

# ARIA



## Dame Kiri comments . . .

Looking back on 2015, although it has been busier than anticipated, it has been packed with wonderful experiences shared with the young singers we are supporting. They are really inspirational. I'd like to share some of my 2015 highlights.

A recent visit to New York was a very happy occasion which allowed me to set aside a day to catch-up with Anthony Schneider (studying at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia) whom I had not previously heard sing (only on recordings). I do believe his sound and voice is very good and he has a very focused idea of what he wants to do. He is enjoying his time in Boston and working very hard – of course he wants to get into opera as soon as possible.

Oliver Sewell (studying at Manhattan School of Music) was also on my list to visit – he sang for me at the same time as Anthony. Once again a delightful young man and such a joy to see how focused they both are. I am hoping Oliver will visit me in London as I would like to work with him – he has a particular sound that needs to move away from his past... we had a very enjoyable time together.

Although I do not really like newsletters that are glowing and almost unreal I am glad to be able to say that our students in the UK are doing extremely well:

- I saw Thomas Atkins in 'Le Donne Curiose' an Opera by Wolf Ferrari, where he was, dare I say without being biased – fabulous. So funny and such a good personality. He is doing very well and has many projects on the horizon and a lot of interest from the opera houses.
- Bianca Andrew is such a lovely girl who is also doing well and being a very important part of her group at the Guildhall. I know Gillian Newson has seen her in performance and is thrilled by her performances.

- Edward Laurenson (also at the Guildhall) is sounding so much improved from his first days here – he has grown in confidence and now able to discuss all his Ideas and future plans.
- James Ioelu is already doing well at the National Opera Studio. He is already a very good colleague and much enjoyed at the NOS. The general comment from everyone there is they say... 'Oh he is so lovely'. James is a very tall and gentle soul... I so love working with him.
- Edward, Bianca and James came to my home last weekend and we had a really good working day. Lots of things to correct – little habits creeping in – the students don't always get the time with their teachers to clear up those problems.
- Jonathan Abernethy visited me during his study time away from Australian Opera. He is also doing very well – you may have seen him on YouTube in a very special master class with James Conlon.
- Phillip Rhodes has had a very busy year and I think he is in the happy position of having quite a lot of work. His Agent Manager Deborah Sanders, one of our London trustees, is doing an amazing job advising and positioning him in all the right places.

Finally, I'm really looking forward to returning to NZ next March for a 6-city recitals tour accompanied by Terence Dennis (Christchurch March 7, Invercargill March 10, Wellington March 13, Gisborne March 16, Tauranga March 19, Blenheim March 21). I am looking forward very much to visiting those cities and connecting with many friends and renewing old friendships.

Thank you for your continuing support and I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

*Kiri Te Kanawa*

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## Welcome to the 20th edition of Aria

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KIRI TE KANAWA  
FOUNDATION



PHOTO: CLIVE BARDA/ARENAPAL



## Dame Kiri shares her visit to a very special part of France

One of the things on my 'must do list' has been to find time to visit war graves and especially those associated with the Battle of the Somme – a battle that took the lives of so many young New Zealanders – it's a site that New Zealanders have always commemorated along with Gallipoli. I was therefore delighted to be invited to host a television documentary being made to mark the 100th anniversary of that battle and in particular the Māori Pioneer Battalion and those early days – and one special soldier Lt Henare Kohere who died on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

Those seven days that I spent in that very special place will be with me forever. I invited Kawiti Waetford, one of our Foundation students to assist me – he was

invaluable ...such a young person with also a very special story to tell. You will I hope have the opportunity to view this documentary next year on ANZAC Day when it is screened on Māori Television.

Some people say that those battles did not affect us... they do affect us and will continue to do so because we are here as a result of the sacrifices made by those very brave and wonderful young men. To hear the stories and the hardship of what they went through – I feel it would not happen today. The land has their lives... it has the souls of thousands. And I am sure if I could have stayed longer I would have been able to hear and feel even more of what I felt during our short visit. I know I will return.

## Quite simply the gentlest person I have ever known

Dame Kiri described the sad news about the death of Jonah Lomu as heart stopping and quite unbelievable.

"Back in 2004, despite his bad health, Jonah readily accepted my invitation to be a special guest when we launched the Foundation at a Gala concert in NZ. That evening, before he came on stage, to rapturous applause, he asked me what he should say and his choice of subject was perfect - who was it who inspired him. Since that night I know Jonah has inspired thousands of rugby and non-rugby fans all over the world. He will remain a star forever. He was quite simply the gentlest person I have ever met. We have indeed lost a treasure. May he rest in peace."



## Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Singer Development Programme

In the last edition of Aria we announced initial details about an exciting new 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.

The programme, already known as 'the Kiri Programme' will comprise a series of high-impact modules spread over a 12 month period. Each with a focus on specific skill areas, such as language, stagecraft, career management and business acumen, together with intensive vocal and repertoire coaching.

Stephen Dee, the trustee charged with the development and implementation of the programme recently updated the trustees on progress to date:

- The key international faculty members for the Programme have now been confirmed, and will be announced early next year.
- The artistic panel has been listening to a number of prospective participants, and now have a shortlist. The final list of 6-10 singers to be invited to take part in the inaugural programme will also be announced in the New Year. We are very excited by the calibre of the young singers who are being considered.

The new programme will complement the Foundation's other activities in support of young singers, which include involvement in:

- Lexus Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Masterclasses and associated scholarship.
- New Zealand Opera School – Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation International Vocal Faculty.
- Kiri Te Kanawa Understudy programme at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.
- Scholarships at the Royal College of Music.
- Individual support, often sustained through multiple grants over several years – currently for 8 singers.





PHOTO: CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

## Dame Kiri to attend 2016 New Zealand Opera School in Whanganui

*The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is a significant supporter of the annual NZ Opera School held in Whanganui. Organisers were very pleased recently to receive confirmation that Dame Kiri will attend the 2016 School, taking a private masterclass for the aspiring young opera singers attending, as well as appearing in a ticketed public 'In Conversation' event.*

The New Zealand Opera School provides New Zealand's most intensive training for emerging opera singers, with tuition and coaching in voice, language and movement, and public performance opportunities over two weeks every January. Twenty two students from around the country, selected on merit, attend the residential school.

The School is now widely recognised as a significant 'career nursery'. It has proved to be an important influence in advancing some of New Zealand's top talent towards their goals, including international tenor star Simon O'Neill, Bianca Andrew and Edward Laurenson who are also forging international solo opera careers.

Dame Kiri will add her support to internationally distinguished tutors Hakan Hagegard and Della Jones, who make up the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation International Vocal Faculty.

"The Foundation's principal aim is to identify and assist talented young New Zealand singers to complete advanced classical vocal studies and develop international careers," says Dame Kiri. "We see the New Zealand Opera School as a natural partner in this regard."

"It requires more than talent to succeed on the international opera stage and living in the South Pacific adds the further complication of distance. I am looking forward to coming to the New Zealand Opera School to help nurture our country's next generation of artists."

New Zealand Opera School Director Jonathan Alver says he is delighted to host Dame Kiri at the school in 2016.

"The School prides itself on delivering world-class training and the addition of Dame Kiri to this year's curriculum is the icing on the cake. She is an inspiration to generations of New Zealand singers and brings unparalleled talent, experience and passion to the faculty."

Dame Kiri will conduct a closed-door masterclass for students and will be the guest of honour at the school's gala concert at the Royal Wanganui Opera House on Saturday 16 January. Her public event will take place on Friday 15 January when, in conversation with Rodney Macann at Wanganui Collegiate, she will talk about her life in opera and her passion for developing the talents of young singers.

## UK Foundation announces new scholarship

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) recently announced a new scholarship arrangement with the Royal College of Music. The \$10,000 scholarship to be known as the Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarship will be presented in association with the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and awarded annually to a singer in his/her final year of study at the Royal College. The College will manage the scholarship selection process and where possible Dame Kiri will be involved in reviewing the recommended recipients.

Announcing the scholarship Dame Kiri said she was delighted that the Foundation had agreed to continue the relationship with The Royal College and she was looking forward to working with The College on this new initiative.

The 2015 recipient is Galina Averina a young Russian soprano who made her international debut in 2013 as Despina in 'Cosi fan tutte' during the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Notable prizes include Junior Prize in Les Azuriales Opera International Singing Competition in Nice (2013), the 6th Prize and the Audience Prize in Francisc Viñas International Contest in Barcelona (2015). Galina is a Samling Artist – 2015.

Galina (pictured with Dame Kiri after the presentation) said it was a big honour to receive such an award at the point of starting a career. "Dame Kiri and the Foundation have already helped me in so many ways by encouraging and supporting me with masterclasses, competitions and coaching. I deeply appreciate this award and will do my best to keep developing my vocal technique and performing skills during my last year in the College" she said.

**Dame Kiri is the President of the NZ-UK Link organisation in the UK**, HRH The Princess Royal is the Royal Patron, and there was a reception to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organisation in October. Dame Kiri was presented to Princess Anne as was young NZ Tenor Tom Atkins.



PHOTO: CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

**Kirsty Simpson** (a repetiteur previously supported by the Foundation) reports she had a great year working as Principal Keyboard with the NZ Symphony Orchestra and will be working with them next year. 2015 highlights included playing for a masterclass given by Renee Fleming and being a member of the Takiri Ensemble on its NZ debut tour with Chamber Music New Zealand.



PHOTO: CARLO SCHULLER

**Icelandic bass Andri Robertsson** who is supported by the Foundation, has been in Portugal and France this autumn to sing the Bach show Trauernacht. He also sang at the Oxford Lieder Festival and has a recital at the Icelandic Opera next week. Next month he is off to Zürich for 3 months singing the roles of Pan, He and Priest in Purcell's King Arthur and Sprecher in Zauberflöte at Opernhaus Zürich. Then in later next year he is performing Angelotti in Tosca for English National Opera. Later he has an interesting assignment – to sing in a new commission at the Royal Opera House in 2018.



**When Anthony Schneider sent his recent update (see later in Aria) he also shared a surprising find.** During rehearsals for the end of year production of Don Giovanni he discovered that Dame Kiri's very own Donna Elvira costume was featured in the production! It still had the Metropolitan Opera tag with her name on it. The picture shows Anthony in his Commendatore armour with Jo Ana Rusche as Donna Elvira – who was delighted to be wearing this dress.

**Surprise Appearance** – Dame Kiri recently made a surprise guest appearance in the famous party scene on stage at the Britten Theatre during the Royal College of Music's production of Die Fledermaus (directed by John Copley) – complete with canine support from her Pomeranian-Yorkshire terriers – Nyack, Millie and Abbey (Note – the dogs were all born near Glyndebourne so they have operatic credentials). It was the Opera School's winter opera production, beautifully staged and 'dressed' and Galina Averina, inaugural winner of the Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarship, sang the role of Adele in the opera.



PHOTO: CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

## 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.





The Foundation is currently supporting 8 young singers studying in various parts of the world. We invited them to summarise 2015 and their aspirations for the future. Their responses are inspirational and provide an insight into how hard these young people are working to achieve their goals.

### JAMES IOELU

In 2015, there have been many 'aha' moments around what it takes to succeed in this profession that I couldn't possibly recount them all in one newsletter (maybe I should start a column!). I started the year with an auditions tour in America and the UK. Auditions were nothing like I imagined; the universal audition experience seems to be that singers in general face quite a bit of rejection, and I was no exception to that rule. I felt better when a friend mentioned that if you succeed in one out of twenty auditions then you are on the right track. As a singer, the process will either make or break you. You have to believe with every ounce of your being that you've got what it takes, independent of the audition results. I learned that the opera world is full of opinions (even contradictory ones) but that the most important thing is to consult wisely and trust your own judgement and professional instincts.

In late December, I got the call from Sheri Greenawald, director of the prestigious Merola Opera programme to offer me a place, and the title role for Don Pasquale, one of three operas they planned to produce over the American summer. The Merola experience was amazing, the team (and their donors) are so generous and committed to building the next generation of singers. I particularly enjoyed working with the team for Don Pasquale, including Warren Jones and Nic Muni as there is nothing more enjoyable than getting to play the fool in a comic opera! Another highlight was working with the great American Bass-Baritone, James Morris – I was scheduled for two lessons but when two more slots opened up to work with him, I jumped at the opportunity. The summer at Merola has really taught me to own my performance, to trust my instincts and to believe in my instrument.

After a short trip home to New Zealand, where I performed a fundraising concert hosted by the James Wallace Trust, I set out for the National Opera Studio in London for a 9 month residency. This last recital at the Rannoch House will always be special for me as it was the last concert my grandmother was to attend before she passed away soon after I arrived in London. I have now been at NOS for 3 months and I feel I am really beginning to hone in, and refine various aspects of my voice. I am especially grateful for the scholarship from the Auckland branch of the Victoria League which allows me to reside at Victoria House for the duration of my residency. At NOS, I have been fortunate to work with amazing coaches such as Della Jones, David Gowland and Steven Maughan to name a few. Another perk of being in London is that I am a short train ride away from Dame Kiri's home. I have been a number of times to work with Dame Kiri, and always to good effect – I come away feel reinvigorated, enthused, and reassured of the direction that my voice is heading (up, it seems!). I am in awe of Dame Kiri's commitment to young singers – despite a busy schedule she manages to find the time to offer support in any way she can.

Life in London around the world cup was an experience and a half, never have I felt so much pride in being a New Zealander as during those final weeks. The next couple of months are exciting. I am literally on my way to Leeds (I am writing this update on the train) for a week of singing at Opera North. I'm looking forward to catching up with Phillip Rhodes who will be there as well. We have an English song recital as well as my own recital in the next couple of weeks but the thing I am most excited about is seeing my family as they come to visit for Christmas.

Finally, I would like to finish by wishing all of the supporters of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation a blessed Christmas – hopefully you all manage to get some rest, spend time with family and have a chance to contemplate the important things in life! I thank you once again for your support – there is no way I could be where I am without the support of the foundation, and I am well aware that the foundation relies on the support of many generous individuals and groups.



*"... a friend mentioned that if you succeed in one out of twenty auditions then you are on the right track."*

**KAWITI WAETFORD**

It is great to be back on New Zealand soil, to share with family and friends my experiences settling in the UK, and more importantly, my recent vocal developments.

Mid-way through October I was given the opportunity to sing for Kathryn Harries, director of the National Opera Studio, London, to get some advice. Her feedback was hugely encouraging and positive. She commented on the quality of the voice and the performance attributes I possess which would lead me in good stead for the future. She also worked with me on some repertoire, giving good solid technical advice, and reiterating everything that Dame Kiri and many other teachers and coaches have told me. I am thrilled with the positive response I was given, and furthermore for the opportunity for Dame Kiri to hear the recent developments in my voice as I go through this baritone/tenor transition.

In October Dame Kiri invited me to be involved with the filming of a documentary for Maori Television on the Battle of the Somme. This was a week-long journey, centred in the township of Albert in Northern France. We learned so much about the events that took place there, and the crucial role that the Maori Pioneer Battalion played in this part of WWI. On the last day of filming we travelled to the township of Saint Omer, Pasde-Calais, where my great-great grandfather, Eugene Waetford, is buried; a very special and fitting way to end our trip.

Before returning to New Zealand I met with Adrian Thompson, singing teacher at Guildhall School of Music, to get further advice. He talked to me about some of the pitfalls he experienced when working with young baritones transitioning to tenor. After working with me vocally in a session on repertoire and some exercises it was clear to him that I am definitely a tenor – a tenor voice with a dark quality and colour. It was also his opinion that following two years of consolidation I could “easily turn what I am doing into a really fantastic sound”. The Guildhall School of Music has an excellent opera programme and would be an excellent option to consider pursuing in future.

While I am in New Zealand I will be performing at singing engagements, concerts, and reconnecting with important financial supporters and fulfilling obligations, while planning for the next step upon my return to the UK. As ever I thank Dame Kiri and the members of her Foundations, as well as the many people at home and abroad who support me on my journey. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a great 2016.

**JONATHAN ABERNETHY**

With the help of various scholarships and the support of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, I've recently returned from six months abroad working with various teachers and coaches while also participating in three summer programs spanning the UK, France, Italy and the USA.

First up, the Mozart residency was an intense 2-week course in June as part of Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. During the two weeks I was involved in several concerts performing works by Mozart, Handel, and Gluck. The festival were incredibly well organised and were devoted to ensuring everyone involved had everything they needed to make the most of the time there.

My next stop was Castiglione della Pescaia, on the Tuscan coast of Italy to attend The Solti Accademia which is focused on the Bel Canto repertoire. The teaching took the form of group masterclasses, these were fantastic as the focus greatly varied depending on who was in charge; Sir Richard Bonyngue was looking for the detail in the music, whereas Leo Nucci was looking for a dramatic element to pull the audience in. Barbara Frittoli was focused on text and the intention that comes across when you truly understand what you're singing about.

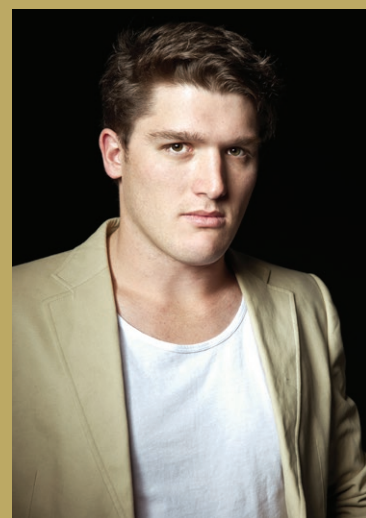
Then I was off to Chicago for the Ravinia Steans Music Institute summer school. At Ravinia I was exposed to various teachers from around the USA as well as some incredible language and stylistic coaches on the repertoire. Kevin Murphy was the Music Director of the programme and was a great mentor and offered excellent guidance through the repertoire and helped suggest new works to look at for now and into the future. I stayed on in Chicago for another month to work with teacher Julia Faulkner who is the vocal head at the Ryan Opera Centre, Lyric Opera Chicago. My trip also enabled me to spend considerable time working in Cardiff with renowned Tenor and teacher Dennis O'Neill and I'm very grateful to him and his team for looking after me there.

These were concentrated periods to focus on the voice and work on my vocal production as opposed to the repertoire itself. For me the two teachers have given me some solid technical guidance and I was fortunate that they have a very similar teaching style, which means I have no conflicting ideas about what I'm trying to achieve.

Throughout the trip I was exposed to so much music and made it to venues that I'd heard so much about. I saw some fantastic shows which varied from Opera to artsong to orchestral to vocal and instrumental ensemble works. It has been a truly inspiring time for me and I can't thank those enough who helped make this trip possible.



*“... we travelled to the township of Saint Omer, Pasde-Calais, where my great-great grandfather, Eugene Waetford, is buried; a very special and fitting way to end our trip.”*



*“The teaching took the form of group masterclasses, these were fantastic as the focus greatly varied depending on who was in charge...”*

**OLIVER SEWELL**

The first half of my second year at Manhattan School of Music is almost over and it has been the busiest and most productive six months of singing and development I have had to date. I have been cast in two lead roles at school, planned and prepared a new recital and was treated to an amazing day working with Dame Kiri in New York City.

It is currently tech week for the Manhattan School of Music main stage production of the opera version of the book, play and, most famously, the movie *The Dangerous Liaisons*. I am playing the young, innocent and corruptible love interest Chevalier Danceny (the tenor lead). The MSM Opera Studio unfortunately has to cast an A and B cast for their productions.

The A cast performs two of the three shows (opening and closing night) and is, in this case, also doing a commercial recording of the opera. I was very pleased to be offered the role in the A cast. This tech week will be one of the more interesting and challenging ones for me as I have to play the harp on stage. Playing in time with the orchestra from on stage in my period costume will be quite the exercise. For the opera I have been receiving harp lessons from the harp teacher at MSM, Susan Jolles. Susan has been playing in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for the past 40 years and had an amusing and beautiful anecdote about one particular singer who, while singing a very difficult aria from the opera *Capriccio*, also mimed playing the harp while Susan played from the side of the stage.

Susan said that to convincingly mime playing the harp was no easy task. However, one evening at the Met Susan's husband was in the audience and he thought the singer looked so natural on the harp he was convinced that they must be actually playing: that particular singer being the one and only Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. I have a lot to live up to!

For all of you lucky enough to be in New Zealand for the festive season please take an extra walk in the evening sunshine for me. And to everyone, my best wishes for a happy and joyous Christmas.

**ANTHONY SCHNEIDER**

I just celebrated Thanksgiving for the 3rd time in the United States. It's possibly my favourite holiday now as it centers around sharing delicious food with friends and family and reminds us to celebrate the incredible things life has given us each year. This occasion will always be doubly special for me as I married Donna, the love of my life, over the holiday this year.

This year has also been rewarding professionally, as I performed leading roles in *La Bohème* (Colline), *Faust* (Mephistopheles) and *Don Giovanni* (Commendatore). I learned and studied under the guidance of our Maestro at the Academy of Vocal Arts, Christofer Macatsoris, who helped me find colour, personality and authenticity in each of these roles. I also had a fantastic time at the Glimmerglass Festival during the summer, where I covered the role of Banquo in *Macbeth* and performed in *The Magic Flute* as the 2nd Armed Man.

The support from the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has helped me to expand the scope of my auditions this autumn, allowing me to win an Encouragement Award at the Gerda Lissner Art Song Competition, 3rd prize at the Partners for the Arts competition, and 2nd prize at the Giargari Bel Canto Competition. I will also be singing in a masterclass led by Joyce Di Donato in January in Carnegie Hall.

I was incredibly fortunate to spend some time with Dame Kiri in September, where she challenged me to set my artistic goals higher. My singing has taken on a new edge since then, as I follow her advice to stay connected to my breathing and to the emotion of the music. It is so encouraging to have her support and guidance at such a crucial time in my development." Wishing you a Christmas season shared with loved ones and filled with beautiful music!"

**PHILLIP RHODES**

This time last year I sat in New Zealand wondering if I would be home in time to see my family for Christmas, with the help of the foundation I was fortunate enough to make it with 2 days to spare! This year I have been at home with my family just over ten weeks, and with rehearsals running through till the 23rd of December it is unlikely I will make it to 12 weeks!

Two years ago it was the complete opposite, with a possible 12 weeks work, a festival here and the odd concert there, and the rest of the year wondering whether it was worth all the effort! Now with a steady flow of work throughout this year and the next, I think it is important to remember how close I came to saying 'stuff this!' And remembering those that gently encouraged me to persist just by being there. The net is cast far and wide for the understanding and supportive people that have kept me marching forward – my agent Deborah Sanders is always pushing and encouraging me as well as listening to my concerns; my family in NZ, my



PHOTO: BRIAN HATTON

*"This tech week will be one of the more interesting and challenging ones for me as I have to play the harp on stage."*



PHOTO: PAUL SIROCHMAN

*"My singing has taken on a new edge since then, as I follow her advice to stay connected to my breathing and to the emotion of the music."*

*continued overleaf*



wife here in Wales, and of course Dame Kiri and her foundation. With your support the scales always tipped in favour of hanging in there just a bit longer.

It has been a testing year and I have had to work hard, but can look back and do so with pride in knowing I put my best foot forward, and look ahead to doing more of the same with a full calendar this coming year.

First off will be the production of Andrea Chenier for Opera North, after which I will be off to London for the cover of Enrico in the Royal Opera House's production of Lucia di Lammermoor. I will be on the plane immediately after that to New Zealand for my debut of Giorgio Germont in New Zealand Opera's 'La Traviata' and then a short tour of the NZ Opera/VSO co-production of Sweeney Todd before returning to the UK for other contractual work.

I am so thankful to the foundation and all they have done. This past year has been a big one and I was forever conscious of keeping my eye on the ball and keeping ahead of the work as most of it was new to me, thankfully next year all but one of the roles will be repeats which take some of the pressure off! Lots of love and a merry Christmas to you all!

### THOMAS ATKINS

I'm writing this at the end of a lovely day with Kiri starting out with a photoshoot for new head shots for Edward Laurensen and me, followed by a delicious pub lunch and ending with a BBC Radio interview. Needless to say, the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation never fails to further my career, feed, and promote me!

The first term of my second year on the Opera Course at the Guildhall is coming to an end and it still a funny feeling that I have only one term left here. I have recently accepted a 6 month contract with Glyndebourne that begins in March 2016 so I will be parting with Guildhall a term early.

With auditions looming for what I will be doing after that contract I will have news very soon for what comes next! The term started with a bang as I had just come off a run of Madama Butterfly at the Arcola Theatre in London and we went straight into music calls with the conductor, Mark Shanahan, on the first day back for our production of Le Donne Curiose by Wolf-Ferrari. The production was a great success and a lot of fun.

With performances in France, Switzerland, Japan and London it's been a busy few months, but there is no time to waste as auditions for young artist programmes are coming up fast. So far, I've been offered auditions with Royal Opera, Oper Stuttgart and Opernhaus Zürich. A young artist programme at any of these houses will provide invaluable experience working with the best of the best in the business. Fingers crossed!

**STOP PRESS – As Aria was about to be published Tom advised that he has been accepted into the Royal Opera's Jette Parker programme. He is thrilled and so are we – what a result!**

### BIANCA ANDREW

The last of the autumn leaves are falling from the trees in London, and I am singing in my final performances of 2015 before the school year finishes for Christmas. Looking back over the past year, everything seems to have flown by so quickly and it makes me feel very lucky to think of all the opportunities and experiences I have had since moving to the UK with the help of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.

The first half of my year was spent focusing very happily on song repertoire. I was given many opportunities to work in masterclasses and on projects with artists such as Graham Johnson, Dame Felicity Lott, Sarah Walker, Martin Katz and Iain Burnside. A particular highlight was taking part in a Lieder masterclass with Roger Vignoles at Wigmore Hall! I think I must have learned over fifty new songs in English, German, French, Swedish, Catalan, Russian, Spanish and Italian since I started at the Guildhall a year ago – it has been like a dream being able to study them all day, every day at school!

In the European summer I returned to New Zealand for a month of performances around the country. I presented two solo recitals; one in Wellington and another for the Auckland Opera Studio with pianist Bruce Greenfield. I then headed off on a tour of New Zealand with the newly-formed Tākiri Ensemble. We were on the road for two weeks, with a programme of beautiful songs and Lieder by German, British and New Zealand composers. I just had time to celebrate my 26th birthday with my family before jetting back to London to begin the 2015 school year – this time as a member of the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music.

*"With your support the scales always tipped in favour of hanging in there just a bit longer."*



*"... the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation never fails to further my career, feed, and promote me!"*



*"A particular highlight was taking part in a Lieder masterclass with Roger Vignoles at Wigmore Hall!"*

*continued overleaf*



As I write, I am preparing for the final two performances of our Autumn Opera Scenes. I am singing in scenes from Don Giovanni, Chérubin and War and Peace, and it has been a real learning curve preparing them over the past two months. I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of the programme here; not only am I financially supported by a full fees scholarship by the School, but my teachers are dedicated to challenging me and helping me to become a totally individual and creative performer.

Over the past year I have also been able to visit Kiri at her home on several occasions – and what a pleasure that has been. It is difficult being on the other side of the world to my family in New Zealand, and I always find that going to see Kiri is like going home for a day! I so appreciate being able to sing for Kiri every few months and hear her feedback and ideas, and to catch up about how things are going at School and in life in general.

I send all my best wishes to the Trustees and many supporters of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for a safe and happy Christmas. Thank-you for making my studies here possible and I look forward to sharing more news with you in the New Year.

### EDWARD LAURENSEN

Time is flying by so quickly. Winter is approaching in London and the days are noticeably shorter and colder.

While I was back in New Zealand for the long break I spent much of my time doing preparatory work on some new pieces I had chosen for the start of this new academic year. This has really helped to get things off to a good start and has meant that I could immediately concentrate on working on my vocal technique rather than learning new repertoire.

I also had time to reflect on my first year at the Guildhall and review and develop my goals for the next few years. I took advantage of the opportunities to become more involved with the various Clubs and Societies at Goodenough College. Last year I was so busy finding my feet in London that Orientation just flew by in a flash. I've also moved into a different room in Goodenough, which is more centrally located and closer to the shared services.

Early in the term, I was fortunate to be selected to sing for Dr. Brian Zeger in a public masterclass. Brian has been on the faculty of The Julliard School since 1993, Artistic Director of Vocal Arts at Julliard since 2004, and is currently the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Programme. I learned a lot from this opportunity and received some very positive feedback. It was an honour to sing for such an accomplished musician and I appreciated the interest he took afterwards in learning more about my career aspirations.

I have also had the opportunity to participate in a further Masterclass with David Gowland (Artistic Director of The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at The Royal Opera House). He had heard me sing on a previous occasion and it was encouraging to get feedback that indicated he thought my voice had developed.

Early in November I was invited by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa to attend a Masterclass she was conducting at the Royal College of Music. This was a wonderful evening and an opportunity to sit and observe Kiri working with other singers. Recently Dame Kiri invited me and several other singers from the Foundation down to her home for intensive one-to-one coaching, and I am looking forward to going back down this weekend. I find it incredibly valuable to have these opportunities to work on my new pieces. I always benefit tremendously from her advice and expertise and know they really assist my development.

Recently I was honoured to be the recipient of an AMP 'Do Your Thing' National Scholarship. To be among so many incredible New Zealanders, all excelling in their fields was truly humbling. As many of you know, I am returning in December to perform at several events and hopefully a recital.

To all of the supporters of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, I wish you the very best over the holiday season, and hope you all have a very Merry Christmas!



*"Last year I was so busy finding my feet in London that Orientation just flew by in a flash."*

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



2015 marks the 25th anniversary of a series of remarkable outdoor concerts given by Dame Kiri with the NZSO in the summer of 1990 (Christchurch, Wellington & Auckland) to mark New Zealand's 150th Anniversary. 290,000 attended the 3 events – the concert in the Auckland Domain attracting 140,000 – the largest concert ever held in NZ at that time. For those who could not attend the concerts a live radio broadcast and later telecast meant Dame Kiri's music entertained an estimated 750,000 – 25% of the entire population at that time. People who attended experienced a concert that none wanted to forget.

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.

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## 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, their  
families and the young  
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 2016  
bring you continuing good  
health and happiness.