**Amsterdam's Carré Theatre was graced on Monday night with the radiant presence and performance of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.**

- a review -

One of the world's most famous and beloved opera stars who has performed at all the major opera houses of the world including the Metropolitan Opera in New York and London's Covent Garden, Kiri stole the hearts of 600 million people when she sang at the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana in 1981.

Thirty years on, the packed auditorium in the Dutch capital was hushed in breathless anticipation before the world famous diva appeared and, when she did, the soprano fulfilled all the expectations of her exotic legend.

**Kitchen**  
This most famous New Zealand icon - daughter of an Irish mother and Maori father - appeared as a sublimely elegant vision in long silver gown and jacket, looking no less than a goddess.

The programme included songs by Rossini, Richard Strauss, Debussy, Poulenc and Puccini - a veritable treasure trove of delights.

Kiri, often speaking to the audience about the songs in a natural, informal manner, could almost have been talking to friends in her garden or kitchen at home - such was her warmth and unaffected friendliness. At one point she even referred to the crowds of football fans who had been celebrating the national title won by local club Ajax the day before.

**Young talent**  
Founder of the [Kiri te Kanawa Foundation](http://www.kiritekanawa.org/) which she set up to help promote the talent of young singers in New Zealand, Kiri introduced the Amsterdam audience to the extremely gifted young baritone, the Maori Phillip Rhodes, a beneficiary of this project, who performed the Figaro song from 'Barber of Seville' with extraordinary colour and verve and also the very moving aria 'Nemico della Patria' by Giordano in the second half of the programme. Definitely a rising star to watch in the heady firmament of opera.

Kiri also spoke fondly of Jake Heggie, a boy who'd turned pages for her in the 1980's and now a composer. She performed his 'Monologue' to words from 'Masterclass', a play about Maria Callas by Terence McNally, with great clarity and depth of feeling, ending with a comic touch when the pianist joined in the singing.

The concert itself could hardly end... But finally, after all the insistant clapping and cheering - and 3 encores - the audience had to call it a day!