

# ARIA



## Dame Kiri comments . . .

So far 2015 has been another very interesting year for me – full of surprises and memorable experiences, interesting musical projects and continuous work with young singers being supported by the Foundation. You will read all about them later in this mid-year edition of *Aria*.

In March I received an Honorary Doctorate from the Royal College of Music which was bestowed by HRH Prince Charles. HRH was charming as always and was shown my portrait commissioned by the RCM to be hung at the college in the Britten theatre ... it was a lovely moment when I saw HRH standing with one of the school's administrators giving my portrait a serious view ... I did not ask Prince Charles for his opinions of the painting.

I've had a number of students here at my home recently for individual mentoring and weekend group sessions. While all the students have their own teachers there are always things they need to discuss in depth and of course sitting round a dining table is far more relaxing than a study room and consequently sometimes we achieve a lot more in that environment.

Here in the UK the Guildhall, the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music provide regular opportunities for students to develop their talents in the presence of their peers through a series of concerts with opera

scenes etc. – these are full-on productions. I am very grateful that Gillian Newson (one of our UK Trustees) has made time this year to attend nearly every performance. I know the singers we support really appreciate this personal contact as well as the genuine interest in their performances and future.

Another very memorable experience for me was the premier of 'Between Worlds' a new English National Opera production inspired by the events of 9/11. Phillip Rhodes who is supported by the Foundation sang one of the main roles – being present to hear him sing in this World Premier was such a proud moment.

Now with number two knee replacement surgery completed and recovering better than number one knee I am looking forward to the Cardiff Singer of the World competition. I was a preliminary judge for 65 contestants and it was our challenge to choose 40 out of those 65. One of those selected to progress was a singer from Mongolia – I was very pleased to see that he was in the final 20. By the time you read this the world will know the outcome and the singer that has been launched into our Classical world.

I hope you enjoy the many news items in this latest edition of *Aria*. Thank you for your continued interest and support for the Foundation.

*Kiri Te Kanawa*

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## Welcome to the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of *Aria*

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PHOTO: CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU



## Exciting programme has far reaching aims

*In 2008 the Foundation initiated and funded a unique research project to identify key areas of improvement to help talented young New Zealand singers seeking to further their singing education and careers in the United Kingdom.*



PHOTO: CLIVE BARDA/ARENAPAL

The project was undertaken by New Zealand professional opera singer and teacher Jenny Wollerman who spent three months based in London visiting the major UK music colleges and institutions, interviewing teachers, current New Zealand students and emerging young singers, institutional staff and other professionals in the field, particularly those who had worked with young New Zealand students and singers.

The major findings of the 112 page report (which can be read on the Foundation's website), appropriately entitled 'Kiwis Can Fly', highlighted the need for enhanced vocal repertoire coaching, the importance of building a performance profile and the shortage in New Zealand of coaching skills in vocal repertoire, languages and diction. It concluded that investment in these areas will improve overall standards and ensure that New Zealanders are better prepared when they head overseas.

Now eight years later, after much research and consultation with a variety of organisations and individuals involved with the training and development of young singers the Foundation is on the cusp of launching an exciting programme which will provide a high-level, personalised, and sustained skills boost to a select group of outstanding young opera singers preparing to leave New Zealand for international post-graduate training and career development. It will be focused on providing training and mentorship that will better prepare participants to undertake advanced study abroad, compete with their international peers, and establish sustainable professional careers.

Dame Kiri, the driving force behind the programme, will be closely involved, alongside prominent international teachers and coaches. Full details will be announced soon.

## A memorable Anzac experience

Earlier this year Dame Kiri was thrilled to be invited to perform on a cruise organised to mark the centennial of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. The ship anchored off-shore but in full view of ANZAC Cove during the dawn service. The whole day was spent watching films and sitting in on Lectures about Gallipoli. During an onboard ANZAC Day service Dame Kiri presented a wreath on behalf of New Zealand which she was invited to take back to NZ (she will present it to the RSA in Russell on her next return). In the evening Dame Kiri gave a concert joined by Foundation



student Kawiti Waetford – singing the national anthem and some Maori songs. "To be there at that moment on the 25 April at the same time as the Landings with the weather it seems the very same temperature....it was all very moving, something I will remember always." Said Dame Kiri.



PHOTO: CLIVE BARDA/ARENAPAL

## Fostering this most unlikely opera prodigy

Back in December 2010 *Aria* introduced readers to Tonga-born Ta'u Pupu'a who had two passions – American football and opera. He began his working life in 1995 as a defensive lineman for the Cleveland Browns but after sustaining an injury he changed career direction to follow his other passion – opera. Inspired by a childhood spent singing in church alongside his father, a Methodist preacher, he resettled in New York in the hope of making it on Broadway.

Although he got parts in amateur productions, Ta'u was finding it tough in 2007 when he spotted a poster announcing that Dame Kiri would be signing books at the Metropolitan Opera bookshop. It was there following a brief conversation that Dame Kiri handed him her card and asked him to call her later that day.

Dame Kiri heard him sing and then arranged an audition at the Juilliard School in Manhattan, which contains one of the most prestigious singing academies in the world. Ta'u won a full scholarship which allowed him to study for three years.

Now Dame Kiri is being credited with fostering this most unlikely opera prodigy – an ex-professional American football player. His new career began in 2011 at San Francisco Opera and since then he has starred in a wide variety of roles. Recently Ta'u appeared in the Birmingham Opera Company's production 'The Ice Break' a new opera by Michael Tippett where he portrayed a character based on Muhammad Ali. This was his British debut and second role outside the USA.



## Enhanced sponsorship brings world-leading teacher to New Zealand Opera School

*Since 2012 the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has enjoyed a very successful relationship with the NZ Opera School Trust. Now as a result of the Foundation's increased support, a doyenne of the opera world has accepted an invitation to join the distinguished teaching staff of the New Zealand Opera School for summer 2016.*

The Foundation has announced its commitment to continue as Principal Sponsor for the 2016/2017 summer schools, with the further creation of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation International Vocal Faculty. This has enabled the School to secure the services of leading teacher, Welsh mezzo-soprano Della Jones, alongside last year's international tutor, Håkan Hagegård.

With 120 roles in her repertoire, and a prolific recording portfolio exceeding one hundred works across every major record label, Della Jones is a stellar addition to the school's teaching resource, says Executive Chairman Donald Trott. "Miss Jones' repertoire spans five centuries, from early to contemporary music, and she has appeared on most, if not all, of opera's iconic stages.

Her addition to the teaching staff is further testimony to the strong relationship between the New Zealand Opera School and the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation."

The School's director, Jonathan Alver, is delighted with the increased sponsorship. "The combination of Della Jones and Håkan Hagegård in the inaugural International Vocal Faculty will provide our students with a level of expertise that would be the envy of any vocal faculty worldwide".

Della Jones says she is impressed with the credentials of the school. "I am looking



Håkan Hagegård



*Della Jones says she is impressed with the credentials of the school*

forward enormously to coming to your highly reputable Opera School in Whanganui, and working with the up-and-coming New Zealand singers. I work hard, but believe in the joy of music-making, and I will help you all in whatever challenges you need to overcome."

Dame Kiri believes the School is "a natural partner" for her Foundation. "The School provides a unique vehicle for young New Zealand singers, providing world-class tuition and mentoring, and the Foundation is often able to help those young singers to take the next steps in their careers."

The International tutors will complement the already impressive list of local tutors and coaches including Isabel Cunningham, Sharolyn Kimmorley, Terence Dennis and Bruce Greenfield. The NZ Opera School is New Zealand's only annual intensive residential opera school and is held for two weeks each January on the campus of Wanganui Collegiate School, providing tuition and coaching in voice, language and movement, and public performance opportunities.



## Jonathan Abernethy heads overseas

Since joining the Young Artist Program in Australia, New Zealand tenor Jonathan Abernethy has established himself as a vibrant and upcoming Australasian operatic artist. 2014 marked a particularly successful year in Jonathan's career, debuting the role of Fenton (Falstaff) to critical acclaim, a performance which awarded him a prestigious Green Room nomination, and being named the winner of the Australian Opera Awards.

Having completed the Young Artist Program and following performances in the Melbourne season of Don Carlos, Jonathan has headed overseas to pursue further artistic and technical training in Europe and the United States, including participation in the prestigious Aix-en Provence Mozart Residency, the Solti Accademia in Tuscany and Ravinia's Steans Music Institute as part of the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

The trip, funded in part by grants from a number of organisations including the Foundation, is helping Jonathan to further his vocal technique and artistry, build on his language skills and help create a network of contacts within the international operatic scene.

**STOP PRESS:** Earlier this month Jonathan took part in the RSMI Master Class with Maestro James Conlon, during the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

Watch the video by following this link <http://youtu.be/L3J7f2v0Z3I>

Jonathan is the second singer – about 30 minutes into the video.



Diana Fenwick (Deputy Chair), James Ioelu, and Beverley Johnson (chair, Victoria League)

## James Ioelu – a young singer with great potential

New Zealand Bass-Baritone James Ioelu is the inaugural winner of the Victoria League Scholarship in Singing which carries 12-months accommodation at the Victoria League's London base. The scholarship is sponsored by the Victoria League in Auckland in association with the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation which has also presented a special grant to cover James' tuition fees while he is studying at the National Opera Studio.

James has been accepted into the 2015-16 National Opera Studio program which is considered one of the most prestigious training programs in the UK not only because of its extensive curriculum but also because of the exposure and relationship with the six biggest Opera houses in the UK.

Commenting on the awards Dame Kiri described James as a young singer with great potential – "I am delighted that the Foundation is able to support him at this important stage of his singing development. The invitation to join the National Opera Studio

*Continued overleaf*

program comes at the right time because it will provide a sound benchmark from which to develop his talent and keep that forward momentum on track", she said.

Acknowledging the scholarship James Ioelu said he felt very honoured – "most young singers need to take up a second job to be able to fund living and training in a very expensive city. So to have accommodation and tuition fees funded will allow me to maximise the opportunity I have been given. Many thanks to the Victoria League for this generosity and to the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for their tireless efforts in helping young singers" he said.

Congratulating James, Beverley Johnson Chairman of the Victoria League in Auckland said "we are absolutely delighted to be able to work with the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation to play a key role in supporting this very talented singer's development."

James Ioelu was recently placed in three major Australasian competitions – winning the NZ Aria and being runner up in both the Dame Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngel Bel Canto Competition and the Sydney Eisteddfod Aria Competition. He also secured a coveted spot at the Merola Opera programme in San Francisco where he is currently performing the title role in *Don Pasquale*.

**NOTE:** The Foundation is also proud to report that Celine Forrest (Welsh Soprano) who received the Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarship while studying at The Royal Academy of Music has also been selected to join the National Opera Studio this year. She is to be also congratulated on her recent performance at the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. Celine secured her place in the competition by winning the prestigious Welsh Singing Competition earlier this year.



## Anthony Schneider in Philadelphia

New Zealand bass Anthony Schneider is the latest recipient of a Foundation grant – to support his audition and competition programmes.

Having completed a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Auckland Anthony took up a position as Resident Artist with the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia in 2013. During his time with AVA his roles have included: Colline, Benoît and Alcindoro in *La bohème*; Count des Grieux/Innkeeper in *Manon*; Dr. Grenvil in *La traviata*; Surin Pique Dame. Recent competition successes have included The Encouragement Award, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, 2015; Philadelphia District Winner, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, 2014; Main Prize and Audience Prize. His goal is to spend the coming year intensely focused on auditions and transitioning to a professional career.

Commenting on receiving the grant Anthony said 'It is an incredible honour to receive support from the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. All opera singers experience a series of highly emotional, physical and mental challenges. Receiving this grant means that I can focus even more of my energy on the vital aspects of vocal technique, musicality, artistry and acting that make opera truly come alive. In objective terms, the Foundation is also giving me the opportunity to participate in more auditions for main stage roles, competitions and young artist programmes so that I may attain ever higher levels of singing.'

## Do you have musical treasures cluttering up your garage?

*Ray Beilby (Queensland, Australia) was recently rummaging through boxes of 'junk' in his garage. Can you imagine his surprise (and ours) when he discovered among his collection of long forgotten programmes two highly significant publications from opera performances featuring Dame Kiri:*

- The 1968 Chelsea Opera Group production of *Idomeneo* staged at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in which Dame Kiri played the role of Idamante (one of Dame Kiri's early public performances). Ray found the programme of particular interest because, while it gives brief highlights of the careers of the performers, it says no more about Kiri Te Kanawa than 'she comes from New Zealand';
- The 1971 Royal Opera House Covent Garden production of *Marriage of Figaro*. It was Dame Kiri's sensational debut in this production as Mozart's Countess Almaviva which gained her legendary status almost overnight.

Ray was quick to realise the value of these finds and offered them to Dame Kiri who has in turn donated them back to the Archive of New Zealand Music within the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington (NZ) who are already holding many donations of material relating to her singing career. The collection includes newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, programmes, photographs, correspondence, posters, awards, videos and personally commissioned arrangements.



Ray is really pleased to know that his 'treasures' are now in safe keeping at the Library and commented 'We've probably all got at least one treasure in a box in the garage whose certain fate is the dump unless discovered in time.'



*Kiri Te Kanawa as the Countess. The Royal Opera, Covent Garden 1971.*

If you have items that you think might be of interest and worth keeping we suggest you contact the Library Curator, Keith McEwing – [Keith.McEwing@dia.govt.nz](mailto:Keith.McEwing@dia.govt.nz), or +64 4 470 4483.

**POSTSCRIPT:** Another significant publication was recently discovered and is now on its way to the Library – the programme from the final of *The Sun Aria* held at the Melbourne Town Hall on 11 October, 1965 – in which Dame Kiri took first prize.





PHOTO: BRIAN HATTON



## Oliver calling home

*Earlier this year NZ tenor Oliver Sewell received further grants from the Foundation to support his continuing study at the Manhattan School of Music. Because of the lapsed time some of the details included in his newsletter will have already happened but these excerpts will still provide a picture of his New York experiences.*

"Despite yet another decent snowfall in New York yesterday I remain hopeful that spring break will live up to its name in more ways than simply being a break from school. So far, two things have dominated my break: looking after my friend and colleague Christian Thurston (the New Zealand Baritone) and learning two new roles.

Christian is here for auditions at the Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School. It is awesome to have a fellow kiwi in town and it is nice to be able to pay forward the generosity Simon O'Neill showed me last year when I was here for my auditions. The two roles I am learning are Tamino from *Die Zauberflöte* and Ernesto from *Don Pasquale*.

This brings me to some terrific news. I am beyond happy to have been cast as Tamino in the Manhattan School of Music's main stage production this Spring. It is going to

be an incredible experience as both the Director Jay Lesenger and Conductor George Manahan have been brought in from outside of school for the production and both are highly respected in the American operatic world. I was not expecting to be cast in the main stage opera in my first year and needless to say I am excited and raring to get stuck into it.

I have one last piece of unexpected news to share. I have been cast to play Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* at the Crested Butte Music Festival in Colorado this July. It is going to be a brilliant experience singing Ernesto alongside the American bass Kevin Glavin, who is playing my uncle Don Pasquale, and has sung the role with New York City Opera. Another highlight will be working under the baton of Maestro David Stern who is the Music Director at Israel Opera."

## Talent is a gift.

*"Those who have been blessed with talent deserve the opportunity to nurture and develop it to full potential. My passion is to see young people succeed and it is such a joy to see Foundation recipients progress along the difficult journey which is a career in music."*

DAME KIRI TE KANAWA

We need your help, to help them... to live their dreams.

### YOUR DONATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

Donations to the Foundation of any size are always welcome and very important for the continued aim of supporting talented singers and musicians.

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (CC 34307) and The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) (1098213) are registered charitable trusts which offer a range of opportunities to support their work. Further information about how to make a donation can be obtained from the Foundation office – see contact details at the end of this newsletter.

## Tom Atkins – a year of experience and growth

*NZ tenor Tom Atkins is also at The Guildhall – he recently filed this report ...*

"2015/16 has been a simply wonderful year for both experiences and my growth as a performer. Over the past year I have had the pleasure of working on productions with Royal Opera (Pastore (cover) *Orfeo*) and Scottish Opera (Tenor Solo *Anamchara - Songs of Friendship*), I've sung with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Hall, performed in Japan (which was an absolute joy singing with Dame Kiri at Yakushiji) and Shanghai, and all this while putting on shows at the Guildhall.

A highlight for me this year was competing in the Guildhall Gold Medal Final 2015. Singing on the Barbican Hall stage with the Guildhall Orchestra behind me, led by Dominic Wheeler, was an experience that I shall never forget.

This year I have had two opportunities to work on brand new operas. The first was with Scottish Opera on a work that was written for the Commonwealth Games, named *Anamchara - Songs of Friendship* by Pippa Murphy, and the second was a short opera by Leith called *Isabella* in which I created the role Marco. Working on new operas is an absolute joy as it allows performers to go in with a clean slate and to be creative in a way that can sometimes be difficult to achieve when working on roles that already have so many preconceived ideas surrounding them.



Whilst it is great to look at what I have done this past year, I am very excited about the year to come. In a couple of days I am going to Fontainebleau, France, to take place in a summer course held there for three weeks and then I'm coming back to London to go straight into rehearsals for a *Madama Butterfly* (Pinkerton) which has four shows at the end of August at the Arcola Theatre. With Summer done I will be starting back at the Guildhall in September where I have been cast in two operas for terms 1 and 2 - the first is *Le Donne Curiose* by Wolf-Ferrari in which I will be playing Florindo and the second is Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* in which I will be playing Male Chorus. I will also be continuing to perform internationally this year with concerts in Japan, Switzerland, Budapest and France.

I am obviously loving life in London and all the opportunities it brings. Thank you so much to the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for the ongoing support, and to Dame Kiri herself for her belief in me."



PHOTO: CARLO SCHULLER

**Andri Róbertsson** the Icelandic bass who has been supported by the Foundation sent this brief report from the Opera Studio in Zürich.

"I've been busy in Zurich performing four roles this year, plus a variety of concerts and auditions... most recently Die Schöpfung in London last month. I'm trying to find a house in or near Newcastle to create a base and travel from there to whatever projects I am offered. I have lots coming up – Schönberg's Serenade op. 24 in Luzern, more performances here at the opera house, a recital at the Aix en Provence festival, the Queen Sonja Competition in Norway in August. Then next season a recital of Berlioz at the Oxford Lieder Festival with Edwige Herchenroder, more performances of the Bach show Trauernacht with the Aix en Provence festival, both in France and Portugal, perhaps more competitions and concerts in Iceland. 2016 looks like it will be very busy – from January until the end of April I will be at the opera house in Zürich singing the roles of Pan and He in Purcell's King Arthur under Laurence Cummings and Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte under Fabio Luisi. So there is plenty to do and then it's just to carry on auditioning."



**Galina Averina** is a young Russian soprano currently studying at the Royal College of Music in London. She is about to start her second year at the International Opera School.

She made her international debut in 2013 as Despina in "Cosi fan tutte" in the Dubrovnik Summer Festival and has been awarded many notable prizes including the Grand Prix at "New Names" Young Musicians Competition in Moscow, "Vocalists 2012" Award, Junior Prize in Les Azuriales Opera International Singing Competition in Nice (2013), the 6th Prize and the Audience Prize at Francisc Viñas International Contest in Barcelona (2015) and was a finalist in the Stuart Burrows International Voice Award 2015.

In 2013, following masterclasses with Dame Kiri, Galina was invited to perform as a guest in Dame Kiri's recital at Cadogan Hall in London.

Galina recently received a grant from the UK Foundation to cover the costs of further coaching to enhance her technical abilities as well as interpretation to help prepare for several major competitions.



**The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)**, in recognition of Dame Kiri's 70th birthday and her long professional association with Covent Garden, recently announced a grant of £70,000 to The Royal Opera. The grant is to be used over 3–5 years to further the careers of emerging artists of great promise. Peter Mario Katona, Director of Casting, has devised this new scheme under the terms of which he will select artists to take on cover roles where The Royal Opera might not normally be able to have a cover in place. This could enable a selected artist to gain significant international exposure should an opportunity to sing the role arise.

Two singers have been selected for the 2015/16 Season: New Zealand baritone Phillip Rhodes, and Uzbekistan soprano Hulkar Sabirova. They will cover the roles of Enrico and Lucia respectively in The Royal Opera's new production of Lucia di Lammermoor.

Hulkar Sabirova made her debut in the role of Lucia for Deutsche Oper Berlin in May 2014. Her recent roles have included Queen of the Night (Die Zauberflöte) for Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Olympia (Les Contes d'Hoffmann) and Adele (Die Fledermaus) in Essen. Phillip Rhodes made his debut as Enrico with Auckland Opera Studio last year. His recent roles have included Marcello (La bohème) with Opera New Zealand and Opera North and Aeneas (Dido and Aeneas) for Opera North.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa said she was delighted that the Foundation has taken up this opportunity to make such a significant contribution to the careers of emerging artists. 'The world of international opera today is very different from the one I entered 44 years ago. The field is full to overflowing with highly trained, motivated and ready-to-go young artists who have everything it takes to build a career – except performance experience.

I'm very excited to be collaborating in this way with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and to watch the careers of the exceptional young artists chosen for the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation awards unfold.'



### Private coaching a huge bonus

*NZ baritone Edward Laurenson is currently studying at The Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London under the tutelage of Yvonne Kenny. In 2014 Edward received a Foundation grant to support his initial period of study. Here are extracts from his recent newsletter.*

"Having completed my first year of study my goal now is to extend my studies for an additional year so that I can complete a Master of Performance degree. The quality of teaching at the Guildhall is excellent – its faculty comprises world-leading specialists across each of the areas critical to delivering a truly first-class performance.

One of the key highlights this year was an invitation to visit Dame Kiri's home for a private afternoon of one-on-one coaching. For me this was a dream come true! With no real time constraint we were able to work across a range of pieces which provided plenty of scope to touch on the many different elements that contribute to a well-rounded performance.

I found Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's style of teaching very warm and generous, while at the same time providing a depth of focus and direction. Having the lesson in her home, with her three adorable dogs present, helped remove much of the anxiety that one might expect to feel when singing for one of the world's most outstanding operatic singers. It wasn't long before I felt at home and was able to relax and absorb all her advice.

Thank you Dame Kiri and the Foundation for your support. This Foundation has contributed substantially to changing opera in New Zealand, enabling singers like me to gain access to truly world-class tuition and mentoring. The opportunity to receive tuition and mentoring from Dame Kiri herself was a fantastic experience and very important for the continued aim of supporting talented singers and musicians."



## Bianca Andrew selected for Guildhall opera course

Last year NZ mezzo – soprano Bianca Andrew received the Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarship as the singer judged to have outstanding potential for an international singing career. Since arriving in London last September she has lived up to that potential enjoying her first year at the Guildhall School studying with Yvonne Kenny. She was recently delighted to be one of 12 singers selected internationally for the Guildhall Opera Course, which is a two-year programme beginning in September.

*Bianca recently told Aria what the Guildhall Opera Course will mean for her career ...*

"The two-year Opera Studies course will provide me with singing lessons, individual coaching in roles and repertoire and acting and stage techniques such as movement, dance, make-up and drama. As part of the course I will take part in workshop productions of scenes and fully-staged public productions, as well as receive dedicated language coaching and career guidance. My training in stage techniques and musical coaching will be overseen by experienced visiting professionals.

In addition to vocal and dramatic training, the Department puts on three full public productions each year and three programmes



*Tom Aitkins, Bianca Andrew and Edward Laurenson at the Guildhall*

of operatic excerpts in workshop settings, developed in full partnership with the Technical Theatre Department. In the summer term, these collaborations include new work by composers and librettists on the MA in Opera Making and Writing, in association with the Royal Opera House.

It's been a wonderful year for me and I am so grateful for all the support the Foundation has provided. Not only have I been generously supported financially, but Dame Kiri personally has also provided me with mentoring, care and advice. I am particularly grateful for her hospitality, and for her time working so carefully with me in our lessons."

*As Aria went to print Bianca's latest news arrived – follow this link to read [us8.campaign-archive2.com](http://us8.campaign-archive2.com)*

## Imagine a high profile athlete without a coach – singing is the same

*Like well-tuned athletes, singers visit their singing coaches as often as possible because they need the ears of someone they can trust to listen and comment on whether their vocal approach is remaining spot on – or whether something needs adjusting.*

There are other strong similarities between being an opera singer and a high-performance athlete. If you are successful you will be subject to the reviews of the professional music and theatre critics and many in your audiences will have their views. Then there are the well-meaning and often misguided ones who will offer you 'helpful advice'.

To survive and thrive in this demanding profession where 'many are called but few are chosen' you need a high degree of personal security and healthy self-esteem. You also have to know who you can trust for objective, accurate and helpful feedback on performance. Recognising that outstanding



vocal equipment is only a part of what is demanded of today's opera singers the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has created a relationship with management expert Michael Gourley of Human Synergistics New Zealand to work with the singers the Foundation supports.

The results have been extremely rewarding as he has helped these young singers to have a better understanding of themselves and what will help them in striving for excellence and to be healthy, whole people and great singers. Working with Michael and his team will be an integral part of the Foundation's support system for young singers for the foreseeable future.



**Phillip Rhodes**  
– his wheels  
are spinning

*Phillip Rhodes as Judge Turpin*

**Phillip Rhodes reports ...**

"Since returning to the UK the wheels haven't stopped turning, with a long rehearsal period in London for ENO's new production of 'Between worlds' being the first piece to work through. It was an extremely difficult piece, and I was very proud of being able to achieve the role having worked on it since its inception. The role was a great challenge and I have grown a greater appreciation for modern opera. Not to say that I wholeheartedly believed the role was a perfect fit but it was for that reason I felt I broadened my skills in trying so hard to find a character that seemed hard to create. I am so very grateful to the Foundation for the support shown during my time in London, I took the contract as the opportunity to work with Deborah Warner, and it was a very good decision. I thoroughly enjoyed working on the piece, every frustration, every mistake, every argument, and of course that final moment things just felt right. It was a true ensemble piece and it was wonderful to share all that with Claire Egan as well.

I am now heading off to my final scheduled show of Carousel, and Billy Bigalow has been a better fit than I first thought it would, again another tough role to play with so many complexities, a troubled sometimes violent man, that has true vulnerability, an outside filled with lots of charm, a man that wants to better himself but doesn't know what that means. The music fits like a glove, and it has been wonderful to step into a role with a lot of dialogue also, I have missed it in recent years.

Earlier this month I was in Melbourne for the role of Judge Turpin in Victoria Operas production of Sweeney Todd. This is a vile role and I enjoyed exploring the horrible nature of this tormenting and predatory character in this dark comic opera.

In September I'll be back in New Zealand for the big one, Scarpia, one of the big nasties of opera, yet again another big challenge in 'maintaining and restraining' in the want to match the more experienced and mature voices, I will be constantly reminding myself they gave me the job for the voice they know I have and I don't need to give any more than that! It is a wonderful role full of elegance and lust and I hope to discover more of those attributes in Scarpia."

Visit our website [www.kiritekanawa.org](http://www.kiritekanawa.org) to follow news of our Foundation recipients



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.*

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.

