Chand.**

Happy Birthday Kiri!! Wow 80! When I think back on when we first met, I think of the beginning of what has been an exhilarating journey. It's also hard not to think of all the intense life events that have happened in the world and also in my life. After our first encounter, literally days later the building we met in was destroyed by the Christchurch earthquakes. Fast forward a few months and I was making my debut at the Sydney Opera House. That was just the start of this crazy journey. I think the next time we met was with Kawiti at your home in South Downs, I distinctly remember your sending me off to a show at Glyndebourne with the crystal and champagne... I remember thinking what a riot to take this huge picnic to an opera and what a cool experience that turned out to be. I hope you have a wonderful day full of delicious food and champagne and celebrate in style on the big day. I hope the weather treats you well and you have the chance to be out in nature, on the boat, in the bush or wherever your happy place may be. Happy 80th! Warm wishes and love from us all here in Frankfurt, **Jono, Anna and Maddie Abernethy**

Happy 80th Birthday Dame Kiri ! It is a great pleasure to be able to congratulate you on this incredible milestone. You have been a wonderful support to me musically and personally and I could not be doing this journey without you. I hope you have a wonderful celebration and I look forward to congratulating you in person when I see you next. I wish you all the blessings, for a year of happiness and good health. With love, **Samuel Downes.**

Dearest Kiri, I am sending you all my very best birthday wishes! What a legacy you have, both on stage and with the impact you have had on young singers across the world. Thank you so much for your support of me, both in encouragement and allowing me the opportunity to train and develop my skills. I am so grateful for the direct feedback and advice you give, particularly when we were able to meet a couple of months back. I hope to meet again when I am back in the country next! In the meantime, I wish you a wonderful, happy year ahead in the beautiful Bay of Islands. With love, **Eliza Boom**

Happy Birthday Aunty Kiri!! I wish you a special day on this great milestone of 80 years young! Words cannot express my gratitude to you and the foundation for the generous support you have provided me and have continued to provide for us Kiwis around the globe. My fondest memory will always be when Samson, Filipe and I visited your home outside of Glyndebourne. Following lunch, we decided it would be a great idea to weigh ourselves. After laughing at both Filipe and Samson's results, I was next up on the chopping block. The scale read ERROR and I still believe it doesn't work to this day! I'm sorry for this and will send you a new scale in the mail. Again, I wish you a happy birthday and all the best for what is to come. Much love, **Manase Latu**

Happy Birthday Kiri! Thank you for letting me into team Kiri. Over 20 years of globetrotting, as your "sound man", and before that, being involved in some of your recordings for Decca from the late seventies on. What a rollercoaster ride it has been. Full of fun, as well as hard work. But it wasn't just the work, it's also the Kiri parties and get togethers, where you welcomed, into your home me, my family and the dog! Happy, happy times. It was sad when you left Blighty to live back in NZ, but hey, I can hardly blame you! Enjoy all the fuss that will be made of you for your birthday. Hopefully we will see you soon! Lots of love, **Martin, Frances, Alastair and Alice Atkinson** xxx

Happy Birthday Dame Kiri and thank you for being a pivotal part of my growth and development from my first Lexus Song Quest to overseas performances and auditions. Your generosity and invaluable mentorship has provided me with a sounding board about the next steps in challenging myself and forging a career path. You have been a trailblazer knocking down doors for other young woman to follow your legacy means that NZ singers are taken seriously overseas. Have a wonderful 80th Birthday! **Tayla Alexander**
