



NEW ZEALAND SINGERS TAKING FLIGHT

**Research Project Report On
Ways Of Strengthening The Preparedness
Of Young New Zealand Singers
For Advanced Study And Career Paths
Based In The UK**

By Jenny Wollerman

FOREWORD BY KIRI TE KANAWA

I am often asked if there is something in the New Zealand air or water that produces remarkable singing voices - we are renowned for it internationally, and I am always surprised and delighted by the number of my compatriots I see excelling in opera houses around the world.

Yet, as with any serious endeavour in life, success in singing is not just about having a lovely voice. Singing is a highly competitive business, and there are always many more outstanding young singers than there are roles for them to sing. Having a great voice is just the starting point for an international career - our aspiring opera stars also have to be better than their rivals in many other essential areas: musicianship and intelligence, work ethic, tenacity, technical preparation....

In addition, young New Zealand singers often find themselves competing on an uphill playing field. Not only are they as far away from home as it is possible to be and usually very short of funds to boot, they may also be less advanced in their vocal development than their competitors.

One of my motivations in establishing the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation was to find innovative and constructive ways to assist young New Zealand singers with their international career development. It's relatively easy to give young singers a big cheque and send them on their way hoping for the best, but I have always thought that a more considered and strategic approach might produce better results. For example, it might be more efficient to provide additional support in New Zealand in certain specific areas of training in order to ensure that our singers are better prepared when they leave, and that they do not have to spend precious, hard-earned funds on remedial studies in the UK just to get themselves up to the starting standard of their international competitors. Money is always in short supply, so it is vital that we do everything possible to ensure that the many grants and gifts handed out to our singers every year by a range of generous organisations and individuals, are spent carefully and wisely.

As a starting point, the Foundation agreed that we should do some research into the current state of advanced tuition in leading vocal training institutions in the UK, which is still the most popular destination for young New Zealand singers. Along the way, we also wanted to pick up some feedback from those institutions as to the general standard of their New Zealand students, and as to whether there were any consistent deficiencies in their New Zealand preparation and training that we might be able to assist in correcting. Not only do we want to help New Zealand singers to be better prepared before they leave the country, but we also want to provide some tools to help them make well-informed decisions as to where they should best continue their studies abroad.

I was personally delighted when Jenny Wollerman agreed to undertake the research and write this report. Jenny is a highly respected New Zealand singer and teacher who has herself studied abroad and understands at first hand the difficulties that young singers can endure. Jenny has applied herself to this task with phenomenal focus, energy and intelligence, the result of which is a document that will provoke a great deal of interest not just with singers but also with their teachers, funders and employers. I congratulate and thank Jenny for this achievement - it is everything we hoped for, and more.

However, this report is just a first step, not an end in itself. The report contains a number of conclusions and recommendations that deserve to be followed up, debated, and, hopefully, implemented. The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is ready to initiate these next steps and will work hard to help bring about practical measures to make that playing field just a little more level.

I commend the report to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kiri Te Kanawa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kiri" being the most prominent.

Kiri Te Kanawa
Chairman, Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation



The primary aim of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is to assist outstanding New Zealand musicians and singers to develop international careers at the highest level.

The Foundation plans to undertake a range of activities in support of its objectives, including:

- Establishing and providing scholarships, prizes and grants to selected individuals to enable them to develop their singing or musical studies or careers.
- Arranging for the training and instruction of singers and musicians, either individually or through attendance at workshops with well known New Zealand and international singers or musicians, either in New Zealand or overseas.
- Working with New Zealand music teachers and coaches who will identify young singers and musicians with outstanding talent and career potential.
- Promoting and providing performance opportunities for young New Zealand singers and musicians including concerts and recitals.
- Working through Dame Kiri's extensive international network of close friends and colleagues in the music field providing mentoring opportunities.
- Providing funding and support for singing and music teachers to enable them to travel and research singing, vocal, instrumental and other music techniques.
- Working in partnership with other similar foundations, trusts, organisations and individuals to support the development of musical talent.

The Foundation's first four years have been enormously successful, with excellent corporate support from Rolex, UBS, ASBbank, Air New Zealand, the Lion Foundation and a number of individuals and Trusts; several fundraising concerts and three recipients of Foundation grants named.

The first was Dunedin-born soprano Ana James who has recently graduated from the prestigious Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; the second, young Auckland conductor Kerry Jago who has completed a four year conducting course in Germany; and most recently, pianist Kirsten Simpson who was the first pianist to attend the Summer Academy of the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto in Italy. This last grant provided the additional opportunity to join resources with the Dame Malvina Major Foundation to enable Kirsten to complete her studies.

If you would like to support the objectives and work of the Foundation, please contact The Foundation at the address shown below.

The Foundation thanks its major sponsors:



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Contact Details:

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation
PO Box 38387
Howick
Auckland 2014

64 9 534 9398 (Phone)
64 9 534 0629 (Fax)
foundation@kiritekanawa.org
www.kiritekanawa.org

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About the Author

Jenny Wollerman is a highly respected New Zealand singer and teacher.

She began her vocal studies in New Zealand and went on to complete her training at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. After graduating with a Master of Music in Opera, she undertook further studies at the Banff Centre in Canada and the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh, England, before returning to pursue her career in Australia and New Zealand.

She has since appeared throughout New Zealand and Australia, as well as in Britain, Belgium, Ireland and Taiwan and has performed with the New Zealand, Tasmanian, Adelaide, West Australian and Taiwan Symphony Orchestras.

Engagements since her return have included Léïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* for the State Opera of South Australia, the Australian première of Lutoslawski's *Chantefleurs et Chantefables* with the Tasmanian Symphony, John Psathas' *Orpheus in Rarohenga* with the New Zealand Symphony and Ravel's *Shéhérazade* song cycle with the West Australian and Adelaide Symphony orchestras. She performed as soprano soloist in the *Lord of the Rings Symphony* in 2003, both at the premiere in Wellington and in Taiwan under the baton of John Mauceri. She has recorded the Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream* music with the NZSO for release on the Naxos label.

She has been teaching singing at Victoria University School of Music, now the New Zealand School of Music, since 2003, and is voice tutor for the NBR NZ Opera Emerging Artists programme. Her singing teaching gained national recognition when in 2005 her students won both First and Second place in the Lexus Song Quest, NZ's premier singing competition, formerly known as the Mobil Song Quest.

As well as her Master of Music Jenny holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Victoria University and LTCL in piano performance.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my warmest and deepest thanks are due to Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, who is to thank for the very existence of the project, and who has unfailingly advised, inspired and supported me throughout it. She was the driving force in getting the project off the ground, and with her Foundation was able to ensure it came into fruition. I am hugely grateful to her for her generosity in providing my accommodation in London, in making sure everything I needed was available to me, for approaching teachers and professionals in the UK to ask them to help me in my research, and for inviting me to her home in Sussex where she generously gave of her time and expert knowledge in coaching me on repertoire, as well as generally looking after me and making me feel very welcome.

Secondly my immense thanks for the support of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Trustees, Professor Elizabeth Hudson, Director of the New Zealand School of Music, Air New Zealand, the William & Lois Manchester Trust and all the other generous sponsors of the project listed on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation page. The foresight of the Foundation in recognising the importance and significance of the project and its long term benefit to New Zealand singers and the singing community, as well as that of Professor Hudson and the other supporters has made the project possible.

A special note of thanks to Paul Gleeson, the Foundation administrator, who was always there for me during the project, dealing swiftly with all my questions and issues, and to Nigel Barnfield, Alison Jenkins and Neil Grainger in London. Many thanks also to Stephen Dee for his collaboration in the final stages of the report.

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I have to say I was quite overwhelmed by the generosity of all the people I approached as part of the project, and I hope that anyone I have missed out inadvertently will accept my sincere apologies.

I have had the most wonderful experience in undertaking this research project: the people involved and the experiences I had during it will be an ongoing source of inspiration to me in the future. I look forward to being able to pass on what I have learned to aspiring young singers in the long as well as the short term.

Thank you all again, on behalf of all young singers from New Zealand!

Jenny Wollerman

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Presentation Date

It should be noted that the fundamental content of this report was completed in June 2007. As such, the information within it should be regarded as current at the presentation date of 30th June 2007.

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this report at time of presentation, it is possible that some information that has been included here may already be out of date, or be inaccurate or incomplete. Readers should not rely solely on the information given here, but check the website or prospectus of the relevant institution or organisation for more complete information.

Executive Summary

This report is the key output of the research project undertaken by Jenny Wollerman in the first half of 2007. The project examined the current study and career scene for singers in the UK and the experiences of young New Zealand singers there, with the aim of finding ways to help better prepare them for this path before they leave New Zealand.

As part of the project Jenny Wollerman spent three months in the UK, visiting major music colleges and institutions, observing classes and lessons, attending student and professional performances, and interviewing teachers, students, institution staff and other professionals in the field, particularly those working with New Zealand students.

The report is in two parts:

Part One describes the research methodology and results, and reaches a number of key conclusions, and some practical recommendations. The key conclusions are:

- There is a need for ongoing monitoring of the standard of tuition and training available in the UK and for a service providing up to date and objective information and advice for young New Zealand singers who are considering travelling abroad to advance their studies.
- While the general level of technical vocal training in New Zealand is comparable to that available in the UK, there is a shortage in New Zealand of coaching skills in vocal repertoire, languages and diction. Investment in this area will improve overall standards and ensure that New Zealanders are better prepared when they head overseas.
- New Zealand students often have more performing experience than the local students but this counts for little in the UK. It is vital to build a performing profile in the UK and to be seen performing there by potential employers. It follows that New Zealanders need to be ready on arrival in the UK to compete with their international rivals for those precious performing opportunities, and that the easiest way to gain this profile is through an institution or advanced level programme.

Part Two comprises detailed practical advice for young New Zealand singers contemplating international study.

PART ONE: REPORT ON RESEARCH

1. Introduction

This project entailed an investigation of all aspects of the current study scene and professional scene in the United Kingdom experienced by young New Zealand singers going there for advanced training in classical singing.

The aim was to identify ways to help the singers in preparing for this advanced study. As well as giving information about the UK study scene, this report sets out some of the potential barriers to the best use of students' study time in the UK and suggests ways of overcoming or avoiding these barriers.

As part of the project I spent three months based in London in the first half of 2007 working on the research. In this time I was able to meet with and interview numerous people involved in the training and careers of young singers, thus forming a network of contacts for the future, to visit the various colleges of music and training institutions, to observe lessons and masterclasses and attend both school and professional performances.

As part of the project I conducted a survey of the perceptions of New Zealand based singing teachers and singers about study in the United Kingdom, in order to compare these perceptions with the actual conditions and situations experienced by New Zealand students in the UK. During the period I was in the UK I then conducted interviews with a number of current New Zealand students in the United Kingdom and recent graduates from New Zealand who had studied there, in order to find out about those experiences.

Please note: for those who may not be familiar with some of the terminology used in this report, I have included a glossary of related terms at the end of the document.

2. Background

It has been a fact for many years that young New Zealand singers who wish to pursue a career in classical singing find they need to undertake advanced study overseas in order to bring their skills and knowledge up to a competitive level and in order to place themselves where they may be noticed by agents and employers.

New Zealand seems to produce large numbers of very talented singers for its small size, and the professional opportunities within its shores are limited. Hence the need for travel to overseas centres where it is possible to pursue this aim, and the destination of choice of the majority of New Zealand singers for decades has been the United Kingdom.

The factors which increase the difficulty for New Zealand singers of achieving their aim of a professional career are manifold, not the least of which are the high cost of travel and the high tuition fees for overseas students. While a number of singers leave New Zealand with the benefit of funds from competition wins, scholarships and awards behind them, most depend as well on raising large amounts of money from parents, personal donations, charitable organisations, and government institutions.

Perhaps partly due to the difficulty of raising such funds, the numbers who do study overseas tend to be minimal, and are mostly restricted to the 'cream of the crop', which is certainly reasonable. However, even if only the 'cream' get this advanced training, for all sorts of reasons not all will end up having successful sustainable careers. It can be seen that this situation gives important benefits to the study and professional singing scene within New Zealand, as a certain number of these will return to their home country and pass on what they have learned as an important part of the next generation of singing teachers and educators within New Zealand.

So the benefits from undertaking a project of this sort can be seen to reach through not only to the young singers who aim for careers but also to the wider singing community and the fundamental music education standard available within New Zealand.

3. Need for the project

I am so pleased at last someone is able to fill this huge gap in our music education... I am sure there must be rather a lot of music teachers saying this will really help us and our pupils, so much more than all the dollars raised to help them.

(NZ Teacher)

This sounds like a really useful project. I know that I would have valued information like this when looking at overseas study myself... It was certainly a challenge to find really useful information beyond the catalogues from the institutions (and sometimes even they weren't very forthcoming or quick!).

(NZ Teacher)

The prospectus information I received from the institutions was flashy but confusing. I could have really done with some advice at that stage as I had no criteria for choosing between them.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

I know from my own experience how difficult it can be for a young singer attempting this path. First as a young student in New Zealand and the USA, then as a young singer struggling to 'break into the business' in the UK, eventually singing professionally myself, and now as a singing teacher in New Zealand, with my own students disappearing off overseas to pursue the same goals I did, I have learned how difficult it can be to make the right choices. One is confronted with myriad choices of teachers, coaches, courses, schools, agents, auditions and so on, and coming from the other side of the world it can be very difficult to know where to start.

Given that the majority of New Zealanders choose the UK as their base to pursue their study and career goals, it is perhaps surprising that at the moment there are few people permanently living in New Zealand who are really up to date with the current scene in the UK for singing and singing training.

This lack of up to date information on 'the scene' is what the research attempts to address, and the aim is to ensure that this information and advice is disseminated to all those who need it, be they the young singers themselves or those who teach, support and advise them. Since so many New Zealanders do go there, it was logical to first investigate the training scene in the UK, and perhaps in the future more research can be done on the possibilities in other countries such as the USA.

Thank you for your time in considering this and also for all the work you have been doing to provide support for present and future NZ singers. From what I feel and what I have heard from other singers, we are all very excited and appreciative!

(NZ Based Student)

4. Description of the research aims

It seems to me that the aim of helping young singers achieve their study and career goals, not just of entering into the course of their choice, but also into their chosen career, requires vision and caring support throughout the whole path of their training, from their first lessons in NZ through to becoming established in a sustainable career.

The objective of this project is to research specific information and knowledge about what to expect from study in the UK that will aid students in their preparation in New Zealand. The advice and information is to be made available to all young New Zealand singers and their teachers.

Through this research the project aims to provide guidance that is current and that prepares young New Zealand singers for the different expectations and ways of working that they will encounter overseas, and information that will help them prepare mentally for the trying times and unexpected difficulties they may encounter.

In the research undertaken in the UK, I tried to cover the following aspects:

- to get a sense of what the young singers will experience and need to prepare for before their arrival in the UK
- to conduct interviews with teachers, coaches and professionals about their experiences of NZ students to attempt to identify any recurring deficiencies in the standard of NZ singers that leave them under-prepared for their UK study
- immersion in the current music 'scene' in the UK to get a general feel for the standards expected and a comparison of standards between young New Zealand singers and those from the UK and other countries
- to find out the level and type of preparation and prior training expected by the major UK music institutions through observation of lessons and interviews with leading UK singing teachers
- to develop impressions and subjective knowledge of quality and atmosphere and reputation and industry ranking of the various available study and career paths and teachers
- to conduct interviews with young NZ singers currently studying at the institutions and those who have recently graduated, to get their views on the particular challenges that they are facing and how these might have been eased if their preparation in NZ had been different
- to observe coaches and teachers working with emerging young up and coming singers to gain more specific knowledge and understanding of the level and quality of training with which they need to arrive

- to have lessons myself with these teachers in order to derive a greater understanding of the way they are working with the young singers
- to make and renew personal contacts with key people in the music training institutions and in the business for the purpose of ongoing information updates, advice and links to the professional and study scene into the future.

Time was a limiting factor in the gathering of information in the United Kingdom and I had many more names on my contact list than I was able to make use of. In other cases, I missed out on meeting people due to them being unavailable within the period I was there. However, I do feel that even though there is always the possibility of doing more research in a project such as this, I was able to cover the most important areas in the time available.

Naturally I have learned an enormous amount from doing all of these things. It was, as I expected, a most stimulating time, and I am already passing on to my own students some of the concepts and skills I have learned from my own lessons and coachings, and from lessons and masterclasses I observed while there. I have amassed more knowledge and intrinsic understanding than can be usefully identified in a report such as this, and I look forward to being able to pass this information on to prospective students and their teachers either on an individual basis or through seminars in the coming year.

5. Summary of UK activities

Here is a brief summary of my activities during the three months I spent based in London researching the project. For more details and comments see Appendix 1: 'Activities Update Reports', which includes all of the reports that were posted on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation website during this period.

I visited the five main music colleges in the United Kingdom which offer high level postgraduate courses for singers: Royal Academy of Music (RAM), Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD), Royal College of Music (RCM), Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) and Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). I interviewed the Heads of Vocal Studies at all of these institutions. I also attended student performances and observed teaching at all of them, with the opportunity to observe both individual lessons and masterclasses.

I visited three 'finishing level' training institutions which are designed to help bridge the gap between postgraduate study and employment: The National Opera Studio (NOS), Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera (JPYAP) and the Cardiff International Academy of Voice (CIAV). I was able to attend performances by trainees from all three of these programmes, observe the institutions' day to day operations and interview the administrators and directors of these high level programmes.

In total I observed 24 hours of lessons with 16 different singing teachers and coaches from various institutions, as well as with some who only teach privately. I had 22 lessons or short working sessions myself with 12 different singing teachers and coaches, including most of the teachers whose lessons I observed. As part of my contact with individual teachers and coaches I also interviewed 10 of them about their experiences with New Zealand students and their own observations of the UK study and work scene for young singers.

I undertook interviews and informal discussions with 12 current and former students and recent graduates from New Zealand to hear about their personal experiences of study in the United Kingdom. I also arranged for a group of young New Zealand singers to participate in a full day workshop session with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Jonathan Papp, in which she coached them on repertoire as well as giving them helpful advice, and she generously coached me also in two extended private sessions after this.

I interviewed and met with six other professionals in the field who have extensive experience of the UK scene and are regularly working with and/or casting young singers including New Zealand singers. These people included conductors, casting consultants, agents and opera company staff.

I attended performances by both young singers and seasoned professionals at the Wigmore Hall, the Royal Opera Covent Garden and Linbury Studio Theatre, English National Opera and the Royal Albert Hall. I also attended a number of singing competitions including the semi-final and final of the 2007 Kathleen Ferrier Competition.

6. Findings of the research

A summary of the most significant results of the research follows.

1. NZ study - is the level of singing teaching here of a higher standard than generally acknowledged?

NZ's unusually high output of singers for its size; Possibly due to the high standard of teaching available here?; The best students are leaving NZ very well prepared in terms of technique; Other areas of preparation could be improved on

For many years people have acknowledged, anecdotally at least, that New Zealand seems to produce more successful singers and more 'good voices' than would be regarded as normal for such a small country.

An in-depth discussion of the validity of this perception lies outside the scope of this project. However, the perception certainly exists and has been remarked upon by many in the classical singing area, both within New Zealand and overseas for several decades.

I heard many comments to this effect as I met with people in the UK - here are a couple of examples:

'What do you drink out there that produces so many wonderful voices?'
UK Teacher

'It never ceases to amaze me just how many fine singers emerge from NZ!'.
UK Teacher

In his book 'The Art of Auditioning', Anthony Legge suggests that countries that have an 'outdoor lifestyle' and a 'resonant speech accent' may produce more strong and developed voices. Perhaps this relates to New Zealand's perceived disproportionate numbers of talented vocal progeny.

It is also possible that this high output could be attributable to the standard of teaching available here and the opportunities for performance which young NZ singers are able to take up. This explanation lines up well with the information and opinions which came through in my research.

Specific comments about the standard of preparation of the New Zealand students which came from professionals in the field, teachers and staff members at the UK institutions are discussed further in the following sections.

However, what does seem to come through clearly to me, is that, while not all the students are leaving with the same level of training:

In general, the best students leave New Zealand very well prepared in terms of vocal teaching and technique.

Also it is clear that:

There are some specific areas which could be addressed in order to improve their preparation in other ways before leaving New Zealand for overseas study.

Before moving on to a discussion of these areas, the current UK study scene is considered in the sections below.

2. *Strengths and weaknesses of the UK study scene and a commentary on the singing teaching available in the UK*

UK reputation for vocal coaching and singing teaching; technical versus interpretative teaching; UK versus US teaching styles; UK choral tradition; My experience of UK teachers and teaching; The need for students to get 'value for money'

The students need to have their technique really well settled before going over to the UK because the teaching there isn't good – so there's no chance to fix anything once you get there. But the coaching is excellent and that's what really makes the difference.

(NZ Singing Teacher)

The UK has had a reputation for a number of years of having a really good standard of vocal coaching, but not such a widespread one in terms of vocal teaching, particularly in the teaching of technique. This is of course a huge generalisation, but one which still has a following today.

The level of teaching in the UK institutions is generally lamentable. The teaching standard is not monitored - nobody is checking the effectiveness of teachers.

(UK Professional)

In the early nineties, the level of singing technique here was atrocious. There was a concept that "performing taught you to sing". So singers sang on their "native talent" only. In the last six to ten years that has changed. A generation of teachers has passed on and been replaced by a new generation with new ideas.

(UK Singing Teacher)

From my experience in the UK, there are definitely teachers available, both within and outside of the colleges, who are providing very good technical teaching, and some who are providing an exceptionally high level of this.

There are also large numbers of teachers who remain aligned to an older ethos of teaching, which seems to have been the dominant style in the past, in which students were simply encouraged to let their voices sing out freely and confidently and it was felt that learning to sing was mainly a matter of learning to incorporate style and expressive interpretation with the student's innate sense for singing, and then to give them as many performance opportunities as possible.

Often this was the way that the best and most successful British singers studied and naturally this is the way in which they tend to want to pass on their knowledge.

The UK institutions have older teachers in general, and many of these have been very good performers, but they tend to bring with them their own faults and often pass these on as well.

(UK Vocal Coach)

Contrasted with this is a more rigorous 'technically oriented' way of teaching based on various schools including the Italian 'bel canto', which has always been available from a small number of teachers within the UK and is still being taught today by UK trained teachers.

Students studying in the UK will learn to sing with musical taste and knowledge of style, whereas those in the USA learn technique only.

(UK Singing Teacher)

Coaches in the USA tend to do external work – "Do this, do that..." – rather than getting the singer to discover it in themselves, which is in general done much better here in the UK.

(UK Vocal Coach)

The British concept that the US students have no artistic training is quite wrong!

(UK Singing Teacher)

There seems to be a widespread perception within the UK that their 'interpretation based training' contrasts with that given in the USA, in which a strong technical basis is built up with students.

As a generalisation it is probably true that there is more stress placed on technical training in the USA, but it is also thought by many that this is at the expense of interpretative and stylistic training. This is certainly not in line with my own experience of studying in the USA – although the singing lessons did tend to focus mainly on technique, the vocal coaching was totally about interpretation, style and 'finding it within yourself'.

I was surprised at how many people made this comment to me, especially since I never asked specifically about it – the comments were always made unprompted. However there was at least one UK based teacher who held the opposing view which lines up with my own experience of the USA training.

It was also acknowledged by many that the 'choral tradition' continues to influence much of the teaching available, in Britain, and in England in particular. While this tradition provides students with a sound basis for further training as a soloist, it does have potential drawbacks for those interested in opera, as pointed out by one teacher. This is not to say that all teachers are allied to this choral tradition, but it does seem to filter through into the musical taste and style that is appreciated in the UK.

In this country [England] there is a choral tradition, as opposed to an operatic tradition. In this tradition all voices should be similar and not "stand out" which is quite different in opera. This attitude is changing, but there are still some English people, even teachers, who are appalled by the operatic sound. Wales and Scotland tend to produce more operatic voices [than England].

(UK Singing Teacher)

In my time in the UK during this research I experienced a wide range of teaching styles, from 'old school', to the students of acknowledged great teachers such as Vera Rosza, Audrey Langford and Frederick Cox, teachers with whole careers in teaching behind them and rafts of successful students who have passed through their hands, teachers with ongoing singing careers at the highest level, and teachers who trace their teaching to Italian 'bel canto' through direct lines to great Italian teachers.

I also met a number of younger teachers who embrace all sorts of different concepts and 'methods', interpreting them and correlating them to develop their own teaching concepts. Most have had at least some exposure to 21st century teaching models such as the Estill Model, and have in general a far greater knowledge of the physiological workings of the vocal instrument than was common in teachers when I studied overseas 20 years ago. Even if not all who have this knowledge choose to teach in a way that openly displays it, in talking with them it is obvious that the knowledge is there and that it informs their teaching.

It was evident to me that all the teachers I met personally in the UK were very special people with a keen desire to communicate their understanding to their students. From my inevitably brief observation of their teaching, I would not say that all were what I would call 'extraordinary teachers' but a number probably did approach that ideal and pretty much all were above average, both in their ability to communicate as teachers and in the level of their knowledge.

Many of the teachers continue to lead active performing careers, and even though this can make it more difficult for students to receive regular lessons, this knowledge of the performing world and understanding of what it takes to maintain a performing career seem to me to be important aspects of the training that can be passed on to students.

It was also evident from talking to a range of professionals involved in the UK scene that the standard of singing teaching available within the institutions is by no means uniform, and that probably not all of the teachers working within the institutions would come up to the same levels as those I encountered.

It seems to me to be inappropriate to discuss my personal impressions of the teachers and teaching I was lucky enough to be allowed to observe while in the UK in a public document such as this. However, if individual students about to embark on auditions for further study in the UK wish to consult me individually, I may be able to give some idea of the different teaching styles and approaches I

observed and suggest some teachers who may work well for particular individuals.

My impressions are, of necessity, only of a limited number of teachers, and I only saw a 'snapshot' of the teaching that they undertake, so this guidance can only be a starting point, and individual students must make their own decisions about these things. Section 2 in Part Two of this document gives more information and advice on choosing teachers and on consultation lessons.

It is important that students are getting 'value for money' at the institutions they choose.

(UK Professional)

'Value for money' is a key issue raised by a number of the people I interviewed. They all said they would advise NZ students to make sure they were really getting value for money from the courses they undertook, with the implication that in many cases the students at institutions do not truly get this. Every student will have different expectations of the courses they take on, but they need to go into them with a very good knowledge of what exactly they will receive for their money.

Because the courses cost so much for foreign students, it would seem wise to try to minimise the amount of time spent in the institutions, and how this could be done is something that discussed later in this report, under Part One Section 6.6.

3. How the UK career scene works and how students make the transition from study

The former 'training on the job' path versus the current 'study in institutions'; The need for a young singer to build a profile within the scene

Perhaps in times gone by the concept of 'learning through performing' applied and worked well because there were opportunities for young singers to learn about the craft while being employed long term by a single opera house or company. These employment situations are now few and far between, and mainly restricted to the opera houses of the German system, and even when singers begin their careers there they need a lot more knowledge than in the past.

In the past many New Zealand singers went to the UK when 'learning on the job' was still possible, and went straight into careers where this was supported. But for young singers today the situation is quite different. They must be much better prepared, more polished and more experienced before beginning their careers, as well as having a really secure technical understanding of their own voice, its limitations and strengths, in order to avoid taking on inappropriate engagements which may limit the length of their performing careers.

The UK colleges go some way towards providing this 'high level polishing', particularly in the vocal coaching and role preparation offered in the postgraduate opera programmes. The 'finishing school' institutions and programmes such as National Opera Studio, Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, Cardiff International Academy of Voice carry this 'polishing' to even higher levels.

The singers who have been trained in these higher level programmes can be seen to have reaped the benefits of this, and to have gained an understanding and some experience of the expectations of professional companies. Not every singer can, or will need to go through these higher levels, but there is a function of 'exposure' and 'profile building' that those students lucky enough to be accepted for these programmes will gain from even further, as long as they are truly ready for this.

According to the professionals I interviewed, the way the 'system' is now working in the UK is that very few young singers are offered work from auditions. Instead, prospective employers keep tabs on who is coming up through the ranks in the colleges, in the big competitions and in other performances such as the small companies who use young singers. By the time they hear a singer in an audition, they will usually have some background knowledge of them if they have made an impression in any of these arenas.

So even if it may appear that a singer has been offered work straight from an audition, the decision to make that offer is usually based on a great deal more in the way of knowledge and recommendations that have passed on to the employers than is obvious. Agents, casting consultants and those casting for opera companies will often track a young singer they think may be interesting for a couple of years before making any formal contact with them and before any engagements may be offered.

Hence it is very difficult for any young singer coming in from outside the UK to feel that they are having any success when they audition for work there. If there is little or no background knowledge of the singer, the UK agents and companies are not likely to make any offers until that singer has a profile on the scene. This can be helped by recommendations (usually done without the singer's knowledge) from coaches, conductors and directors and word of mouth spreading throughout the business, but the main thing is for such a young singer to be seen and heard performing.

This is why it is so much easier for singers who have studied at the main colleges and institutions to move on into careers within the UK: they have built up a profile. Studying at an opera school within one of these colleges can provide students with a 'platform' to build up this profile and most of the students and graduates spoke of this as being a very important aspect of their study.

It seems that the main companies, agents and casting consultants mostly only attend these types of performances within London, so building a profile there is easier. However, word of mouth also plays a big part in building this sort of profile, so if a student gives a really stunning performance in a production which has not been attended by the main critics, agents and casting people (e.g. in a '2nd cast' performance at a college, or a performance at a college outside of London) they will very likely still make an impression.

4. NZ perceptions of UK study and how these compare with the actual experiences of students in the UK

NZ students perceived to have more performance experience, highly motivated, 'can do' attitude; NZ students less proficient in European languages and suffer stress from lack of emotional support and financial strain; NZ based singers often have a poor understanding of the role of a vocal coach; Study and living costs known to be high; The UK is still a popular study destination for young singers; Points of attraction and non-attraction of UK for young singers

As part of the research I conducted a survey of New Zealand based young singers and teachers in order to compare their perceptions about study in the UK with the actual situations I found there. A copy of the survey form used for this is attached as Appendix 2.

The following is a summary of the key points of interest that I found from the survey responses.

NZ students' potential advantages over local UK students

Most of the New Zealand based singers and teachers asserted that New Zealand students were more likely to have had more performance experience than the local UK students, which lines up with comments from NZ students and professionals in the UK.

In terms of stage experience and experience with orchestras and conductors, I was way ahead of the other students from the UK.

Former UK Student From NZ

It is certainly the case that many New Zealand students have performed in various concerts and productions and have often worked in the NBR New Zealand Opera chorus before leaving for the UK, while it is apparently quite common for UK students starting postgraduate studies on an opera course to have never performed in an opera before.

Many also felt that New Zealand students would be highly motivated to work hard and that their "can do" and "no nonsense" attitude would stand them in good stead in terms of study.

NZ students' disadvantages over local UK students

New Zealand based singers and teachers also tended to recognise that New Zealand students were liable to have less proficiency in European languages than the UK locals.

Stress associated with the lack of finance was also highlighted by many of the New Zealand based survey respondents as a potential disadvantage for New Zealand students. This was also identified as a major problem by the students I spoke to within the UK.

The other common issue identified by New Zealanders who are currently studying in the UK was that of loneliness, homesickness, lack of emotional support and other aspects which can be linked to culture shock. Interestingly, few of the New Zealand based respondents in the survey identified these aspects as likely to be major problems for New Zealand students.

The role of a vocal coach

When asked to define the role of a vocal coach, one third of the New Zealand based young singers surveyed gave responses that showed that they had no idea at all what a vocal (or repertoire) coach was, or that they had quite the wrong impression of the role of a coach.

Another third of the New Zealand based young singers surveyed had, by contrast, an excellent understanding of the role of a vocal coach. Interestingly, one of these singers had studied overseas previously, and the rest came from Auckland.

The other New Zealand based students displayed varied levels of understanding. One erroneously stated that the role of the coach was to "develop the voice technically". Another thought that a coach was for very advanced students or professionals only, which is by no means the norm in UK training institutions. Another stated that you would take music to a vocal coach only after having learnt it with your singing teacher, which, while this is one accepted way of working, it is also quite common for a vocal coach to work with a singer on new repertoire from day one, and students may find this is the way they are expected to work in the opera schools at the UK colleges.

So what is a vocal coach expected to do? In my experience, the first requirement for a vocal coach is that they have a thorough knowledge of the vocal repertoire. They are usually expected to be excellent accompanists as well, and most are also very good sight readers. Here are some quotes from the responses of the NZ based singers, which do, in my opinion, specify clearly and correctly a number of aspects of the role of a vocal coach:

A vocal coach will guide the student in voice preparation, may assist with the warming up of the voice; the outward presentation of the singer; the musicality of the performance; the details of the music; the interpretation; the language and its inflections; the style and authenticity; the shading of the vocal palette; the finishing of the piece ready for performance. They should not interfere in the student's basic technique of vocal mechanics.

(NZ Based Young Singer)

...They could also work with singers on interpretations, suggesting new perspectives or ideas for the singer to explore. In addition, they could give advice on the different musical or compositional styles, for example advising the singer on how to ornament their baroque arias, or pointing out the differences in singing French melodie and German lied.

(NZ Based Young Singer)

I do not expect (or necessarily want) a vocal coach to offer vocal technique but rather offer support and knowledge in a broader sense. ... the role of a vocal coach is imperative in the development of all singers, both musically and emotionally.

(NZ Based Young Singer)

Study costs in the UK

The cost of study (tuition fees) estimated by New Zealand based singers responding to the survey was often within the correct range.

Currently tuition fees for foreign students at the main colleges are around NZD\$30,000 to \$45,000 (approx GBP£11,000 to £14,500).

Most respondents expected the costs to be high. Some estimated the actual cost to be substantially higher than this, whereas others thought the costs would be much lower (ranging from estimates of NZD\$2,000 to \$20,000).

Living costs in the UK

Again, most respondents estimated the living costs within the correct range, that is to say, the range published by most of the institutions in the UK as being an estimate of living costs.

The estimated living costs for students in the UK are usually given as somewhere in the range £9,000-10,000 per annum (approx NZD\$23,000-\$30,000), with costs in London being somewhat higher than those elsewhere.

Most of the students currently studying in the UK felt that the living costs published by the institutions were indeed a reasonable estimate of the actual costs. A few gave widely varying estimates of their living costs that did not line up with those given by the colleges and these ranged from NZD\$15,000 to \$60,000 per year.

World regions considered by students for singing study

Of the New Zealand based singers responding to the survey who were considering overseas study, most included the UK in their regions of choice. The next highest scoring was Europe, followed by Australia, USA, and Canada.

So most respondents regarded the UK as worth considering as a place to study.

Attractiveness of the UK in terms of potential for advanced study

When asked in what ways the UK compared with other potential countries in terms of its attractiveness for advanced singing study, the respondents identified the following aspects. These are listed in descending order of popularity.

Attractive aspects:

- English language
- Gateway to Europe
- The UK's history of support for art and culture
- New Zealand's traditional ancestral links with the UK
- The number of New Zealand students who have trained there successfully
- Performance and experience opportunities available while studying there

Unattractive aspects:

- High costs of living
- High level of competition for work
- High cost of fees

Here are some other comments made by New Zealand based singers responding to the survey:

Several people have said the tuition they've received there has been nothing special.

(NZ Based Young Singer)

For me it [the UK] is less attractive due to the high fees, and many students seem to complete their study and then find that life is just a struggle over there because there are so many people and it's so hard to get work.

(NZ Based Young Singer)

5. Perceptions in the UK of NZ students' preparation and readiness for study there

NZ students thought to be well prepared in general; Ways in which they are not so well prepared or ready for advanced study; Lack of foreign language training and lack of musical stylistic and interpretative coaching; Possible explanation of varied technical preparation

Of the staff, teachers and professionals in the field I interviewed in the UK who had had experience with NZ students over the past five to ten years, most said that they felt the New Zealand students arrived well prepared in terms of vocal technique.

That is to say, they felt that New Zealanders arrived at least as well prepared, if not in fact better prepared than the local students. This implies that the standard of teaching in New Zealand is regarded as very good, especially by staff at the UK institutions and by those teachers teaching at an equivalent level outside the colleges.

There is good teaching in New Zealand from the students I have seen, and it is not below the UK level.

(UK Teacher)

In my experience the New Zealanders are extremely well prepared and well taught, and I can't see any reason to worry about this.

(UK Teacher)

Probably the standard of teaching in New Zealand is as good as it is here.

(UK Professional)

Generally the standard of New Zealander I see in college productions and auditions is really high, particularly in terms of technique.

(UK Professional)

Young singers are coming over from New Zealand now much better prepared than in the past. The ones coming over are generally the best singers.

(UK Teacher)

New Zealanders tend to be really good performers and have generally got 'up and into it' quickly [in their college studies]. The New Zealanders also seem to have good open personalities.

(UK Teacher)

It is worthwhile considering though that the students who would be being referred to here would tend to be those who were accepted by the colleges, and would also tend to be the more 'memorable' students. Plus, some staff and teachers I interviewed said they did not always know which students were from New Zealand unless they were their own students.

Some comments made in the interviews that do not wholly agree with the above:

The New Zealand postgraduate students tend to have 'open minds' to try anything and to take risks but also are not as 'polished' as the UK graduates.

(UK Institution Staff Member)

They tend to be lacking in an awareness of the performance standard and in their range of repertoire. Languages are generally poor in New Zealand students. They tend to be lacking in the areas of sophistication, refinement and the emotional depth required in song repertoire. But the New Zealand students work really hard!

(UK Institution Staff Member)

They tend to be 'formalistic': getting the notes right – but shallow, working on the surface rather than the deeper level. There are often middle grade technical problems, sometimes ingrained tension patterns. Their knowledge of conversational [foreign] languages is generally poor. But their basic learning personality is well set up, and there is a thirst for knowledge.

(UK Institution Staff Member)

The quality of voice and technique are both high. But they need more understanding of languages and linguistic style - to be at home with a language. The use of the style of a foreign language is important, not just the pronunciation. There is also a lack of understanding and knowledge of musical style and of what a coach can do for them. Even the ones already in colleges take a while to pick up on this.

(UK Professional)

So there seems to be a consistent thread here to do with languages, and to do with interpretative aspects which could be expected to be covered by vocal coaches. Please find a further discussion on this subject in Part One Section 6.6.

There is also a contradiction in the comments on technical preparation. The differing comments can be seen to reflect the difference in the level of the actual students these people had come across.

My interpretation of this is as follows:

The most successful New Zealand students who have won major competitions in NZ are recognised by UK institutions as having good vocal technique. This can be interpreted as being due to their studies with the top teachers in New Zealand who have given them a really good technical grounding. Perhaps they have also had little in the way of really bad vocal faults or problems to deal with.

There is a band of less prominent students who have gained confidence and can still display their natural talent but arrive in UK with little in the way of technical knowledge. It seems to me that these students end up paying too high a price for technical training that they could have got in NZ. They need to be encouraged to find the right (or best) teacher for them within NZ in order to get the best training here before launching overseas.

If it turns out that these students have vocal problems that cannot be solved by local teachers then it is reasonable for them to try to find help with this overseas, but often they do not try hard enough here first. Perhaps these students need to be actively encouraged to make the most of the training available in NZ, and discouraged from going to the UK before doing so.

There is then a third group of students who have not studied singing within NZ for long or have found that they have not had success here. They then expect to receive tuition in the UK that is 'expert', thinking that it must be much better than that available in NZ. These students blame their lack of success in NZ on a lack of good teaching and also have unrealistic expectations of UK study. If they are accepted by a UK college they assume that they have the talent to proceed to a career, which may not be the case at all.

Re-education and reversal of these widely held beliefs is necessary in order to stop massive amounts of money being spent unwisely by these students, their families and their supporters. While these students are in the minority there are tragic stories of families who have re-mortgaged their homes and put their life savings into their son's or daughter's overseas education only to find that the

degree and training they end up with is no more use to them than a local music degree would have been and there is no likelihood of progression to a professional career. One can only imagine what the long term psychological cost may be to these students and their families.

And now, a very important rider to these assertions: there will always be exceptions to the rule. I personally know two singers alongside whom I studied who are now enjoying major careers, who, on the basis of the amount of talent they were judged to have when they started out as students could have missed out. I would not like to think that keen, energetic, musical, intelligent young students with the capability to learn are denied the opportunity to study, nor students who would otherwise have brought what they learned back home to New Zealand with them, ready to pass on their knowledge as teachers.

6. What is lacking in NZ studies? Recommended changes and additions to NZ courses and training and the implications for students

NZ training to provide more 'polishing' including language and diction training in general, English diction with respect to the NZ accent and vocal coaching; With addition of this training the length of overseas study could perhaps be reduced resulting in great financial savings

Apart from the technical training discussed above, could New Zealand's training provide more of the 'polishing' currently provided to NZ singers by the UK institutions? I believe so. The lack of vocal coaching generally made available to the students in tertiary institutions in NZ, as well as the tradition of having only one hour per week of singing lessons currently restricts this.

Language training

The need for more foreign language and diction training for New Zealand students has been identified by a number of interviewees including students themselves.

I wish I had had better training in languages before I left New Zealand. The UK students usually have fluency in at least one foreign language, and have often spent a year a year in another country such as France.

(UK Student From NZ)

None of them [the New Zealand students] seem to know how to sing in German!

(UK Teacher & Professional)

The New Zealand students' French is generally not great.

(UK Teacher)

English diction training

Alongside the foreign language diction areas already identified, a really important factor is that students need to be made aware of the NZ accent and how to adapt it to standard English as required in UK, USA and elsewhere.

It cannot be expected that overseas teachers and coaches will understand the idiosyncrasies of the NZ accent, nor how to effectively teach a New Zealand student how to modify their diction to bring it in line with standard English. This is something that should be addressed within New Zealand, otherwise students tend to end up frustrated and made to feel that they have 'problems' due to their accent, when in fact the real problem is likely to be that the overseas teacher does not have the background to work with a NZ accent.

The best way to do this would be to teach them English diction using IPA – the International Phonetics Alphabet – which is a universal system applicable to all languages they may encounter.

International Phonetics Alphabet (IPA) training

The IPA is a system of symbols used to denote specific speech sounds, both vowel sounds and consonants. It is used by singers and teachers of singing diction as a means of defining the sounds of a language quickly and easily as it makes it possible to relate the sounds of different languages to each other. It also helps a student to understand the sounds of their own language and appreciate the specific differences between accents.

It should be possible for students to leave NZ with a good understanding of IPA and the formation of language sounds so that they can more easily implement adjustments suggested by language coaches and teachers overseas.

Vocal coaching

In most of the institutions in the UK, the undergraduates have a regular weekly vocal repertoire coaching, ranging from 30 mins to 45 mins. At postgraduate level they would have at least 1 hour per week, and this is received alongside their weekly 90 mins of singing lesson time. Many New Zealand students do not have this form of training available to them as part of their studies, and only work with a vocal coach in a limited way before leaving New Zealand. Many have only worked with accompanists, and have had little or no time with a specialist vocal coach.

I didn't know what a coaching was. You need to learn how to deal with having input from many different coaches, and to decide what to listen to and what to let pass. I picked up some ideas on this from my colleagues.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The role of a vocal coach is discussed more fully under Part One Section 6.4, but here is one UK Professional's description:

What is the role of a vocal coach?

- They can give a different angle on a role from the singing teacher's
- They work on musical and character aspects
- They work on language aspects
- They can give an overview of a role
- A coach will expect a singer to "work that into the technique" rather than teaching them technique as such

(UK Professional)

New Zealand students need more exposure to this sort of training. If possible, the coaches they work with here should be capable of working on all the musical, interpretative, language, characterisation and vocal aspects that the best professional vocal coaches cover overseas. The required coaching skills and knowledge are available in New Zealand, if in short supply. There are few coaches here who are able to cover all these aspects in depth, but perhaps in this case students could work with one coach on musical and interpretative aspects and with another on language, or in some other workable combination.

As well as making better use of the NZ resident coaches available, perhaps more visits from overseas coaches may be able to supplement this exposure. There have recently been visits from respected international coaches Malcolm Martineau and Robin Bowman who gave masterclasses and individual coaching to young singers here, and perhaps it may be possible to have other coaches visit for extended periods.

There have been regular visits from overseas coaches, for example, for some years the UK based New Zealander David Harper has been teaching at the New Zealand National Singing School held in Napier every second summer. The training that students receive as part of the NZ Opera School summer programme in Wanganui and as Emerging Artists with NBR NZ Opera is also of great importance, as this is high level training that many of the best students who go on to the UK have had the benefit of. Indeed, a number of them commented on this as a major part of their preparation for overseas study.

This said, it seems to me that more of this level of preparation would provide an even better grounding for the students leaving for further training overseas.

Singing lesson hours

Undergraduate students in most of the colleges in the UK receive 90 mins of singing lessons per week, as well as regular vocal repertoire coaching and individual coaching on languages within tutorial type 'song classes'. New Zealand undergraduate students normally receive only a fraction of this training time, and all of these aspects have to be tackled by the singing teacher within a one hour weekly lesson. Because of this, substantially less repertoire and general teaching aspects can be covered during their training in New Zealand.

Implications for New Zealand students

Any expansion of the above training areas will benefit the students. Perhaps it could mean in future that NZ students training overseas would be able to spend less time (and money) in the colleges there.

The saving of one year's tuition fees and general living costs for each student would make a huge difference to the ease with which funding could be found overall, and perhaps mean that more students were able to train without the huge weight of the stress of raising funds year after year for their fees and costs. It could have a massive effect.

Currently a handful of NZ singers have gone through the training in the UK without this stress, due to receiving enough awards and scholarships or winning enough prize money within NZ to fund themselves. But even those who receive tuition fees scholarships from the colleges (which are generally partial scholarships), still have to find their living expenses.

Reducing the number of years of study could transform the experience of these students who are by no means less worthy of this funding.

If we are able to keep the students here longer and 'polish them up' more, perhaps they will be able to go directly into the advanced opera schools in the UK, instead of having to spend one or two 'preparation' postgraduate years, which is the way most of the NZ students are currently being trained by the UK institutions.

Even the top achievers over recent years have usually been accepted into the 'year 5' or even 'year 4' postgraduate levels at RCM, RAM and GSMD. They spend one or two years at this level, then move on into the opera school within the college. After that they have often gone on to still higher level 'finishing schools' such as NOS.

Being able to reduce the number of years at the colleges would save them, and the fundraising and giving public of New Zealand huge amounts of money.

7. *The need for prospective students to understand when, and at what level, it is appropriate for them to study overseas*

When a college does not offer a scholarship; Acceptance at a college does not guarantee career potential

Perhaps it may seem an obvious point that students need to understand when and at what level it is appropriate for them to study overseas, but it seems that not all students recognise or are well advised about their own readiness to pursue advanced study or a career.

If you are not getting a scholarship at a college you need to ask yourself why, and whether you are actually at a level to attend this sort of college.

(UK Professional)

Many New Zealand students applying to study at advanced institutions in the UK seem to hold the view that the best test of one's readiness to study at an institution is whether they accept you from the auditions.

This concept is flawed. Institutions have to base their decisions about international applicants on a short audition, very minimal personal experience of the student and some documents showing formal study and experience in their home country that few on the panel will have any first hand knowledge of or any realistic way of judging its value.

Above and beyond that, many stories abound of students having been accepted for study at institutions who really did not match up to the level of the other students, and who seem (in the perception of the story teller) to have been accepted merely to 'fill up the numbers' and ensure a healthy income from student fees. When overseas students pay so much for their courses and institutions are not limited in the numbers they can take, it is easy to see how this situation could be exploited, whether these stories are true or not.

8. *The very high levels of competition experienced by young singers in the UK, especially sopranos*

Extreme level of competition due to numbers of other young singers, particularly for sopranos; NZ singing work and experience is not recognised

The amount of competition young singers experience in the UK is extreme, and it is very hard for those still in New Zealand to imagine just how big the population is and how many other talented young singers migrate to the UK and will be competing against them for the same opportunities. For sopranos the situation is even tougher, as it always seems that there are more sopranos in the world than any other voice type – often a third to a half of the applicants for places in the institutions, training programmes and opera companies are sopranos.

Performing experience gained in New Zealand is not rated here in the UK.

(UK Professional)

Virtually all young singers going to the UK experience the recognised effect of changing from being a 'big fish in a little pond' to the reverse situation. This problem is probably made worse by the fact that the performing experience that singers have had within New Zealand is simply not recognised as meaningful by those in the UK, even though it may have been done at a high level and on a professional basis.

Population and competition issues are also discussed in Part Two Section 2 (Auditioning for institutions) and Part Two Section 5.

9. Visa and immigration issues for NZ students trying to make the transition to a career in the UK

Non-EU passport and no ancestry makes it very difficult for NZ singers in UK

Students with an EU passport will be well placed to come out of a UK institution and move into work. Those on a New Zealand passport who have British 'ancestry' rights, will also find it possible stay on and work in the UK after their studies, although if they want to do this on a permanent basis, there is still an extended immigration process to go through over a number of years.

For those without either an EU passport or ancestry rights it is so much more difficult. Perhaps so difficult that other options should be sought instead of trying to base one's study and career path in the UK. It is not impossible to gain residence, but the process is long and it is particularly difficult for singers to satisfy the requirements for continuous employment given the contractual nature of the singing profession.

See Part Two Section 6 for more discussion of these aspects.

7. Conclusions

1. The level of teaching in New Zealand, as judged by UK professionals with experience of New Zealand students, is probably better than generally acknowledged in New Zealand, and is comparable to that available in the UK, especially as far as technical aspects are concerned.
2. The best New Zealand students are on a par with the best UK students in terms of vocal talent and technical grounding.
3. The UK's reputation for excellent vocal coaching is still well deserved, and this continues to be one of the good reasons for students to undertake their finishing studies there.
4. Good singing teaching is available, but the standard of teaching is by no means uniform in the UK, and students are well advised to research the reputations of the teachers on offer and the success rates of their recent students, before committing to any particular teacher or school. They are also well advised to take a number of consultation lessons with the teachers they are interested in before committing to a particular teacher within a school.
5. As far as possible, students should arrive in the UK 'technically secure', rather than expecting to receive basic technical vocal training there, especially when they are studying at postgraduate level. Since New Zealand seems to be providing a comparable level of singing teaching to that available in the UK, this should be feasible for most students.
6. New Zealand students often arrive in the UK with more performance experience behind them than the local UK students.
7. New Zealand students tend to arrive in the UK with poor European language skills, and need more in the way of interpretative vocal coaching in order to attain the same level of skills as the locally trained postgraduate students have in these areas. They would also benefit from English diction training related specifically to the New Zealand accent.
8. Students would benefit greatly from spending time in the UK before taking up an offered place at a college or institution, or even better, before auditioning there, in order to get a feel for the culture, the institutions and the UK in general. Having singing lessons during this time with the teacher or teachers they are interested in studying with would also be very beneficial.
9. A singer who wants to make a career in the UK is well advised to undertake study at one of the colleges and/or higher level training institutions there, due to the need to build a profile in the UK scene in order to move into work. This is easier to do from London, but not impossible from other UK cities.
10. If a singer has no right to work in the UK, then perhaps there is little point in studying there, as the difficulties involved in obtaining long term work visas are so great for those without any ancestry or EU nationality rights.

11. In the UK, competition for work and study places is extreme, and it is even harder for sopranos, as this voice type seems to always be in more plentiful supply. Also, a singer's New Zealand professional experience counts for little in the UK, which heightens the difficulty for a young New Zealander to compete for work against others there.
12. It is a major undertaking, both financially and personally, for a young New Zealand singer to try to make a career in the UK, so prospective students need to get independent advice on their readiness to study, especially if a UK college accepts them without offering a scholarship.

8. Recommendations

1. *Coordination and cohesion*

This series of recommendations addresses the reality that, due to New Zealand's small size and inevitably limited resources, we have to be extremely efficient and well-coordinated in order to ensure that resources are allocated in such a way as to maximise the prospects of international success for young singers.

Firstly we need to gather accurate and reliable information, and find appropriate means to distribute it:

Recommendation 1.1:

That ongoing research be carried out, at least biennially, into the standards and offerings of institutions in the UK and other countries regarded as centres of excellence for the professional training of classical singers.

Recommendation 1.2:

That an information and guidance service be established in New Zealand to provide information and to help students in their preparations and decision making with respect to overseas study, passing on the findings of the ongoing research and establishing a central contact point for students, teachers and overseas institutions.

Secondly we need to forge links between all major institutions in New Zealand involved in supporting and training young singers, with a view to developing a national consensus on priorities and strategies to best support singers with professional potential.

Recommendation 1.3:

That discussion take place between all the organisations within New Zealand that are involved in awarding funding grants and fostering or providing advanced study for young New Zealand singers, with the aim of achieving consensus on national priorities and strategies for the support and training of singers.

2. *Improved training support in New Zealand*

These recommendations address fundamental training deficiencies identified in the report, which hamper the prospects of success for young New Zealanders studying in the UK.

Vocal coaching

New Zealand students tend to have had little vocal coaching within New Zealand. If they were to have more of this within New Zealand they would arrive more fully prepared as singers and also be able to make better use of their time with vocal coaches in their overseas courses.

Recommendation 2.1:

That strategies be developed to improve substantially the quality and quantity of high level specialist vocal coaching available to student singers in New Zealand.

Recommendation 2.2:

That strategies be developed for the development of vocal coaching practice in New Zealand through support, training and mentoring of potential vocal coaches.

Language training and English diction

New Zealand students will always lack the opportunity to 'pop across to the continent' and experience the European languages in their native environment in the way that the UK students can. New Zealand singers also grow up speaking in an accent which has specific attributes that are quite foreign to UK teachers and coaches, so they need to have a good understanding of English diction and how it relates specifically to the 'Kiwi' accent, as well as more knowledge of French, Italian and German language and lyric diction.

Recommendation 2.3:

That strategies be developed for the improvement of the amount and levels of language and lyric diction training available to singers within New Zealand, both within existing institutions and schools, and specialist training courses that focus on these aspects, so that higher levels of training in English diction and European languages and diction are available.

PART TWO: GUIDE FOR SINGERS AND TEACHERS

In this section I have included information I found out about study and career paths in the UK which is more detailed and specific and which will I hope be of use in guiding young singers and their teachers. Hence I have addressed this section directly to the students themselves.

1. Planning a study and career path

- The importance of planning your study path and career progression
- When to go overseas to study
- What qualifications should you plan to work towards in the UK?
- How important is where you study, who you study and coach with, and at what stage

The importance of planning your study path and career progression

Planning a study path is always going to be problematic, since as a young student you are presented with so many possibilities in terms of study options. Most of these options involve applications and auditions, the outcome of which seem to be outside of your control. This may make it seem impossible to 'plan' your studies, as you do not know until you apply which institutions or teachers will accept you.

However, despite this difficulty, it is important that you maintain a sense of direction. You need to know what it is you are aiming for in the long term and plan for alternatives in the event that your first choice of study does not come through.

It is very important when auditioning for advanced study to realise that you are 'auditioning' the school as much as they are auditioning you.

If you recognise this, and you are considering all your options at all times, you are in a much better position to make good choices and the best use of the options available.

A study plan needs to be linked to your career aims, if that is what you are hoping for in the long term. One aspect of this planning is in taking into account your 'right to work' (visa) options when choosing which country to study in. (See more discussion of this in Part Two Section 6 below.)

Your study plan needs to address other issues such as funding availability, your interest in particular teachers or teaching styles, your interest in particular musical styles, whether you have family living nearby and so on.

If you choose to do your advanced overseas study in a country in which you have no right to work afterwards, your likelihood of making a transition into a career will be very much limited by this. You may find yourself forced to pursue your career in another country entirely, where no one has heard you perform before,

which makes it much more difficult to get started in a career, or to go through a long and difficult process to obtain residence in the country you chose.

These factors are all interdependent, and you should consider your whole path to a career and further, when making your initial decisions about where to audition. There are discussions of related factors which will affect these decisions throughout this document.

When to go overseas to study

There can be no hard and fast rules for this, and it will depend on each individual, but it is really important to obtain advice from qualified people in the field before embarking on this. Talk to your teacher, arrange to sing for professional singers, conductors and the like and discuss your readiness for overseas study with them. Get as many opinions about this as you can, and listen hard to what these experts have to say. Try to talk to people with experience of the current scene overseas, particularly in the countries you are considering.

Don't fall into the traps that many have before such as:

- expecting to go overseas to 'learn how to sing' or to set yourself up with a good basic technique – you should be making use of the very good teaching available in New Zealand to gain this before going on to overseas study
- thinking that just because you have been accepted by an eminent overseas institution this automatically means you have 'career potential' – if you have been accepted without any offer of a scholarship, you may in fact be there simply to help fund the institution with your overseas student fees

Most New Zealand students go overseas for their postgraduate study only. Given the level of the tuition fees overseas, this is understandable, and since there is good training available at undergraduate level in New Zealand it makes sense to make use of it here.

When trying to decide if you are ready, look hard at what the institutions are offering and try to get a sense of the level they will expect from applicants auditioning. Students accepted for postgraduate study in the UK have generally already completed four years of vocal study at a conservatoire or university. This is not usually a requirement for applicants, but it gives an idea of the level of preparation and maturity expected. If you look at the level of other NZ students who have been accepted recently for equivalent overseas study you can get a sense of the level you should be at.

It is certainly obvious from looking at the trends of the past few years that the students who have been successful in a number of major singing competitions within New Zealand tend to be the ones who are successful in advanced overseas studies and are more likely to move on to a subsequent career path.

There are always exceptions to the rule however, and there are a number of examples of NZ singers currently making their way in respectable international careers who did not comply with the above guidelines – those who did not complete university studies in voice in NZ or who were accepted for study without any scholarship. Nevertheless these are good indicators of your likelihood of success, and give you an idea of where you stand.

Should you choose to continue anyway, knowing that you have not had the same level of success or training here, at least you are doing so with open eyes and are aware that the odds are potentially stacked against you.

Another thing to remember in this case is that there are many ways you may use your knowledge in the future – and perhaps having a major solo career will not be one of them – but other more realistic outcomes are just as valid. The growth and experience you have as a student can be worth the effort in itself.

Some other potential career options are discussed in the section on 'Career aspects in general' (Part Two Section 8).

Another aspect to consider is whether you are really ready in terms of your self confidence and motivation. Here is a comment from a former student on this:

I feel in hindsight that I was not ready to go to the UK when I did and I made the wrong decision to go, in that I was not personally self confident about my singing for the right sort of reasons. If I had been judging my own performance level instead of relying on others for my self esteem about my singing, then I would have been better able to cope with the pressures I encountered during my studies in the UK.

(Former UK student)

To give an idea of the average age of postgraduate students in the UK institutions, here are some very approximate observations on the age of students. Currently at the colleges the postgraduate students tend to be around 23 years old or older. Students on the opera courses at the colleges are somewhat older and may be between 24 to 30 years old when they apply, nearly a year before they actually commence on the course.

At the 'finishing schools' the average ages are higher, as one would expect. The average age of students at the National Opera Studio is currently about 27, and those accepted are generally not younger than 24. The age of applicants granted an audition for the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera is generally about 28 years old, even though the spread of ages of those applying for an audition is very wide.

What qualifications might you study for in the UK?

As outlined above, most of the New Zealand students who go to the UK are there for postgraduate study. There are various degree possibilities including Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), Master of Music (MMus), Artist Diploma and so forth available at the institutions in various differing forms, but generally only the

colleges offer degrees – the finishing schools tend not to have any qualifications to award.

For more detailed information on the degrees available you will need to consult the websites and prospectuses of the various colleges. In order to give great flexibility, some colleges have a complex array of postgraduate qualifications available, and it can be a daunting task trying to work out what they all consist of. This is where I may be able to give some help to individual students when they are ready to plan their studies, and to use my contacts with the institutions to help them gain more understanding of the options available.

An explanation of how the Master of Music programmes in the UK relate to those in New Zealand follows.

A unique feature of the current study scene in the UK is the difference in requirements for Masters study compared with other countries, including NZ. To explain: firstly, in the UK a Masters degree is supposed to take one year of full time study only, not two years as in a number of other countries. Plus, a UK Masters degree is traditionally a degree involving a substantial amount of theoretical study and written research work.

A few institutions are moving towards offering Masters for their practically focused postgraduate opera programmes and also offer other more practically oriented Masters degrees in Performance. For example, RSAMD offers not one but two Masters as the qualifications you will gain from their opera school programme. As I understand it, RCM are also in the process of finalising the structure of a Masters degree that is intended to be a more practical degree: the so-called 'integrated Masters' which also involves a certain amount of research type written work. GSMD also offers a Masters degree which comprises solely recital work and they also have various other forms of Masters programmes.

Another unusual feature of the UK study scene is that one seems to be able to hold or work towards more than one Masters degree in a performance singing related subject, and therefore students coming from New Zealand already holding a Master of Music in Performance Singing may be able to take on study towards another Masters in singing or opera when they reach the UK.

As I understand it, this is in direct contrast with the accepted rules in NZ, and other countries such as Germany, where once one has gained a Master of Music in one discipline you cannot gain another in a related discipline. I found this surprising, and it may be helpful for a number of NZ students to know about this aspect as they are planning their studies.

Another reason which may make studying for a Masters degree as opposed to a PGDip degree a pertinent consideration for a young NZ singer is the weight given to such degrees by UK immigration when considering applications for the right to work and reside in the UK after completion of studies under the 'points' system. Please refer to the section on visas and immigration on how to find more information on this (Part Two Section 6).

How important is where you study, who you study and coach with, and at what stage?

Most professional singers would probably say these points were crucial to their success. However, there are no 'blueprints' for success in this area, and every student will have different requirements in terms of teaching and learning.

Here are some points to consider, based on my observations and information gathered in the UK:

- students in the major London conservatories are exposed continually to the eyes and ears of potential employers or their 'spotters' – almost all performances are likely to be heard by someone who will pass on an opinion about your performance
- students outside of London also get a certain amount of this exposure, but generally less – this can be an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on whether you are ready for such exposure – perhaps it may be better to spend time away from this exposure at first, while you polish up aspects of your technique or performance
- studying in a country and location where you have the right to work after you finish will help in your career transition
- studying with the best singing teacher for you at each stage of your development is crucial, as is obtaining ongoing feedback about your singing from a teacher or coach whose judgement you trust
- exposure to top vocal coaches as you develop is also crucial from the point of view of learning, but also may be important in helping with your transition to work, as coaches who move between different training and working organisations often are in the position to recommend young singers for work opportunities

2. Studying singing in the UK

- Deciding where to study – points to consider when choosing an institution
- Key points of difference between the major institutions providing postgraduate singing study in the UK
- Auditioning for institutions: what the panel are looking for, asking for feedback, how much competition is there?
- When and how to choose a teacher
- When alternative options for study might be appropriate

Deciding where to study – points to consider when choosing an institution

The first consideration is to make sure you will be getting 'value for money' if you do decide to study at a college – make sure you will be able to get what you want out of it. If not, it may be more sensible to study privately.

When choosing a college you need to know what you need from it.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The most important decision is the teacher, then the school.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The first institution I auditioned for was the one I was most interested in, and when I was offered a place right there on the day I accepted it. I would advise students against doing this now. I didn't do the other auditions I had arranged but I realise now that I should have.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

**You should always audition for more than one
institution – not just your first choice!**

If you have some particular technical aspects that need working on, or are in need of more 'polishing' musically, perhaps a good choice is to find a place 'out of the limelight' where you can work on these aspects. It may be sensible not to expose yourself too soon to the stress and risk involved in performing publicly within the London scene, even within a college.

That is to say, if you feel you need time to get ready before appearing on the scene, then good first options may be going into a college situation where you are not going to perform in the main opera productions, or one of the college or training institutions that are outside of the London area but still provide the high level training that you require.

The risk you take by appearing in a public arena in which you will be evaluated (such as a role in an opera production at one of the main London colleges) is that of creating an all important 'first impression' that is not optimum, and that you then have to spend years erasing from the minds and ears of the agents and employers who heard it.

In case you think I am being hard here and want to put extra pressure on the young singers performing in these public situations, I simply want to make it clear how these things work. It does not mean that you have to be 'perfect' before performing publicly in London – but you should be confident in the knowledge that you personally are ready to begin this period of exposure: vocally, musically and technically.

They do need to go to college, but if they're having to pay for it then it would be better to take a year to come here, earn some money, and have private lessons and coachings and do some language courses. Then they could choose which college they would like to go to having observed what happens there.

(UK Professional)

Another really important aspect to plan for is giving yourself time to 'settle in' to living in a different country, as it will take quite some time to do so, even if you feel that you know a lot about it – say from all the British television programmes you've seen! A good idea may be to plan to come to the UK to stay for a little while, either coming a few months early before taking up your place at a college,

or even spending some time here before you audition for the schools, perhaps a few weeks, some months, or even a year, as suggested above.

During this time you would get to know the place and probably would end up feeling more comfortable about moving there, plus, you would have time to visit the institutions you are thinking of auditioning for, perhaps go to some student performances and meet some of the students already there. By doing this you would have a much better idea of the schools you are considering studying at, and you may be able to have lessons with the teacher or teachers you are interested in studying with.

Key points of difference between the major institutions providing postgraduate singing study in the UK

This section gives a 'grab bag' of features of the different colleges and higher level institutions that I felt were outstanding 'points of difference'. The information here is the distillation of my impressions from visiting the colleges, having discussions with students and recent graduates, interviews with the heads of departments and directors of the institutions, and professionals on the field, as well as information found in the various prospectuses.

There will inevitably be features I have missed out, and this is merely intended as a starting point for students who are considering advanced study in the UK. There are a number of excellent features which are offered by all of the institutions which I did not include here as I was looking particularly for points of difference.

I recommend a thorough perusal of the prospectuses and websites of the institutions as this is necessary in order to begin to understand what is available in these courses.

Firstly the five main colleges:

Guildhall School of Music and Drama - London

- A variety of PGDip and Masters degree programmes to choose from including MMP in which students arrange assessed recitals
- Two year Opera Course as well as postgraduate vocal studies courses
- Reputation for supportive attitude from staff in general
- Opportunities to take in the London professional scene
- Opportunities for performances to be heard by potential employers
- 'Opera Associate' programme - gives postgraduate students not on opera course some training in operatic skills and chance to sing in opera chorus
- Reputation for a very good standard of vocal coaches
- Reputation for innovation in developing alternative projects for training & experience

Royal Academy of Music - London

- MMus and PGDip in vocal studies, plus opera course giving PGDip
- Two year opera course (Royal Academy Opera) as well as postgraduate vocal studies courses
- Reputation for good collegial support between students
- Opportunities to take in the London professional scene
- Opportunities for performances to be heard by potential employers
- Housed in a large "character" historical building
- Building has spacious rooms with good light and sunshine
- Reputation for high standard of vocal coaches and teachers

Royal College of Music - London

- PGDip, MMus, PGDip leading to 'integrated' MMus, plus opera course giving Artist Diploma in Opera Studies
- Two year opera course (Benjamin Britten International Opera School) as well as postgraduate vocal studies courses
- Reputation as an excellent 'platform' from which to be heard by potential employers
- Opportunities to take in the London professional scene
- Reputation for a competitive atmosphere among postgraduate students
- Purpose-built opera theatre plus a number of large performing spaces
- Housed in a large "character" historical building
- Very high level of competition for places
- The most popular school for New Zealand students in recent years
- Reputation for very high standard of vocal coaches with a number from the Royal Opera

Royal Northern College of Music - Manchester

- PGDip and MMus degrees
- No separate opera course - all postgraduates are on the same course
- Opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate students to audition for opera roles
- Small numbers of postgraduate students
- Opportunity to be involved in the Opera North Young Artist Scheme – collaboration between the RNCM and Opera North
- Modern, spacious well-designed facilities including large purpose-built theatre spaces
- Modern Halls of Residence next door to the college
- Tuition fees somewhat lower than London colleges
- Accommodation costs in Manchester generally lower than London
- Team teaching system - gives exposure to more than one teacher and different teaching styles

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama - Glasgow

- PGDip, MMus, including MMus(Opera) and Masters in Opera
- Two year professionally focused opera course with a reputation for having high expectations of the students on the course
- Reputation for good collegial atmosphere among staff
- Excellent facilities - modern and well-designed buildings
- Purpose-built opera theatre and facilities in the Alexander Gibson Opera School building
- Tuition fees substantially lower than other colleges
- Accommodation costs generally substantially lower than London
- Reputation for very good standard of vocal teaching

Then the 'finishing school' training programmes:

Cardiff International Academy of Voice - Cardiff

- High level finishing course aimed at singers who are on the verge of the launching their career
- Professionally focused one year course
- Small numbers of trainees on the course
- Training on musical aspects is emphasised
- A small number of performances - the focus is on high level musical preparation rather than performance
- Repertoire coaching from regular and visiting coaches
- Regular singing lessons from the school's director, supplemented by lessons from visiting teachers
- Opportunities to work with many different professional coaches and artists of the highest quality

National Opera Studio - London

- High-level finishing course designed as a stepping stone between the music colleges and the main UK opera companies
- Professionally focused one year opera course - the studio aims to produce graduates who will go on to work for the UK opera companies
- Only 12 singers are taken each year
- High level of competition for places
- Only one place available for non-EU students each year through the auditions
- The training is based on repertoire and role coaching, opera ensemble performances and training in related skills
- Singing lessons are not funded as part of the course
- Opportunities to work with many different professional coaches of the highest quality

Jette Parker Young Artists Programme - Royal Opera - London

- Very high level young artist programme based at the Royal Opera Covent Garden
- Trainees are taken on for two years at a time
- There are only approximately eight singers on the programme at a time
- Extremely high level of competition for a small number of places
- Trainees become salaried company members and work at the Royal Opera full-time
- Trainees perform small roles and cover larger roles in the main house as well as receiving a number of other performance opportunities
- The programme is flexible and tailored to individual needs and private voice lessons with approved teachers are funded
- The training is based on individual coaching in repertoire and related skills from Royal Opera music staff and other coaches
- Opportunities to work with professional vocal coaches of the highest quality (Royal Opera music staff)

Auditioning for institutions: what the panel are looking for, asking for feedback, how much competition is there?

Details of audition requirements can be found in the institution prospectuses and online on their websites. The five main colleges all hold their auditions in November and December for study commencing in the following September whereas the 'finishing school' training programmes all work on different schedules.

Some of the institutions will accept a video or audio recording in place of a live audition, but this is not something they advise, as it is so much harder to judge the quality of a performance from a recording. It also seems that generally they will not consider you for a scholarship unless you audition in person.

A number of the colleges process their applications through a website called CUKAS, the UK Conservatories Admission Service. Currently the Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama work through CUKAS. The CUKAS website applications open online on 1st July.

The Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama handle their own applications and application forms can be downloaded from their own websites.

The application closing date for most of the colleges is in early October, for the November-December auditions period. (NB Always check for the actual dates on the individual college websites or CUKAS).

If you are at all uncertain about whether you may be ready for the opera course at a college, make sure you also audition for the postgraduate (non-opera) vocal studies, or have ticked the relevant box on the application form to be considered for both. This keeps your options open.

Advice I heard about auditioning for institutions included the following comments made by various staff members in the interviews:

You should audition with standard rep, not unusual pieces. When someone presents something unusual it seems like they are hiding something, and nine times out of ten they are. Plus, you should always bring a Mozart aria when auditioning. Make sure you dress nicely, as it makes a difference when the panel can see you have made an effort.

(UK Institution Teacher)

For college auditions sing repertoire that you could be put into right now. Applicants often present rep that is too big or heavy for them. Don't present pieces that are too unusual as the panel can't judge them properly.

(UK Institution Teacher)

Do not include pieces by Menotti – Menotti[’s music] is not liked in the UK.

(UK Institution Teacher)

We are looking for genuine professional potential. The main thing is the voice. Even if they have no formal qualifications then 'prior experience' can sometimes be acceptable as a pre-requisite for the postgraduate courses. A formal musical training may in fact count against them if they don't show the positive effects of that training.

(UK Institution Staff Member)

Knowledge of the accepted decorum for auditioning and style of presentation in this situation is regarded as part of the audition.

(UK Institution Staff Member)

If you are unsuccessful in an audition for a college, you may be able to get some feedback about why, which will help you to work out what to do next. Some colleges give feedback during the interview as part of the audition process. All of the colleges I visited said that if asked they would give feedback – either verbal feedback in the interview or a specially written report or the comments sheet written during the audition would be available.

What about the numbers of singers auditioning? This varies a great deal between the different colleges, but in all cases there are always far more singers auditioning than there are places available.

For example, at the Royal College of Music, which seems to be one of the more popular institutions in terms of the numbers applying, approximately 550 singers audition each year for vocal studies. Of this number, about 180 are applying for undergraduate and the other 370 are applying for the various postgraduate courses. There are only approximately 6-8 first year undergraduate places and 25-30 postgraduate/opera places available each year. This means there is only an 8% success rate for entry into postgraduate vocal studies and opera.

In other colleges where the figures for auditions and acceptance were given to me, the success rates were similar, generally around 10%, and a lower success rate was in evidence at the 'finishing school' programmes.

The number of sopranos auditioning for places is always higher than other voice types, creating stiffer competition. Often as many as half the applicants are sopranos. Some of the courses, in particular the opera courses, say they aim for 'a good mix' of voice types in order to be able to cast their productions, so this will always make it more difficult for sopranos in these situations.

All young singers going overseas to study are likely to feel the effects of moving from being the 'big fish in a little pond' to the 'little fish in a big pond'. It may be hard simply to deal with studying in a school where there is competition for every single performance opportunity. Also, some of the colleges have a reputation for a very competitive atmosphere existing between the students, and there being less in the way of 'collegial support' than you may be used to coming from New Zealand. It is important that you seek out help and support if you are having problems dealing with this. For more on this please see 'Making the best use of setbacks' in Part Two Section 5.

Auditioning for institutions is similar to auditioning anywhere, except that in an institution the panel will be slightly more interested in your potential as opposed to your current level. For more advice on auditioning see the 'Auditions in general' section later in the report.

When and how to choose a teacher

The teacher had been recommended by the Head of Department and another student so I only had one consultation lesson and didn't really question the choice. Now I feel quite differently – I would consider my options much more carefully.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

When you are accepted as a student by an institution, you should be informed of their policy on consultation lessons, and how the decision about whom you will study with will be made. Most institutions in the UK make provision for you to have consultation lessons. Some will expect you to pay for these, perhaps at a reduced rate, others provide a certain number for free and you can then ask to have more and pay for them yourself.

A consultation lesson is a way for you as the student to get some idea of a teacher's personality, their personal teaching style, what they have to offer you as a student and to form an idea of whether you think you would get on well with that teacher. It is also a time when the teacher is able to form similar opinions about how well they feel they would work with you in lessons – which is just as important to your success as a student.

You should always have consultation lessons with a number of teachers – not just your first choice!

In some cases, particularly where a teacher is very popular, even if you decide after your consultation lessons that you would prefer to study with that teacher, you may not be able to do so, due to the numbers of students and a limited number of free spaces being available.

Most vocal departments will be faced with this situation at times, and an equitable solution will need to be negotiated. Where a popular teacher has for example only four spaces and eight students who wish to study with them, they may indicate which students they would prefer to work with, and this is where the consultation lessons will influence their choices. So if you have not taken a consultation lesson and the teacher therefore knows little about you then they may put someone they have met ahead of you on the list.

In order to put yourself in the position of being placed with your preferred teacher or teachers, you need to take a consultation lesson with them, so that they know who you are.

Students who do not take any consultation lessons, or who do not state any preferences for particular teachers, are liable to end up being placed with the least popular teacher.

This may be an unfortunate fact but it is one which tends to apply to all institutions where there is a choice of tutors.

Also, if you miss out because of lack of spaces, it could be an indication that the teacher does not feel they can help you so well as they can help the others, so going to learn from another teacher could be an advantage. Generally the Head of Vocal Studies will be involved in resolving these issues, so if you have any problems with this aspect, you should make contact with them.

When alternative options for study might be appropriate

If you are not able to study at one of the colleges or decide that you do not want to, there are various other options.

Private study with a singing teacher is one obvious one, and it is possible to build a 'programme' for yourself by also working regularly with a vocal coach, and attending night classes and short summer courses as they are available. Singers who have taken this path have sometimes found that they have difficulty in earning enough income to cover all the expenses involved, and you can end up working so hard and such long hours that you do not have time to practise.

So I think this is really only a sensible option if you are able to pick up employment in a field for which the remuneration is pretty high, or your costs are offset in some other way – if you do not have to pay for your accommodation, for example, because you are staying with family.

Free performances and classes: as well as the wealth of professional and student performances it is possible to attend, there are many opportunities that can be taken up for free that will provide you with related training and experience.

The following are all generally free to attend: concerts and masterclasses at the Royal Academy of Music (the vocal masterclasses generally seem to be on a Tuesday afternoon), the Royal College of Music (vocal masterclasses every Wednesday afternoon) Royal Opera House (free lunchtime concerts on most Mondays in the Crush Room – call the box office to secure a ticket at 10am).

This is just a small sample of free events, and more information will be readily available on the internet at the websites of the institutions concerned.

3. Funding your study

- Current costs of tuition and living costs in the UK
- Evidence of adequate funding
- Overseas fees versus 'UK and EU' fees
- Scholarships from institutions – obtaining a scholarship, how scholarship recipients are chosen
- Ongoing funding & help with 'maintenance'
- Grants and sponsorship

Current costs of tuition and living costs in the UK

Tuition fees change regularly from year to year and websites and prospectuses of the various institutions should be referred to for the exact costs. Information on various handbooks and websites you can use to find information about living costs are found in Part Two Section 4 (Living in the UK). The data given in this document is based on information available in June 2007.

To give some idea of the tuition costs per annum for foreign students in the five main colleges:

- The three main London colleges are currently charging foreign students approximately £14,500-£15,000 (approx NZD\$37,000-\$45,000) for tuition fees
- At RNCM the tuition fees are somewhat lower than in London at £13,600 (approx NZD\$35,000-\$40,000)
- The cost of tuition at RSAMD is substantially lower than all of these at £10,950 (approx NZD\$28,000-\$33,000)

As mentioned earlier in this document, the living costs for students in the UK are currently estimated by the institutions as being somewhere in the range of £9,000-£10,000 per annum (approx NZD\$23,000-\$30,000), with costs in London being somewhat higher than those elsewhere. It seems that most of the students currently studying in the UK have found that the living costs published by the institutions generally gave a good estimate of the actual costs encountered.

Evidence of adequate funding

If you do not have a UK or European Union passport you will need a student visa to enter the UK. Students who have been accepted by one of the eight main colleges and training institutions discussed in this report will usually qualify automatically for a student visa, but it is still necessary to apply for one. You should apply for a 'multiple-entry visa' so that you can enter and leave the UK during your studies without having to re-apply for a new visa.

When you apply for the student visa, you will need the acceptance letter which confirms that you have been accepted for a place at the institution. Plus you will need to show that you 'are able to pay for your course and meet your accommodation and maintenance costs without taking a job or claiming social benefit money from the UK government.' This quote comes from the *RAM International Students' Handbook* but applies equally to all institutions.

Overseas fees versus 'UK and EU' fees

In order for a student to be eligible to pay the much lower local (UK and EU) tuition fee rates, they must have "lived continuously in the UK or other European Union member state for purposes other than full time education for at least three years prior to the September in the year in which the course starts." "In addition, applicants must have permanent settled status in the UK or other EU member state." (These quotes are from the RNCM Prospectus 08/09, although the same rule seems to apply for all the UK institutions).

In other words, even if you have British nationality, or nationality from another European Union member state, you will have to have actually lived (i.e. been legally resident) in an EU country for the three years prior to starting your studies there. This situation will not apply to many New Zealand students, but if it does, it means you will be eligible to pay the much lower 'local' tuition fees rather than the overseas rate.

Scholarships from institutions – obtaining a scholarship or bursary, how entrance scholarship recipients are chosen

All the major institutions I visited, including the colleges and the higher level training programmes, have access to a certain amount of funding for students in the form of scholarships. This funding is distributed and decisions are made about it in different ways, but all of them have funding available for students they feel are worthy and in need of assistance.

Some of the institutions have policies of not providing full fees scholarships, but it seems that in practice even these policies can be flexible. 'Entrance scholarships' which are to cover tuition fees, are awarded on the basis of the auditions. Remember that even if you receive a full or part scholarship for tuition fees you will still have to find your living costs.

Some of the colleges also have 'bursaries' or 'study awards' available that are designed to help with living costs. You will have to apply for these separately.

(See also 'help with maintenance' below). Some bursaries may come with requirements to undertake some work – as an example, this is a quote from the British Council website listing for RNCM bursaries:

Postgraduate and overseas (i.e. non-EU) applicants to the College [RNCM] may apply for Bursaries towards the cost of fees and maintenance. However, these awards are strictly limited in number and are made on the basis of need and merit. In return, students are expected to undertake directed activities for the benefit of the College.

(British Council website scholarships database: June 2007)

The colleges are inevitably 'in competition' with each other for the best students auditioning for postgraduate training in any one year. This has meant that the colleges have started to become more pro-active in offering entrance scholarships to the students they are interested in, and some will now do this 'on the spot' in the audition or interview, while others will contact the singer on the same day by phone.

This has also led to some applicants being in the position of potentially 'negotiating' for scholarship money by coming back to each institution and asking them to 'match or better' the offer of the other institutions. This is unfortunate, as many young singers will have had no experience of such negotiations and will feel confident in doing so, plus it is a source of grief for the institutions, who are trying to balance their budget while bringing in the good students. As this all happens whilst the staff are continuing their 'normal' work, any extension of the process adds to their workload. Understandably, most institutions will try to avoid being drawn into such negotiations by a student, however good they may be.

If you are in the position of being able to negotiate for a higher scholarship in this way, you are fortunate. This also means that you have auditioned for more than one institution, which is always a sensible plan in my view, as apart from the scholarship aspect, it means you have had an impression of more than one college and are making a more informed decision about your future.

If, for example, you have been offered a partial scholarship from one institution but none from the one you would prefer to attend, this may give you the opportunity to negotiate a scholarship of similar or greater value from the one you prefer.

I will not go into aspects of negotiation here – many books have been written about the subject. The only advice I would like to give here is to always remember that if you threaten not to take up an offered place without an increase in scholarship, you may find you are forced to walk away from that opportunity. The college in question may refuse to increase the scholarship, or could even retract the offer of a place. So make sure you know what you are prepared to do and what your options are should you not succeed in the negotiations.

It is important to realise when you are accepting an offer of a scholarship that most of these will be offered for one year only. This is the policy of most

institutions with respect to so-called 'entrance scholarships'. Before accepting a scholarship, you should ask how long the scholarship is offered for, and ask for an indication, preferably in writing, if they tell you it is being offered for longer than one year of study. If you do not get this written indication but only a verbal indication, this is not unusual, however the continuation of the scholarship will only be likely, not assured. See the next section for more information on ongoing funding.

The burning question from many is "Who gets the scholarships – what are the panels looking for?"

Entrance scholarships (for tuition fees only) are given out on the basis of the panel's impressions of the student's audition for entry to the college. The panel may have pre-selected in their minds some potential recipients on the basis of their application documents, but the decision itself is made from the audition. In several institutions the panel grades each audition with a % mark and those applicants above a certain grade are then considered for a scholarship.

In some institutions the scholarship may be offered to the student very soon after the audition has taken place - even on the same day. In others, the scholarship offers will be made only after all the applicants have been heard.

In some cases, the need for certain voice types in a department may influence the decision of the scholarships panel. But most of the staff I spoke to tended to list similar attributes as the ones they look for in potential students and in scholarship recipients.

Here are a selection of comments from the Heads of Vocal Studies at various different UK institutions about what they are looking for in their auditions:

- We are looking for genuine professional potential.
- The main thing is the voice.
- In auditions we are judging applicants on their voice, plus brains, language and musicianship. We are not judging them on the basis of their previous study.
- I look for 'voice plus' or 'plus voice'.
- We look for quality of voice, professional potential, and the sense of an individual artist, with something to say through music.

Ongoing funding from institutions & help with 'maintenance'

As noted above, most entrance scholarships for the UK institutions are not guaranteed for the second year of study. As the Creative New Zealand grants for postgraduate overseas study are also usually available for only one year, this limits the funding options and is a cause of angst and stress for many postgraduate students.

Most colleges have some system for helping students having problems with day to day living costs during the year – generally referred to as 'help with maintenance'. Find out what might be available (ask your college's student

support staff) before your financial situation gets to a critical point, and make sure you know what to do when and if it does.

A college will be more likely to continue your scholarship into the next year if you are seen to be working hard and achieving success in your studies. You will also need to show that there is a 'need' for this funding, and that you have tried to obtain funding from other sources (such as within New Zealand) but have not been able to find enough. You will also need to apply specifically for scholarship funding for the next year during the current year of study – perhaps as early as January in the previous year.

Always being diligent in your studies, displaying a positive and focused attitude, turning up on time and attending all relevant classes, and doing the extra work to make sure you learn repertoire on time, will all be aspects expected of a scholarship student. A successful performance in a school concert and/or a good 'review' in a major paper will also count when decisions are being made about which scholarships will be continued and at what level.

Remember that most student visas will allow you to work for up to 20 hours per week during term time and full time during vacation time so you may be able to supplement your income in this way. But working for 20 hours in a low paying job will seriously affect your ability to study well, and may still not provide you with the income you need.

There is no point in working part-time while studying as it inevitably means you can't do your studies justice.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

If you must work while studying always look for work that is well paid. Teaching singing or another instrument is a good option, and there are organisations in the UK which will employ you to do this teaching and provide the premises and administration as well. The college will probably have contacts with these sorts of organisations, or other employment opportunities. You can prepare for this while still in New Zealand by making sure you have skills that equip you for work that is both well paid and will not exhaust you.

Grants and sponsorship

Students applying to Creative New Zealand for funding for advanced overseas study (or anything else) should always contact the arts adviser for advice on their application before it is completed. The website address for Creative New Zealand can be found in the 'Useful Websites' section at the end of the report. The Music Programme Adviser is currently Gretchen La Roche, and her email address is: gretchenl@creativenz.govt.nz

This advice is available to you for free, and it is there to help ensure that all the bases have been covered in your application. This can mean the difference between a successful application and one that is turned down.

RSAMD's 'Guide for International Students' has a section giving advice on finding sponsors and grants (see Bibliography).

The British Council website gives information about possible grants available for New Zealand students. For example, I found a grant listed there which is available under the Scottish 'Fresh Talent' scheme which gives funds for one Masters student per year from New Zealand to study in Scotland, and this grant applies to studies in the performing arts.

When it comes to sponsors, you just need to know who to approach and then keep the contact up. You can offer to sing at a function or do a special concert for them as thanks for their sponsorship.

(UK Student from NZ)

The key to fundraising is keeping in touch with the sponsors and looking after the relationship with them all – even those who have only given small amounts.

(UK Student from NZ)

These comments both come from students who have been successful in fundraising for their studies. When writing letters to potential sponsors make sure you let them know about your eagerness to work hard, what you hope to do with it afterwards, when they might get a chance to meet you or to hear you sing so they have a chance to get to know who you are before donating.

Maintaining contact with sponsors it is a matter of basic politeness as well as all the ongoing benefits you may gain by keeping in touch with them. You may choose to make yourself available to meet them and interact with them – but you must only do this to the level you wish. Perhaps this may simply mean inviting them personally to attend one of your concerts when you are back home in New Zealand.

4. Living in the UK

- Useful guides and websites relating to this
- General information on living costs, banking, transport challenges, where to find the NZ cafes, finding somewhere to practise
- Culture shock issues: differing cultural expectations and homesickness

Useful guides and websites

I have found the following student guides and websites which have a great deal of useful information for students about living in the UK.

The Royal Academy of Music provides a very useful downloadable guide called the 'International Students' Handbook'. This guide includes detailed information about student visas and immigration, and covers aspects such as banking, working in the UK under a student visa, living expenses, accommodation, health and welfare, climate and clothing, social customs, and general security.

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama also has a very useful 'Guide for International Students' available for download on their site under How To Apply » Student Support.

The UKCOSA website (UK Council on Overseas Student Affairs / Council for International Education) also gives detailed advice for international students in the UK, particularly in the areas of immigration and working in the UK. Their 'Guidance Notes' can all be downloaded from the site, plus there is up to date information available here about changes in immigration rules and other related aspects.

Detailed estimates of living costs are available on the Royal College of Music website under Studying » Fees and Funding » Living costs.

The 'London Student Housing Guide' is a booklet that gives information on all aspects of student accommodation, including London-specific information and also UK-specific information such as: how the tenancy deposit system works, how to deal with problems and issues and all sorts of other related information. This guide is published by the University of London Accommodation Office. It can be downloaded from the London Student Housing Guide website or you can order a copy from there (they will send out copies internationally).

General information on living costs, transport challenges, NZ cafes, finding somewhere to practise

Living costs:

The 'Useful guides and websites' section above gives a number of information sources for the costs of living in London. Living costs in cities other than London, such as Manchester and Glasgow, are known to be lower than those in London, especially when it comes to the costs of accommodation. Also, living in a smaller city means your commuting costs are likely to be less, and with accommodation costs lower, you may be able to afford something more comfortable and spacious, or be able to live in halls of residence that are within walking distance to the college. RNCM, for example, has a student hall of residence right next door to the college in which all the rooms are sound proofed, so you can practice 'at home' at any time during the day.

Banking:

Opening a bank account in the UK has always been notoriously difficult for people from overseas, and it is even more difficult now. However, your bank in New Zealand may have a special relationship with a bank in the UK which may make it easier to open an account in there. For example, I was informed by one student that as a customer of the ASB Bank he was able to arrange for an account to be set up for him at the HSBC Bank in London before he even arrived.

If your bank does not have a similar relationship with a UK bank, ask your NZ bank to send an account statement to you at your UK address, as this is usually an acceptable form of the 'proof of address' required by most UK banks in order to open an account.

You should also check with your bank to make sure you can access funds in New Zealand using your New Zealand EFTPOS or credit card in ATMs in the UK, in case you are not able to open a UK account for some time.

London transport:

Public transport in London has had a poor reputation for many years, and there are still problems for the traveller who expects to arrive on time for their lessons and classes and when attending live performances. There have certainly been improvements in the transport system since I last visited, but getting around London is still a challenge, and residents have to learn to factor in extra time for possible delays or closures on the tube in particular in order to arrive on time. A very useful website giving up to date information on closures and service problems and also detailed information on how to get anywhere in London is the government-run 'Journey Planner' website.

Travel time in London:

In such a big city as London the travel time needed is so much longer than we expect coming from New Zealand and it is usually necessary to plan your day's activities ahead. It is easy to underestimate the time required to get between activities occurring in different parts of London, and expect that you will be able to achieve more in one day than is practical due to this difference in scale. Travel time is a significant factor in living and studying in London and should be considered carefully when you are deciding on the location of your accommodation there.

A slice of home life – cafés:

Coffee aficionados will miss the quality coffee available in NZ, and all students are likely to enjoy the link with home provided by the few cafés run by New Zealanders and Australians which now exist in London. (A place to find a proper 'flat white' or 'long black' and hear a friendly voice in a familiar café surrounding.) These cafés include 'Sacred' off Carnaby St, 'Divertimenti' on Marylebone High St and 'Monmouth Coffee Co.' on Monmouth St WC2 and at the Borough Market near London Bridge station.

Finding places to practise or a venue to teach from:

Finding a place to practise can be a trial in London, especially for those not at institutions or living in college halls where practice rooms are provided or who are working full time and not able to practise at home. The following options are expensive but they are popular, especially for teachers. Belsize also hire out pianos on a weekly basis.

'The Music Studios':

Rooms are hired out for practise and teaching. Run by Nigel Brown: Tel (020) 7486 0025. Rooms cost £12.50 per hour, (£10 in the morning). Located at 29 Marylebone Lane, London W1, near to Wigmore Hall. Most rooms have pianos.

'Belsize Music Rooms':

Rehearsal or teaching rooms from £12 per hour. Located at Belsize Park, Hampstead, in North London. Three sizeable rehearsal rooms are available,

plus they hire out pianos at a reasonable weekly rate. Their website is listed at end of this document.

Culture shock issues: differing cultural expectations and homesickness

Culture shock is a recognised psychological effect – it can be described as “the impact of moving from a familiar culture to one which is unfamiliar.” (UKCOSA Guidance Notes for Students 2004-2005). The UKCOSA guide goes into depth about the effects of culture shock and it is well worth downloading and reading. Here are some more extracts from it:

Culture shock includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people and learning the ways of a different country. It also includes the shock of being separated from the important people in your life, maybe family, friends, colleagues, teachers: people you would normally talk to at times of uncertainty, people who give you support and guidance.

...As well as the obvious things that hit you immediately when you arrive, such as sights, sounds, smells and tastes, every culture has unspoken rules which affect the way people treat each other. These may be less obvious but sooner or later you'll probably encounter them and once again the effect may be disorientating.

...Some of the symptoms of culture shock can be worrying themselves. For example, you may find your health is affected and you may get headaches or stomach aches or you may start worrying about your health more than previously. You may find it difficult to concentrate and as a result find it harder to focus on your coursework. Other people find they become more irritable or tearful and generally their emotions seem more changeable. All of these effects can in themselves increase your anxiety.

(UKCOSA Guidance Notes for Students 2004-2005)

I went through a huge culture shock in the first two years.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

In the first six months I was lonely and depressed. I was asking myself “Why am I doing this?”. Now I am taking up all the opportunities to learn and to experience all I can while I am here.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

I was unsettled and lonely as a student: the other foreign students who were from Europe could go home in the breaks but I couldn't!

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The above problems encountered by NZ students are all recognisable as symptoms of the broad definition of culture shock, and it may be easier to cope with these things when you know that it is 'normal' to experience them in this sort of situation.

Other comments from students about cultural differences they encountered in the UK include the following:

I learnt to be more “cagey” and less open. For example, the other students would not tell everyone else about a competition they knew was coming up: the fewer people who knew, the less stiff the competition. This was so different from New Zealand.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The level of openness we might normally expect from someone may be regarded as being pushy. Therefore as New Zealanders we need to be more respectful, more calm, quiet: formal and not jocular. I found I had to modify my enthusiasm so as not to ‘overpower’ the locals.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

The British have a culture of downplaying themselves individually: for example saying ‘Oh, I did a rubbish audition’, whether they really think so or not. So the New Zealander’s confidence and pleasure in achievement relative to the British person’s is overwhelming and it is regarded by them as uncool and perhaps vulgar.

(UK Student From NZ)

Pay attention to the rules and regulations (red tape) because they really think they are important!

(Former UK Student From NZ)

Other cultural differences mentioned by students included the difference in the way British people deal with situations of conflict (in that they tend to avoid open conflict), and the levels of ‘politeness’ and formality being much higher than in New Zealand.

5. Common issues and problems encountered in study and careers

Advice and information on how to deal with various issues including:

- How to change teachers and what to expect
- Population and competition issues – the size of the fish and the pond
- Making the best use of setbacks and asking for feedback

How to change teachers and what to expect

Students must be prepared to “rock the boat” and demand that they get people that work for them in terms of coaches and singing teachers. They should never be complacent - it can go wrong so quickly! They must keep asking other teachers and coaches how they are sounding - is it OK?

(UK Professional)

How do you know when to change teachers?

Firstly, if you are studying in an institution and you feel your teacher has behaved inappropriately in some way, you should immediately make contact with the Head of Vocal Studies, and/or student support services.

What is more likely is that you start to feel that you are not getting what you want and need from your teacher. Perhaps you do not really understand what they are trying to do, or you feel it is not helping you for some reason.

You should first discuss this with your teacher. Perhaps it is simply a matter of terminology, or you would learn much better from that teacher if they used a slightly different approach, and it may be able to be resolved simply through discussion.

Having had a discussion of this sort you may still feel that the only way forward is to change teachers. In some cases, the outcome of the discussions may in fact be that both you and your teacher feel this is the best option – and that will most likely make the whole process much easier for you.

So the next step would be to make an appointment with your Head of Vocal Studies to discuss your situation and your desire to change teachers.

Changing teachers too often can be a trap that is easy to fall into.

Former UK Student From NZ

Remember that it will always take you a certain amount of time to start to understand how things are going with a new teacher. So do not rush into this too soon – make sure you have given yourself, and your teacher, enough time to settle in.

It is important to remember that changing teachers can be a difficult time for you and for your teacher. So you should not do this lightly, nor expect to change teachers often – you will certainly find there is resistance to this and this is understandable. It also can be less disruptive if you change teachers between academic years, rather than during them. You should consider whether this may be appropriate in your case.

Most of the Heads of Vocal Studies at the institutions I visited seemed to be understanding of the need for students to be able to change teachers, and tried to be supportive of this process. At the same time they all felt that it was definitely not something that they wanted to encourage too much, because it is disruptive to all the parties involved.

Some of the staff I spoke to felt that it was important that the student paved the way for leaving a teacher by meeting with the teacher and telling them themselves that they want to change teachers, and it was therefore a requirement that the student do this. Hopefully you will already have had discussions on the subject with your teacher (as above) which will make this much easier.

In this profession it is always good to remain on good terms with everyone if possible, and, as mentioned in the section on differing cultural values, this is particularly important to the British, who in general tend to avoid conflict where they can.

Deciding on your new teacher is of course a crucial part of the whole process, and you will need to take enough time to consider who this might be. You will probably have been considering this during the period when you have been having the discussions with your teacher, and may have formed some ideas from what you have heard from fellow students about their teachers and from what you have heard of their singing.

You should also discuss possible new teachers with the Head of Vocal Studies, who have more experience of the teachers available in the department than any student will have. You should take consultation lessons with the teachers you are considering, in the same way as when you enter an institution. Again, you should have consultations with a number of teachers – not just one!

Population and competition issues – the size of the fish and the pond

It is hard to make people realise how hard it is, and how demoralising it can be, trying to pursue a career overseas.

(UK Professional)

A misconception of young singers coming from New Zealand is that they will get more performance opportunities here - when in fact they are likely to get less, due to the amount of competition.

(UK Vocal Coach)

It is important for New Zealand students to recognise the level of competition they will encounter here, particularly as a soprano.

(UK Professional)

A discussion of the numbers of applicants auditioning for UK institutions is found earlier in this document (Auditioning for institutions, under Part Two Section 2), and this gives an idea of just how much more competition for places there is in the UK compared to what young singers experience in New Zealand. The auditions data I received from UK institutions also showed that there were always many more sopranos auditioning than any other voice type.

This plethora of sopranos compared to other voice types has been a recognised problem in most countries for decades. Given this abundance, the situation can be seen to be even more difficult for sopranos who are auditioning for opera work, especially given that there are fewer 'small roles' and probably fewer roles overall for sopranos in opera, especially compared to the number of roles available for male voice types.

It is probably worth repeating here some of my comments on this aspect from Part One Section 6.8:

The amount of competition young singers experience in the UK is extreme, and it is very hard for those still in New Zealand to imagine just how big the population is and how many other talented young singers migrate to the UK and will be competing against them for the same opportunities. Virtually all young singers going to the UK experience the effect of changing from being a 'big fish in a little pond' to the reverse situation.

It may be hard simply to deal with studying in a school where there is competition for every single performance opportunity. The effects of higher competition may mean that you have less success in competitions and career related auditions than you are used to, and you may find you have a much harder time dealing with these setbacks away from your family and other sources of support. Ways of dealing with this are looked at in the following section.

Making the best use of setbacks and asking for feedback

All professional careers in music will involve setbacks and various situations where you do not achieve what you were aiming for at a particular time. You will probably have a certain amount of experience of this already: you may have had to deal with not doing as well in a competition as you did the previous year or not being offered a place or a role from an audition that you felt you sang well in. Sometimes a number of negative things combine to make you feel "It's never going to work out!". If you do not work out how to handle such setbacks, you could start to lose heart, and/or confidence.

It may be hard to believe, but ALL professional singers lose heart at times, even those working consistently at the highest level!

If you are studying at an institution, help with the psychological aspects of dealing with these issues may be available in the form of counselling or student support. Your teacher or coach, or close friends and family may be able to help you see things differently, and recognise what you have achieved so far, so you can pick yourself up and carry on working towards your goal.

Some important advice from a Student Services Officer in a UK Institution:

Ask for help & advice. Don't assume everyone else knows more or is more confident than you. Student services is always there to help.

It is really important for a young singer to continue to have regular input from vocal coaches and regular 'vocal maintenance' from a teacher whom they trust as they progress through the stages of their career. Regular 'check up' advice can make the difference between a minor adjustment and a major crisis in a developing career, and most professional singers continue to take lessons (even if

irregular) and vocal coaching throughout their career. Part Two Section 9 'General advice to students and young singers' comments further on this aspect.

A large part of the key to success is persistence – Joan Sutherland is reputed to have had to audition eight times for Covent Garden, and Kiri Te Kanawa had to audition there nine times! Remember this the next time you go into an audition – and take heart!

If you have been unsuccessful in an audition or competition, it may be possible to obtain feedback on why this occurred. Every organisation will have different policies on this, but it can be really worthwhile to be able to assess what the panel's impression was. With the help of your teacher or coach, you can then work out how much of this impression was a genuine reflection of your current state and what steps you might take to improve things, if indeed there are things that the panel felt needed to be improved - which will not necessarily be the case.

Helpful advice on auditioning which came from various UK professionals I interviewed can be found in 'Auditions in general' in Part Two Section 7.

6. Career – the transition to a career

- A look at the next step – moving into a professional career
- Staying on to work in the UK – information about visa regulations and issues

A look at the next step – moving into a professional career

Here are some comments made by various professionals working in the field whom I interviewed and came into contact with in the UK. Several of these people are regularly involved with casting young singers for professional opera productions.

You need to work out what makes you happy – what you can 'sell' and enjoy as an artist – to find your own niche.

(Opera Professional)

Singers in the main colleges are being watched for three to four years by casting agents and potential employers, particularly in the London colleges.

(UK Opera Professional)

Very few singers are picked up straight out of college productions to go into work in established houses.

(UK Opera Professional)

Some students don't attend all the classes offered at the colleges - this is a big mistake! What you learn in the practical classes such as stagecraft and movement are really important when you start working on stage.

(UK Opera Professional)

Taking a 'gap year' between college and finishing school studies such as the National Opera Studio is a better idea for students than going straight from one to the other. A good option is to work in a chorus for a year. Generally graduating students need more knowledge of basic stagecraft than they will have generally received at the colleges. They also need to know more about what is going on and to see more professional performances.

(UK Opera Professional)

Why is Glyndebourne chorus good for young singers? Because of the influence of the standard of their fellow singers, the training with conductors and with répétiteurs and orchestras. Glyndebourne still do use some chorus members for small roles and covers, but not so much as they used to - only the top singers get to do this.

(UK Opera Professional)

The [opera] business in general has a lack of imagination. Don't rely on the panel in an audition being able to 'imagine' you in something else by a completely different composer or in a different style. The rep you use in professional auditions needs to come from the roles that you want them to cast you in.

(Opera Professional)

Staying on to work in the UK – information about visa regulations and issues

Comments made about this in my interviews with UK professionals include the following:

It was a big change when the UK joined the European Union. English National Opera, for example, had been filled with Commonwealth singers - they could all sing in English. It is much more difficult now to employ Commonwealth singers who do not have the right to work after their student visa runs out. Even marrying a Brit is regarded with suspicion by the authorities and is checked up on by the Home Office.

(UK Professional)

The UK opera companies [other than the Royal Opera] avoid employing singers who have no right to work. In order for them to get a visa for the engagement the Home Office requires that such singers are 'not displacing resident labour'. However they do take into account an artist's reputation in their own country when deciding to issue a visa for a particular engagement. For example, because Jonathan Lemalu had won competitions in New Zealand as well as all the big UK competitions this 'reputation' made it pretty easy for him to be employed here.

(UK Professional)

The Highly Skilled Migrants visa is the new one that gives a possible way in for NZ students. But it seems to be partly a matter of the 'luck of the draw' as to who actually considers the application. I have seen two students apply recently: only one of them was successful and I was surprised at which one it was as I would have expected the other student to have had a much better chance.

(UK Institution Staff Member)

If you hold a passport from a European Union country you will be well placed to come out of a UK institution and move into work there.

If you have a New Zealand passport but also have 'ancestry' rights, say from having a grandparent who was born in the UK, it will also be possible stay on and work in the UK after your studies, although this will be rather complicated. As I understand it, under the current UK ancestry rules you can stay and work for up to five years in the UK. After this you can apply for permanent residence but you will have to have spent five years in employment there and there must not have been any long periods of this time spent outside the UK.

Without either an EU passport or ancestry rights it will be very much more difficult for you to stay on and move into work in the UK. After your student visa runs out, you may be able to use a 'working holidaymaker' visa for up to two years as long as you are between 17 and 30 years old. Any time you spend outside the UK during that period is counted as part of the two year allocation and you can only take employment for up to 12 months during that time as the concept is that this is a 'holiday'.

Working holidaymakers can apply to stay on in the UK through the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP). This programme is designed to allow highly skilled people to migrate to the United Kingdom to look for work or self-employment opportunities.

The Border and Immigration Agency 'Working in the UK' website gives information and downloadable guides and forms for HSMP. Here follows what I understand from perusing this information about HSMP.

The Highly Skilled Migrant Programme is a points-based immigration scheme. Points are scored in four main areas: qualifications, past earnings, age assessment and UK experience. You need 75 points or more to qualify under HSMP. Not all study qualifications gain points – but, for example, a Masters degree that meets their criteria gains you 35 points. Youth counts for a great deal: those under 27 years old gain 20 points, but by the age of 32, the points gained for age are zero. Even having achieved this total of 55 points, to gain the other 20 points you need to get to 75 points, the amount of earnings in the relevant 12 month period needs to be pretty high – greater than £10,000 in New Zealand or £23,000 in the UK. So the criteria that need to be met to qualify for this programme are really quite difficult to fulfil.

Even after achieving this status through HSMP, you will still have to live in the UK continuously for five years before you can make an application for 'indefinite leave to remain' which can then lead to a UK passport and citizenship.

Please note that if you are thinking of applying to the National Opera Studio you need to realise that your right to work in the UK will be taken into account. As the NOS is designed to lead on to work in the UK opera companies, they take into account an applicant's visa and 'right to work' situation. Out of the 11 places available each year, they generally only reserve one place for a student from a non-EU country who has no ancestry rights.

7. Auditions in general – outside of training institutions and career auditions

- Auditioning for professional companies and other organisations
- Your Curriculum Vitae and related documents

Auditioning for professional companies and other organisations

The following advice comes from comments made during interviews I did with professionals in the field. All of these people are regularly involved in casting young singers from auditions.

You get an impression of attitude from the way a singer dresses in an audition. The first impression with an opera company really counts.

(UK Professional)

In auditions:

- Never apologise for anything
- Try not to say very much unless you are actually asked a question
- Sing what shows you off best and not what you think they want
- Try not to over-dramatise: try to be yourself
- Don't ask for feedback on the spot
- Show confidence in yourself - it is not an examination: it is a privilege for them to hear you sing! But...
- Always be respectful!

(UK Professional)

- Sing the rep you are really good at, not what you think they want
- Never audition if you are 'under the weather'
- The standard repertoire is easier to judge than contemporary repertoire
- I do give feedback - the standard way is to write and ask for this
- Whether a singer has an agent or not won't make the slightest difference to my judgment - it will only make it easier for the singer to get an audition
- School prizes mean nothing to me
- Seeing training at one of the UK colleges plus the National Opera Studio on a CV is definitely of interest

(UK Professional)

- Research the background of opera companies before going to audition for them
- Be informed and choose appropriate repertoire
- The US concept of presenting five arias for an audition and being ready to sing all of them if necessary, is very impressive
- Check the length of the audition time and always bring more repertoire than the number of pieces stated
- Do not bring very obscure pieces for auditions
- Do not include arias by Menotti - these are not popular in the UK
- Don't do embarrassing staging in an audition, for example: kneeling down during an aria
- Always do short numbers - especially the first piece: always leave them wanting more
- Be ready to tell the accompanist quickly about the speed you want a piece to go. If something goes drastically wrong, it is best to stop and start again
- Always treat your accompanist well!

(UK Professional)

After the auditions it is also really important to make yourself easy to contact. Some advice on this aspect:

- Keep your website up to date and make sure it works for older PCs and web browsers
- Always keep checking your emails regularly!

(UK Professional)

Also remember that an unsuccessful audition may not be the end of the story:

Luck plays a significant part in a singer's career. You need to be offering an audition panel precisely the qualities they are looking for at a given time. The singer may be compared to a very special coat displayed a shop window. Passers-by may stop and admire it but, because of the hot weather, decide that it is not what they're looking for there and then. The reason for which a singer is not chosen may be very different from the one that he or she imagines.

(Anthony Legge, *The Art of Auditioning*:2001)

I always take notes and I remember auditions - I may cast you next year from this audition.

(UK Professional)

Your Curriculum Vitae and related documents

Some comments about CVs from someone who is dealing with them continuously:

- When emailing photos and CVs always make sure the file size is kept small – the recipient may not be on broadband – perhaps they are travelling and having to use ‘dial-up’ in a hotel – this is quite often the situation for me
- Please keep your CV to one page only
- Don't bother listing masterclasses on your CV

(UK Professional)

Also remember to always include your ‘right to work’ status if you can work in the UK. If you do not put this on your CV and the panel sees references to New Zealand, they are likely to assume that you do not have the right to work.

8. Career aspects in general

- How does one go about getting work as a singer in the UK?
- Portfolio careers
- Other employment options

How does one go about getting work as a singer in the UK?

I asked this question in the survey of NZ based singers and teachers, and asked the same question of most of the professionals, teachers and students I interviewed in the UK. I was interested to see the contrast in the responses.

I asked the respondents and interviewees to choose, from a list provided, what they felt were the most important ways of getting noticed in the UK by potential employers.

Here is the question I asked:

How does one get noticed by those employing young singers in the UK? Which of the following are the most important for this? Please indicate the three you think would be successful the most often in furthering a young singer's career:

- Auditioning for agents
- Auditioning for opera companies and impresarios
- Recommendations by your school
- Recommendations by your singing teacher or coach
- Performances in school concerts and operas
- Summer school performances
- School competitions and prizes
- Non-school competitions

Here are the results, with the following being the highest scoring choices:

NZ based singers responding to the survey most often chose the most important ways to be:

- Auditioning for opera companies and impresarios
- Recommendations by your singing teacher or coach
- Performances in school concerts and operas

By contrast, NZ based singing teachers tended to choose

- Auditioning for agents
- Non-school competitions

It should be noted here that there were only a small number of teachers who responded to the survey, but the difference between their responses and those of the singers in the survey was still quite marked.

When it came to the responses of the UK based students, teachers and professionals in the field whom I interviewed, who could be expected to have a better understanding of the current situation in the UK, the findings were quite clear cut. The highest scoring ways were:

- Performances in school concerts and operas
- Auditioning for opera companies and impresarios
- Non-school competitions

This lines up with other comments made about the need to 'build a profile in the scene' and the function of schools in providing a 'platform' for young singers to be noticed by employers, as discussed earlier in this report.

A number of professionals in the field felt strongly that auditioning for agents directly was not a good approach, as the agents want to see you performing, not in an audition situation. However, the 'showcases' provided by some of the colleges for invited audiences of opera companies and agents are still felt to be important and useful vehicles for young singers.

Non-school competition success was regarded as being significant for getting noticed – particularly the 'big' UK competitions.

School prizes and recommendations by schools were not highly regarded by the professionals, as a number said the schools tended to push only those who were having success at the time, and they felt that often these were not actually the best students overall.

Summer opera festivals were felt to be significant vehicles for young singers (I had not included these in the choices), but only a few summer schools were regarded as good vehicles: Aldeburgh was one of these.

Recommendations by a well-respected coach or one known personally to the employer were also felt to be useful.

The over-riding comment however, was that 'word of mouth' is the most important way in which information about a young singer travels in the UK. This of course, leads back to the importance of the performances in which a student is seen, and to some extent whom they are working with as the amount of impact a comment from a colleague, coach or conductor may have, will depend on what 'circles' that person moves and works in.

Portfolio careers

This seems to be a catch word in the UK at the moment. In a portfolio career, you manage a 'portfolio' of part-time jobs that result in the equivalent of full-time employment.

In terms of a professional career in the arts, a singer would earn a living by undertaking varied sorts of work rather than just through professional solo singing engagements. All the different sorts of work may be related, to a greater or lesser degree, to the singer's training.

Examples of work other than solo singing engagements that might be included in a singer's portfolio career are: teaching singing, teaching part time at a college or university, undertaking some chorus work as well as some solo work, conducting a choir, teaching part time in a primary or secondary school, coaching at a summer school or arts administration.

Some institutions are working towards providing the skills and business understanding for graduates to manage these sorts of careers, in the knowledge that many will not achieve the 'ideal' of a full time sustainable professional career as a soloist. For example, the Royal Northern College of Music provides a strand of courses that aim to provide this called 'Supporting Professional Studies' – information on this is provided on their website.

Other employment options

It is probably true to say that most New Zealand students studying in the UK are looking to fulfil the dream of a professional career as a soloist. However there are many other equally valid career options which should be considered, and may provide the fulfilment of a life long career as a singer.

Here are some examples:

- working as a full time professional chorus member. While this is not currently possible in New Zealand, it is possible in Australia, the UK, Germany and many other countries.
- working as a professional chorister (that is, singing in a professional choir). There are fewer opportunities for this, but they do exist, in the UK and elsewhere.
- teaching voice, privately or as part of a school or university.
- working in related areas such as arts management

These career choices are just as important to the artistic life of our society and you may in fact find them just as rewarding, and much easier to sustain over a working lifetime, than a solo career.

9. General advice to students and young singers

- Getting advice – what questions to ask, of whom, and when
- Knowing the business and understanding the art form - making the best use of opportunities afforded in the UK and Europe

Getting advice – what questions to ask, of whom, and when

Becoming a professional singer is a long-term game. You have to learn to look after yourself and find people whose judgement you trust.

(Former UK Student From NZ)

There is definitely a tendency in UK teachers and coaches not to say negative things in lessons.

(UK Professional)

Students need to ask questions and not just accept things. Those who do this are the ones who succeed. If they don't have inquiring minds they are missing a vital part of 'the package'.

(UK Teacher)

I think that all singers wish they had a guiding angel whom they could consult at every point in their study and career. Someone who knows them very well, who has a really good idea of their capabilities and has the knowledge of the repertoire and the business to give good guidance on what steps they should take next, which roles and when, and so forth.

Sadly, it seems that most singers do not manage to find such a person – but advice can always be found, from a singing teacher, coach, agent or other professional. The problem with this is that few people will have all the knowledge to guide you properly, and so you must learn to 'filter' the advice you receive and make your own decisions.

A good plan is to try to find a number of people whose judgement you trust and get to know them really well, so that they also know you well. Then, if the advice from all these people coincides, it seems likely that you should follow it.

**All young singers need
ongoing vocal maintenance
on a regular basis**

Try to make sure you always have this available to you and that you do 'check in' regularly with a teacher, coach or other professional whose honesty and advice you feel you can rely upon. This is important not just as your career begins, but also as your voice and capabilities change and develop and the stress and pressures of life and career alter and increase.

Knowing the business and understanding the art form – making the best use of opportunities afforded in the UK and Europe

You have to keep up with what's going on and read the magazines to find out what is 'in' in terms of oratorios, operas etc.

(UK Teacher)

When I arrived here to study I realised very soon that I knew so little in terms of the international performing world: how to judge the standards of singing and performances. I hadn't seen enough professional performances to know this. The local students who had had more experience of hearing other singers had a much more advanced sense of what they were trying to achieve - in terms of tone and in all sorts of aspects.

(Former UK Student from NZ)

You need to figure out how to get the most out of all the opportunities available both at the colleges and elsewhere – and there are so many!

(UK Student from NZ)

As a student in the UK, opportunities abound for you to attend performances, visit art galleries and museums, take trips to nearby European countries to get a taste of the cultural atmosphere and to practise your language skills and so on.

The importance of these experiences cannot be emphasised enough – even if you never end up singing a note professionally, all these experiences will stay with you for the rest of your life. They will open your mind to other possibilities, and they will give you real appreciation for the art form of western classical singing that you are studying.



Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report: 19 Feb 2007

Project Summary

This project aims to help young New Zealand singers intending to go on to advanced classical singing studies in the United Kingdom by the provision of advice and guidance that is current, that prepares them for the different expectations and ways of working that they will encounter, and by giving them information that will help them prepare mentally for the trying times and unexpected difficulties they may encounter.

I know from my own experience how valuable the outcomes of the project can be to such young singers and how important it is to for them to seek expert advice when confronted by the myriad choices one needs to make as a student making this leap in the pathway to a career.

I have been doing preparation work on the project since late last year, and have been working full time on it for the past four weeks. I leave New Zealand on the 19th of February and will start working on the project in London from the 1st of March. I will spend three months based in London, and return in June to spend four weeks writing up the report that is to be made available to all New Zealand singing teachers and students through the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.

After that, a further stage is envisaged as Phase 2, not covered by this part of the project, which would involve my giving seminars to further 'spread the word', as well as making myself available for advice to prospective students and their teachers.

Three areas I will be focussing on in London that I believe to be unique to this project are:

- 1) There have been some indications that there are ways in which the New Zealand students are less well prepared for their advanced study than the local students in the United Kingdom. I hasten to add that this does not necessarily mean that they are not as well trained, nor that they are less talented than the local students. But I will be taking the opportunity while in the United Kingdom to thoroughly investigate this and to find out if there are ways we can help the students to be better prepared so that they will have an easier time and are able to make the best use of their study time right from the word 'go'.

- 2) I have already started to develop a network of contacts in the United Kingdom which includes people involved in all areas of the education and training of young singers as well as in the professional world of singing so that there is access via this network to advice and viewpoints from all quarters. This way we in New Zealand will have access to viewpoints that are independent of any particular institution and that come from sources throughout the singing world, in both the educational and professional spheres.
- 3) I will be observing and absorbing the current conditions in the United Kingdom scene to get an overview of the whole process that the aspiring students will have to make their way through, not just the study. Through this I hope to be able to gauge the current levels that they will be expected to live up to in order to study and progress on to careers.

I have had enthusiastic responses to the project from singing teachers and students throughout the country. Already a number of conflicting viewpoints have started to come through from them about the United Kingdom institutions and teachers. This is why I aim to cover as wide a range of teachers as possible in my research, seeking advice from many different quarters and actually observing at first hand the teaching and coaching available there.

Specific activities that I intend to pursue while during the three months I am in the United Kingdom include:

- making contact with vocal staff from the major institutions, including the heads of the voice departments, vocal coaches and singing teachers and interviewing them on their opinions of the level of preparation of New Zealand students and in what ways we could help them better prepare, as well as finding out what specific knowledge and understanding of the 'way things work' at the institutions that would help them fit in more easily
- arranging to observe singing lessons and classes and to take some lessons myself with a number of teachers from the institutions, as well as meet with people with understanding and experience of the courses such as past students from New Zealand, vocal coaches, and others not attached to the colleges to learn more about the teaching and courses available at the institutions
- interviewing current and past students of the major training institutions for their opinions and experience of the processes involved in completing the courses, including those who may not have gone on to achieve their career goals as well as recent graduates who are starting to become established in their careers
- making contact with appropriate staff at companies involved in the profession including ENO, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Scottish Opera and other like companies as well as some of the smaller companies that students often start out in, to find out their views on the best training and advice on how well New Zealand singers could be helped in their endeavours and in what areas their prior training could be improved
- observing master classes, singing classes and performances at the training institutions to observe standards and levels of the students, and performances at the various opera companies, Wigmore Hall and so forth to absorb the

current professional scene in the United Kingdom and bring this knowledge and understanding about both the study and the professional scene back to New Zealand

The benefits to young New Zealand singers in the future from this project stand to be enormous and I am so pleased to be a part of this project. My hope is that as a result there will be fewer talented young New Zealand singers who 'fall by the wayside' due to problems that could have been avoided with more knowledge and understanding.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a vote of thanks on behalf of all young New Zealand singers to Dame Kiri and the Foundation trustees for being so strongly behind this project. I know they are firmly committed to the aims of the project and to helping our talented young singers to reach the pinnacles of success.

Current Status of the Project

The preparation stage of the project has been very rewarding and my plans for the period in London are starting to take form with the first few weeks already filling up with appointments and events to attend.

I have been spending time in the past weeks following up on contact details provided by Dame Kiri and others and have already made a number of dates for meetings with teachers to discuss the issues faced by young New Zealand singers, to observe and experience their teaching, both one on one and in masterclasses, and to meet with staff from several of the training institutions.

I have started to gather contact details for current students and recent graduates from the United Kingdom colleges and other training institutions and programmes, and will contact them when I arrive to arrange to meet with them and interview them on their experiences.

I have also prepared a survey form to go to New Zealand based singing teachers and students, asking them questions on their perceptions of study in the United Kingdom institutions, so that I may then have a basis to compare the perceived realities with those that are actually encountered.

This survey is currently going through the Victoria University/New Zealand School of Music approval process and should be ready for distribution by the 1st March. If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

Confirmed Arrangements Made For London Period:

My initial focus so far has been on the London colleges, in particular the Royal College of Music (RCM) and the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). I have also made contact with the National Opera Studio (NOS) and the Jette Parker Young Artists' Programme (JPYAP) at the Royal Opera House and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD). I also intend to contact the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama very soon.

1. So far I have made contact via email/phone/fax with six singing teachers from RCM and RAM and five private teachers and coaches. I have confirmed appointments with Jennifer Dakin, Enid Hartle and Noelle Barker.
2. I am also looking forward to attending the master classes and regular classes being given at the colleges in the first few weeks by Anne Howells, Gillian Knight, Diane Forlano, Roger Vignoles, and Helmut Deutsch and to attending the Richard Lewis awards, the Kathleen Ferrier award final, the Guildhall English Song prize and Longfield prize competitions
3. I have made arrangements to meet with Donald Maxwell from the National Opera Studio, and Siri Fischer Hansen from the Jette Parker Young Artists' Programme at the Royal Opera House and am looking forward to observing both programmes. Contact has also been made with the heads of vocal studies at both the RCM and RAM and the deputy head at Guildhall, with a view to my meeting with them about the project. All of these people have enthusiastically commended the project's aims and have indicated they are willing to allow me to observe the school's activities where appropriate (with the agreement of the relevant staff and students).
4. I have been researching related events to attend including a number of student performances at the institutions and outside that involve young singers as well as professional performances – the possible events to attend are too numerous to list here but I will include details of events I have attended in the next updates.
5. As part of the preparation for the research I have set up databases of all the contacts information accumulated so far and will continue to update these in order to maintain the contacts
6. I have also spoken informally with a number of people in the profession and educational institutions within New Zealand about the project and their suggestions and comments have been very helpful in formulating my ideas on the best ways to approach the research.

Other Related Activities Undertaken

- 22/01/07: On the 22nd of January I gave a presentation about the project along with Dame Kiri and Dame Catherine Tizard (Deputy Chair of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation trustees) to an audience of approximately 180 interested parties at the Opera Factory in Auckland. This event was very kindly organised at short notice by Opera Factory director Sally Sloman ONZM.
- 25/01/07: Upbeat interview: I gave an interview about the project on Radio New Zealand Concert (Concert FM) with Eva Radich (in the Upbeat programme) on 25 January. I hope to give some more update interviews on RNZ Concert while in London.
- 8/02/07: I met with the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation trustees in Auckland on February 8th and updated them on the latest progress of the project.
- Information on the project and survey and a letter from Dame Kiri has been distributed via email to NEWZATS members (the New Zealand singing teachers' association) and a follow up article is being prepared for the NEWZATS newsletter.

- An article about the project and the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has been printed in the latest New Zealand Opera News magazine (January/February 2007 pp 24-6) from information I supplied.
- While teaching at the New Zealand National Singing School in Napier in January I took the opportunity to give out an information sheet to all the students and teachers and to talk to them about the project and the survey. I also sent the information sheets to New Zealand Opera School running concurrently in Wanganui and hope to have all these students taking part in the survey as well.

What's Next?

- Departure from New Zealand on 19th February
- Commencement of work on the project in London on 1st March: first up is a 10.30am meeting on that day, followed by a singing lesson and the observation of lessons later in the day
- Contacting of current and recent students in London to arrange meetings with them
- Distribution of the survey form to New Zealand based teachers and singers
- Continuation of organisation of appointments for meeting and observing classes etc in London
- Writing of regular fortnightly progress reports which will be posted on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation website

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, please contact me on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

You can also email me as above if you would like more information on the project or if you have any helpful comments or suggestions to make. Alternatively you may contact Paul Gleeson, Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation administrator on: foundation@kiritekanawa.org

Jenny Wollerman - 19 Feb 2007



Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 2, 15 Mar 2007

The Project As At 15th March

I have now been in London working on the project for exactly two weeks. In that short time I seem to have fitted in a great deal, including meetings and interviews with teachers, contact with and visits to the three main London colleges and the National Opera Studio, and attending various performances and master classes at Wigmore Hall and the Royal Academy of Music.

I have also had time to see a few of the New Zealand singers currently studying in London, and will be contacting more of these students as well as recent graduates over the next few weeks.

I have started the distribution of the survey form to New Zealand based singing teachers and students. This survey focuses on the perceptions of study in the United Kingdom institutions, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

Activities In London Over The Past Fortnight:

London Music Colleges

I have made contact in various ways with staff at all three of the main London colleges: Royal Academy of Music (RAM), Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) and Royal College of Music (RCM).

Specifically:

- I have met informally with Linnhe Robertson, Acting Head of Vocal Studies at GSMD, and will be following this up soon with a formal interview. I have also had the opportunity to attend recitals given by the Post Graduate students at GSMD, including one by an NZ student, Jaimee Marshall.

- At the Royal Academy of Music I have observed some singing teaching and master classes, including Diane Forlano, Jennifer Dakin, Anne Howells, Noelle Barker and Gillian Knight and singing for some of these teachers myself. I have also met Jonathan Papp and Audrey Hyland, both coaches at RAM.
- I attended the third night of the RAM opera school's double bill of Tchaikovsky's 'Iolanta' and Puccini's 'Gianni Schicchi' with NZ student Kristen Darragh playing Zita. Kristen received a deservedly excellent notice in The Times for her performance.
- I am meeting tomorrow with Nicholas Sears, Head of Vocal Studies at the Royal College, and have also spent some time meeting with and interviewing Lillian Watson, one of the teachers at RCM, and have observed some of her lessons.

Other Training Programmes

I met last week with Donald Maxwell, the Director of the National Opera Studio (NOS) and will be attending their performance of Contemporary Opera Scenes on Friday 16th March. I look forward to attending and observing more events and activities at NOS during my time here.

I have made contact with the Jette Parker Young Artists' Programme (JPYAP) at the Royal Opera House and look forward to observing some of their programme, including a lunchtime recital by New Zealander Ana James who is currently on the programme.

This weekend I will be travelling to Glasgow and will be meeting with staff from Scottish Opera and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. I also intend to visit the Royal Northern College of Music soon and have made contact with Susan Roper, Director of Vocal Studies there.

Other Activities

- Outside of the training institutions I have also spent some time with singing teacher Enid Hartle, who currently teaches no less than five young New Zealand singers here in London, both observing and taking lessons with her.
- I have attended two concerts at Wigmore Hall as part of their 'Festival of Song': a lunchtime recital by Bernarda Fink and Christian Koch and a recital of Wolf songs given by Roger Vignoles with four up and coming young singers – Caprice Corona, Anna Grevelius, Allan Clayton, Ronan Collett, which was very exciting. The young singers took a little time to warm into their performance but the level of their expressive and vocal ability was in almost all the songs shown to be extremely high and very polished.
- In total I have observed 8 hours worth of individual lessons with five different teachers including RAM, RCM and private teachers in the first two weeks and have received 5 hours of lessons myself from the same teachers.
- I have also met and talked informally with five New Zealand students and recent graduates here, who have or are studying at the RAM, RCM, GSMD

and the NOS. All of these I hope to meet with and interview on a more formal basis in the next few weeks, along with more students and recent graduates.

Coming Up In The Next Two Weeks

- A meeting with Nicholas Sears, Head of Vocal Studies at Royal College of Music
- Visit to Glasgow to meet with teachers and staff at Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and Scottish Opera staff
- Attendance at master class with Roger Vignoles on Brahms Lieder at the Royal College of Music
- Performance of Royal College of Music students in Handel's 'Porro, re dell'Indie' as part of the London Handel Festival
- Observing more lessons and meeting with teachers from the colleges and outside
- More student performances at Guildhall, National Opera Studio, St John's Smith Square and other concerts elsewhere
- Contacting of more students and graduates in London to arrange meetings with them and arranging formal interviews with them
- Continuation of the distribution of the survey form to New Zealand based teachers and singers via email
- Continuation of organisation of appointments for meeting and observing classes etc in London
- Writing of next fortnightly progress report to be posted on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation website

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, please contact me on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

You can also email me as above if you would like more information on the project or if you have any helpful comments or suggestions to make. Alternatively you may contact Paul Gleeson, Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation administrator on: foundation@kiritekanawa.org

Jenny Wollerman - 15 March 2007



Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 3, 29th March 2007

The Project As At 29th March

It's now four weeks since I started working on the project in London, and I feel I am starting to get a sense of the body of information that I am gathering and a better sense of direction in terms of what further areas I need to look into. In the past two weeks I have continued to meet with staff and attend performances and master classes at the London colleges and the National Opera Studio. I also visited the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) and Scottish Opera in Glasgow.

I have also attended a number of professional performances and have continued to make contact with various people involved with young singers outside the colleges. Today (29th March) am on my way to Manchester to visit the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) and will attend their student production of *Eugene Onegin* this evening, conducted by New Zealander Tecwyn Evans.

I have distributed my survey form to all those New Zealand based singing teachers and students who have contacted me and asked to be included, and have received completed responses already from a few participants. It is useful to be able to take into account these responses as I am undertaking the research, and where respondents have asked for specific areas to be investigated I am bearing these in mind as I continue my fact finding.

The survey focuses on the perceptions of study in the United Kingdom institutions, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz to receive a survey form and information sheet.

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Activities In London Over The Past Fortnight:

Music Colleges and Other Training Institutions

Being aware that for most of the music colleges the Spring term finished this week, I used the first four weeks to focus on making contact with them while the teaching was still in progress. I am glad to say that I have now made contact with all five of the main music colleges in the UK. I have visited the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD), Royal College of Music (RCM) and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) in Glasgow and am on my way to visit the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester today. I have also visited the National Opera Studio in London several times.

Activity Details:

- I have met with Nicholas Sears, Head of Vocal Studies at the Royal College of Music and interviewed him about the school. Nicholas is new to the RCM, and only started at the school this year, but has already undertaken the auditions process for 2007/8 and has been involved in the process of awarding scholarships for study.
- Other activities I have attended at the Royal College of Music are a master class with Roger Vignoles on Brahms Lieder, and Handel's *Porro, rè dell'Indie*, a collaboration with the London Handel Society in which my former student Madeleine Pierard performed the role of Erissena. I also had a lesson myself with Lillian Watson, and am looking forward to observing some more lessons with her and other RCM teachers later in my time here.
- I attended the Richard Lewis / Jean Shanks Award singing competition finals at the Royal Academy of Music, hearing five of the eight finalists. The main prize was awarded jointly to three of the baritones I heard and I was certainly impressed by these three young singers.
- At the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, I met with Chris Underwood, Head of Vocal Studies and interviewed him about the school. I also observed the singers' class he takes with the first year undergraduates, and was impressed by the level of involvement and interest the young singers displayed in the technical and interpretative aspects discussed, as well as the level of talent and the atmosphere in the class which I felt was focused yet friendly and supportive.
- While at the RSAMD I also met Kirstin Sharpin, a New Zealand soprano who has been studying there for five years and is currently in the Opera School, and Joe Harrop, a New Zealander on the research staff at the Academy whose interests include research into musical performance. I hope to return to RSAMD later in the project, to spend time with the singing teachers and hope to take part in a joint workshop with them.
- At the Guildhall School (GSMD) I attended a student performance of opera scenes and a master class given by Helmut Deutsch in which he worked with Post Diploma Vocal Training students and student pianists on Lieder and art songs. This was an informative and interesting class and Helmut maintained a

supportive and friendly atmosphere while working intensively with the students.

- I went to the Contemporary Opera Scenes performance at the National Opera Studio on 16th March. This definitely ranks as a highlight of my time here so far. The scenes involved all 12 of this year's trainees, including New Zealand tenor Shaun Dixon. Four scenes from operas by contemporary or recent British composers were chosen: *Powder Her Face* (Thomas Adès), *The Silver Tassie* (by Mark-Anthony Turnage), *Punch and Judy* (Harrison Birtwistle), *Flight* (Jonathan Dove). These are all operas that have not yet been seen in New Zealand to my knowledge and the excerpts chosen gave the students and audience an exciting taste of the complexity of style and commitment to the drama required as well as calling for some demanding vocalism at times. The level of talent and professional qualities of the students was very exciting and I found the whole performance an uplifting experience.
- Also at the National Opera Studio I was able to observe a master class given to the trainees by American mezzo Joyce DiDonato. This also was an excellent and inspiring class, both in terms of the professional and interpretative advice given and the inspirational enthusiasm displayed by Ms DiDonato, and in terms of the vocal quality and potential of the young singers who performed.

Other Activities

- In Glasgow, as well as visiting the RSAMD, I visited Scottish Opera, now run by New Zealander Alex Reedijk, former director of New Zealand Opera, and had the opportunity to interview Jenny Slack, Director of Planning, with responsibility for various areas including casting and the performance tours. Jenny has been a mainstay of Scottish Opera over many years, and as Scottish Opera makes an effort to employ and foster young singers, keeps a close eye on the emerging talent around Britain.
- I have spent time in discussion with teacher and sought after voice consultant Paul Farrington and had a singing lesson with him. Paul has taught at the New Zealand Opera School summer course in Wanganui for two years and has contact with a number of young New Zealand singers in London as well as teaching many professional singers here and working with emerging artists in the Samling Foundation master class programme.
- I have also had a session with breathing specialist Anna Sims. Anna is English and resides north of London, but is best known in Sweden, where she has been coaching professional opera singers in the breathing techniques she developed herself after a horrendous accident in which her lungs, voice box, throat and hands were badly damaged by fire. Anna had been a singer up till that point, and effectively nursed herself back to health by inventing this system. Anna explained and demonstrated the basics of her system, and I hope to follow this up with some more time with her later on.
- I have started contacting New Zealand singers who are recent graduates of the UK institutions, starting with a discussion with Wendy Dawn Thompson, to be continued later.

- Another performance highlight for me has been to experience *The Tempest* by Thomas Adès performed by the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. I found this production absolutely stunning. The cast was top flight, including Simon Keenlyside, Ian Bostridge, Philip Langridge, Cyndia Sieden and young rising star lyric soprano Kate Royal, who studied with Rudolf Piernay at the Guildhall School and the National Opera Studio. Adès himself was the conductor, the production included some highly technical special effects, used to magical effect and the singing was wonderful. Especially magical was Adès use of a stratospheric range assimilated with ease (and such good diction!) by coloratura soprano Sieden.

Coming Up In The Next Two Weeks

- Contacting more students and graduates in London to arrange meetings with them and arranging formal interviews with them
- Attending more performances including: *St Matthew Passion* at the Royal Albert Hall with New Zealand singer Paul Whelan as 'Christ' and rising young English tenor star Allan Clayton and a lunchtime recital by Ana James, young New Zealand soprano in the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera.
- Meetings with Linnhe Robertson and Robin Bowman of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Vocal Studies department, Tecwyn Evans, New Zealand conductor, formerly chorus master at Glyndebourne, and Wendy Dawn Thompson.
- Attending more opera performances including Philip Glass' *Satyagraha* at English National Opera and a double bill of *L'Heure espagnole* and *Gianni Schicchi* with Bryn Terfel at the Royal Opera Covent Garden.

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

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Jenny Wollerman – 29th March 2007



**Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 4, 12th April 2007**

The Project As At 12th April

I have now been working on the research in London for six weeks. The last two weeks have flown by but I still feel that I am fitting a great deal into the time available. The past week has been quieter, due firstly to the Easter break which meant that most people were away on holiday, plus I have had to cancel one appointment due to having contracted a cold - which I certainly didn't want to pass on to any singers here.

Most of the colleges are currently on holiday, and will start back into their 'Summer Term' either this coming Monday or the next. But I have continued to attend performances, have observed at the Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme and conducted some more interviews over the past fortnight.

There have been more requests for the survey form and I have now sent out a total of 64 copies and have received a number of completed responses back, which are already informing my enquiries here, especially in respect of the areas respondents are requesting me to look into.

The survey focuses on perceptions of singing study in the United Kingdom, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz to receive a survey form and information sheet.

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Activities In London Over The Past Fortnight:

Music Colleges and Other Training Institutions

For most of the music colleges it is now the holiday break between the spring and summer terms. Just before the break I visited the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester and was able to attend the final performance of their production of Tchaikovsky's 'Eugene Onegin'. I also spent a day observing at the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera at Covent Garden.

Activity Details:

- I travelled to Manchester on 29th March, and was able to meet up with New Zealander Susan Roper, who is Director of Vocal Studies at RNCM and attend the school's production of 'Eugene Onegin', conducted by another New Zealander, freelance conductor Tecwyn Evans. While there I was introduced to various members of staff including Alec Crowe, the Head of the School of Vocal and Opera studies, Stefan Janski, the Director of Opera Studies, and some of the RNCM singing teachers. As it was the end of term, we agreed that it would be best if I return in May to observe some of the teaching and spend some time there while the school was in session. One of the interesting features of the vocal programme that I am interested in learning more about is their system of 'team teaching', in which the students have regular sessions with another teacher as well as their own, with the 'second teacher' allocation changing each term.
- The production of Eugene Onegin at RNCM was really impressive. It involved the whole of the voice department from first year undergrads to postgrads, with about 45 in the chorus. The chorus' singing and standard of stagecraft and presence was impressive as was the accomplished dancing of all on stage!! The principals were also very good, and I particularly enjoyed the 'Olga' of Kathryn Rudge, a 3rd year undergraduate student studying with Susan Roper.
- Last week I was able to observe for a day at the Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists programme (JPYAP). I sat in on a vocal coaching with current Young Artist, New Zealander Ana James, an Italian language coaching with another current artist and a coaching by David Gowland, Artistic Director of the programme, working with Grant Doyle, a former member of the JPYAP, who had returned to work on a role which he is covering for the Royal Opera soon. This is a new feature of the programme, whereby former Young Artists are able to return to work on new roles – a huge support for a young singer whose career is getting underway.

Interviews

During the past two weeks I conducted formal interviews with

- Linnhe Robertson, Acting Head of Voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD)
- Tecwyn Evans, conductor, from New Zealand, who held the prestigious post of chorus master at Glyndebourne for four years before going freelance.

Glyndebourne chorus is still mentioned by many as an excellent way for young singers to learn about the profession and I was very interested in his comments and to hear about his experiences as chorus master, coach and conductor

- Michael Lloyd, conductor, who is about to travel to New Zealand to conduct his fifth Lexus (Mobil) Song Quest final. Michael has had an extensive career in opera and was on staff at English National Opera from 1985-2003. Through his work for the Song Quest he also has a good sense of the talent and capabilities of young singers leaving New Zealand to pursue careers
- Wendy Dawn Thompson, a young New Zealand singer whose career has gone from strength to strength since she was a finalist in the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World and won the coveted Kathleen Ferrier award in 2003. Wendy Dawn studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and Royal College of Music and also spent a season in the Glyndebourne chorus. She is very keen to help other young singers coming to study here by passing on lessons she learned through her experiences and was able to give a great deal of practical advice applicable to young NZ singers

Other performances attended

- The Bach Choir's 'St Matthew Passion' in English is an annual event held at the Royal Albert Hall. New Zealand baritone Paul Whelan was singing Christ, and was in fine voice with a well projected resonance. Young up and coming British singers Allan Clayton, tenor, still a student at the Royal Academy of Music but already making a big impression here professionally, and Iestyn Davies, countertenor who also studied at RAM were also of interest.
- New Zealander Ana James gave a recital to a full house in the Royal Opera House's Crush Room as part of the free lunchtime recitals given by the Jette Parker Young Artists. She displayed an impressive control over the full lyric and coloratura range and a truly professional finesse and colour along with a fuller tone and resonance than I had heard from her before. Her commitment to communication and the intensity of her performance remains, and I found this an exciting performance.
- English National Opera has mounted a new production of Philip Glass' opera 'Satyagraha' as a co-production with New York's Metropolitan Opera. I was fortunate to be able to attend the opening night. This was my first live experience of a Philip Glass opera and I found it an uplifting experience, and quite mesmerising.
- On a different note, I went to the West End production of 'The Sound of Music', currently playing to packed audiences, with Lesley Garrett as the Mother Abbess, and Michael Lloyd conducting, and thoroughly enjoyed myself.
- At the Royal Opera I attended the double bill of Ravel's 'L'Heure espagnole' and Puccini's 'Gianni Schicchi'. Both productions were directed by Richard Jones, whose inventive and amusing productions I have enjoyed greatly in the past, and these two lived up to my expectations. Bryn Terfel was brilliant as Gianni Schicchi, and all the singers in both works were capable of excellent

comic characterisation of which Jones made great use, keeping the audience around me continually chuckling appreciatively. An excellent night out!

Coming Up In The Next Two Weeks

- Interviews and meetings with students and graduates in London
- A number of competitions including the Kathleen Ferrier awards, including New Zealanders Anna Leese, soprano and Kirsten Simpson, accompanist, and the Handel Singing Competition
- Attending the Royal College of Music Open Day
- Interviews with more college staff and professionals involved with young singers including Robin Bowman from GSMD
- Arranging to meet with more of the singing teaching staff at RCM, GSMD and RAM
- A trip to Chichester to take a workshop with the Masters voice students at Chichester University, where New Zealand/British singer Martin Elliott teaches

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

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Jenny Wollerman – 12th April 2007



Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 5, 26th April 2007

The Project As At 26th April

The number of activities I have been undertaking over the past two weeks has increased as the colleges have returned for their summer terms. With less than four weeks left in London, I am planning the next weeks carefully, trying to fit in as many of the important areas that are still to be covered as I can - and already the diary is looking very full.

I have started to focus on the New Zealand students and young singers here, and have conducted a number of interviews with them, and I am organising more interviews and group discussions during the next few weeks. I have interviewed the HODs of Vocal Studies at Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) and at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). Other highlights of the past two weeks include attending master classes given by Sarah Walker at the Royal College of Music (RCM) and one given by Sir Thomas Allen on scenes from 'Le nozze di Figaro'. I also went to hear the semi final of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards yesterday, in which Anna Leese was a competitor, and I am looking forward to hearing her in the final tomorrow evening.

Of the seventy or so copies of the survey form I have now sent out I have received 14 completed responses back, all of which are very interesting and I am looking forward to receiving more of these.

The survey focuses on perceptions of singing study in the United Kingdom, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz to receive a survey form and information sheet.

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Activities In London Over The Past Fortnight:

Music Colleges and Other Training Institutions

The music colleges run on slightly different timetables, but all have now started back into term time after the holiday break between the spring and summer terms.

I was able to attend the RCM Open Day yesterday which gave me more insights into various areas of the activities in the vocal department and gave me the opportunity to see all the facilities and hear some talks from various staff about student support and postgraduate study in general. There was also an excellent master class on during the afternoon in which Sarah Walker was the professor, and I was able to attend some of this class around the various talks I went to.

I have also had the opportunity to interview both Robin Bowman, HOD of Vocal Studies at GSMD, and Mark Wildman, HOD of Vocal Studies at RAM along with Chris Loake, the Vocal Faculty and Opera Co-ordinator.

I also went to another lunchtime concert given by trainees and former trainees from the Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artists Programme (JPYAP) – this one was a performance of the complete *Liebeslieder* and *Neue Liebeslieder* by Brahms. A stunning ensemble of top quality young voices, who performed with finesse and style. Considering that not all are still on the programme, and this repertoire is not the main focus of the programme, to me this shows a very high level of professional preparation and ability, as well as some excellent coaching.

Other Interviews and Lessons

During the past two weeks I have interviewed four young New Zealand singers and a freelance conductor as well observing the lesson of a New Zealand student at Guildhall. I have also continued to have singing lessons myself with Paul Farrington, and attended a seminar given by him – see more details below.

Other Activities

- I was asked before I left New Zealand for this trip to give a master class at Chichester University and I travelled down to Chichester last week to do so. The students were Masters students who were all taking singing performance as part of their course, and I enjoyed taking the class very much, as well as learning some more about the training given in universities outside the main colleges.
- I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend a master class given by Sir Thomas Allen last week. This was a private event, but it was with young singers from the Classical Opera Company's production of 'Le nozze di Figaro', in which New Zealanders Anna Leese and Rebecca Ryan both have roles. The class was immensely entertaining as well as informative, and it was a real treat to be able to watch Sir Thomas working with the young singers on

the dramatic aspects of scenes from 'Figaro', an opera in which he is so totally at home and has such a depth of knowledge and understanding.

- I attended a one day seminar given by Paul Farrington for singing teachers which was most helpful and informative, giving a concise and practical introduction to the Estill Model as relates to singing teaching. This is a model that is quite new to me, but I feel I can relate to it well and it makes sense of much of the technical training I have received in the past. Not only were the basic concepts covered in the seminar, but there were also opportunities for questions and input from the 20 or so singing teachers who attended. There was also a short 'master class' session at the end, in which many of the concepts discussed during the day were put into practice with some young singers, with some striking results achieved in a way which should empower them to maintain and make use of these technical adjustments in the future. I found it an excellent seminar.
- Yesterday I attended the semi finals of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards. Anna Leese was competing in this round which involved eleven young singers, and I am pleased to be able to report that she was included in the six singers who will compete in the final tomorrow evening. It was enlightening to be able to hear all the different singers, judge the level, and read about their backgrounds in the programme. I found it interesting to hear a range of singers whose current or former training included all the major colleges including Royal Scottish Academy of Music Drama, Royal Northern College of Music, RCM, RAM, GSMD and the National Opera Studio (NOS). Some are still in opera courses at these colleges and at least five are entering the NOS in Sept 2007 or are currently on the programme. Of those who mention their teachers in their biographies, there were two with Noelle Barker, and the others listed Jane Irwin/Patricia McMahon, Enid Hartle, David Maxwell-Anderson, David Pollard, Lillian Watson, Robert Dean and Susan McCulloch as their teachers. The semi finalists ranged in age from 21 to 28, but most of them are closer to 28 years old.

Coming Up In The Next Two Weeks

There seem to be quite a lot of Britten opera performances coming up in the next fortnight, and what better place to be seeing them than right here in the UK! Here are some of the activities I have planned:

- More interviews and meetings with students and graduates in London
- A workshop style working session with Dame Kiri, Jonathan Papp, Anna Sims and some young New Zealand singers
- Attending the Kathleen Ferrier Award final
- Lessons, coachings, interviews and observation of lessons with teachers from RAM, RCM and GSMD
- Attending the Royal Northern College of Music Open Day in Manchester, meeting with Susan Roper and other staff, and observing classes there
- Attending the National Opera Studio Showcase at the Hackney Empire
- Attending the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama's production of 'Albert Herring' and participating in a workshop with other RSAMD teachers.

- Attending the RAM Opera production of 'The Rape of Lucretia' and the production by the Royal Opera at the Linbury Studio Theatre of 'Owen Wingrave'

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey as mentioned at the beginning of this report, please contact me on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

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Jenny Wollerman – 26th April 2007



**Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 6, 10th May 2007**

The Project As At 10th May

The past two weeks have been busy, as I expected, and have included three trips out of London, including visits to the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester for their Open Day and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music (RSAMD) in Glasgow, where I had the chance to attend their production of Britten's 'Albert Herring'. I have also been to the Royal Academy of Music's production of 'The Rape of Lucretia' and 'Owen Wingrave' at the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre, so it has been quite a time for Britten operas!

I have continued with observations of singing lessons and had more coachings and lessons myself with a number of different teachers from the colleges. I have also continued meeting with and interviewing New Zealand students and young singers here, and have conducted a number of interviews with them. Plus I was involved in making the arrangements for a day long workshop session with Dame Kiri for a group of young New Zealand singers, and they all seem to have appreciated this and found it useful.

Interviews with the heads of departments have continued in the past two weeks, the latest ones being with Susan Roper (Head of Vocal Studies RNCM), Tim Dean (Head of Opera RSAMD) and the former HOD of Vocal Studies at Royal College of Music, Neil Mackie. I was also very pleased to be able to interview Sarah Playfair, freelance casting consultant, whose current work includes planning and casting for Garsington Opera.

While I have received quite a few completed responses to the survey of New Zealand based singers and teachers, I am looking forward to receiving more of these, so if you are involved in the survey and haven't yet returned yours, please do so as soon as you can.

The survey focuses on perceptions of singing study in the United Kingdom, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please

contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz to receive a survey form and information sheet.

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Details Of My Activities Over The Past Fortnight:

Music Colleges and Other Training Institutions

I travelled to Manchester to attend the RNCM Open Day and was able to observe a number of 'team teaching' classes there, as well as meeting with New Zealander Susan Roper, the Head of Vocal Studies, for an interview. The 'team teaching' classes are run alongside the students' regular voice lessons, and involve a small number of students, usually of the same voice type, working with a teacher on both technical and interpretative aspects. It was excellent to get to meet the teachers and observe them working and to see the 'team teaching' concept in practice. This is a unique aspect of the RNCM Vocal Studies which gives the students access to and experience of various different teachers' ways of working, as well as giving them extra lesson time over and above their regular lessons with their usual teacher.

I also went up to Glasgow to visit the RSAMD and attend their production of Britten's 'Albert Herring' which I enjoyed very much. It's an opera I know well, and in particular I enjoyed the direction, which I felt allowed the comedic aspects of the piece to come through without ever losing integrity or reverting to slapstick. The singing of almost all the singers was very good indeed and was consistently so throughout the evening.

The other main activity for me at the RSAMD was to take part in a 'forum' with three of the singing teachers there. First I observed the teachers in lessons and then we all took part in a round table discussion of teaching techniques and issues involved in the teaching of singing which was chaired by the HOD of Vocal Studies, Chris Underwood. This allowed me to meet some of the teachers at the Academy and get to know them better, and gave us the chance to discuss various issues arising from the lessons and share our experiences as teachers.

While at the RSAMD I was able to interview the Head of Opera, Tim Dean, and back in London I had the opportunity to interview Neil Mackie, the former Head of Vocal Studies at the Royal College of Music, who was able to comment on his experience of the not inconsiderable numbers of New Zealand singers who have studied there during his time as HOD at the College.

I also had the opportunity to observe and/or have lessons with Diane Forlano and Jennifer Dakin from the Royal Academy of Music and Russell Smythe of the Royal College of Music. Plus I sat in on a class taught by Russell on 'The Art Of Teaching', which covers aspects of vocal pedagogy and is run for the undergraduate students at RCM.

Other student performances I attended were the National Opera Studio's Showcase at the Hackney Empire which included New Zealand tenor Shaun Dixon singing an excerpt from Donizetti's 'Roberto Devereux', and the Royal Academy's production of Britten's 'The Rape of Lucretia'. This had New Zealand student Kristen Darragh in the title role, who gave a moving performance and displayed a developing richness of vocal tone.

Other Interviews, Coachings, Performances etc

During the past two weeks I have interviewed two more young New Zealand singers about their experiences here, and am looking forward to a group discussion over afternoon tea on Saturday with some more current students and recent graduates.

Earlier this week I had the opportunity to interview Sarah Playfair, who is a freelance casting consultant whose background in opera includes Glyndebourne, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and Garsington Opera. She specialises in artistic planning and opera casting, particularly in the field of young singers, and her insights were most enlightening.

I enjoyed very much being involved in a day long workshop session with Dame Kiri and a group of young New Zealand singers and one young accompanist. The sessions were accompanied by Jonathan Papp, and also involved Anna Sims, a specialist in teaching breathing techniques. The following day I continued discussions with Dame Kiri and we spent some time doing a working session in which she commented on my singing and we discussed various aspects of technique. This I found extremely interesting and I am looking forward very much to a further session we have arranged for next week.

I was able to attend a production of 'Owen Wingrave' at the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre which included a young baritone from the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme (JPYAP) in the lead role. I also attended the final of the Kathleen Ferrier Competition which was won by Katherine Broderick from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

I have also continued my singing lessons with Paul Farrington, and had a coaching with Jonathan Papp (coach for RAM, JPYAP and freelance) and a coaching and short interview with Stephen Wilder (freelance and RCM coach).

Plus I recorded a phone interview with Eva Radich for the Upbeat! programme on Radio NZ Concert which was broadcast on 30th April.

Coming Up In The Next Weeks

My time in London is nearly over, and I have only about ten more days here, but for this time I have the following plans:

- A group discussion over afternoon tea on Saturday with more current New Zealand students and recent graduates, to hear more about their experiences here
- More interviews and meetings with people involved with students and graduates in London
- Another working session and discussion with Dame Kiri and Jonathan Papp
- Travelling to Cardiff to meet with Dennis O'Neill and find out more about the Cardiff International Academy of Voice programme that he has started there, as well as attending a performance of Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solenne' given by the students
- Attending a lunchtime recital by Anna Leese as winner of the Maggie Teyte Prize at the Royal Opera House Crush Room
- Attending a performance of Debussy's 'Pelléas et Mélisande' at the Royal Opera Covent Garden
- Plus, if I have time to fit them in, there are three more singing competitions next week – two at the colleges and one external which I may be able to attend

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey as mentioned at the beginning of this report, please contact me on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

You can also email me as above if you would like more information on the project or if you have any helpful comments or suggestions to make. Alternatively you may contact Paul Gleeson, Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation administrator on: foundation@kiritekanawa.org

All of my update reports can be found on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation website at: <http://www.kiritekanawa.org/news>

Jenny Wollerman – 10th May 2007



**Jenny Wollerman: Research Project
Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare
Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK
Progress Report No. 7, 24th May 2007**

The Project As At 24th May

This report covers the last week of my time in London plus travelling home to New Zealand. In this period, apart from the preparations for returning, I went to Cardiff to meet Dennis O'Neill and visit CIAV, the training programme he is running there, spent some time with Dame Kiri, discussing the project and having another working session, as well as attending a few last concerts.

I am still looking to receive more completed surveys, so if you haven't yet returned yours, please do so as soon as you can. Thank you!

The survey focuses on perceptions of singing study in the United Kingdom, in order to compare the perceived realities with those that I am finding as I interview people involved in the training and employment of young singers here.

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey, there is still time for this: please contact me soon on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz to receive a survey form and information sheet.

Details Of My Activities Over The Past Fortnight:

Music Colleges and Other Training Institutions

I travelled to Cardiff to visit the Cardiff International Academy of Voice (CIAV) and meet with its director, Dennis O'Neill which only started operation this year. I was fortunate to be able to attend a performance of Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle' given by students from the course with the Cor Caerdydd choir. The four soloists were very impressive, as were the choir, and it was an uplifting performance which was very well received. The following day I spent the morning observing lessons and meeting with Dennis O'Neill at the Academy, to get an idea of how the course works.

Performances and Other Activities

I arranged for a group of New Zealand singers currently studying in London to meet up for a group discussion over afternoon tea and this was very interesting.

Unfortunately, as so often happens with so many things going on for the young singers, a number of them were not able to attend on the day, partly due to transport problems on the underground, so it was a reduced group that came together, but all the students who did come were studying at different colleges so they had had quite different experiences that they were able to share and draw comparisons between.

I went to hear Anna Leese's lunchtime recital at the Royal Opera House Crush Room which was part of her prize for winning the Maggie Teyte Prize. Anna seemed in her element in this recital, and seemed to really enjoy making a personal contact with the audience, who are of course seated very close to the performers in this venue! I went to the concert with New Zealand coach and pianist David Harper and had a chance to catch up and to talk to him about the professional scene here for young singers as well.

The last opera performance of my trip was Debussy's 'Pelléas et Mélisande' at the Royal Opera House. Simon Rattle was conducting, the leads were Angelika Kirchschrager, Simon Keenlyside, Robert Lloyd and Gerald Finlay. I had heard good things about it and I wasn't disappointed. I loved the modernist symbolic setting and was easily drawn into the psychological depths, lulled into a delicious inward journey by the wonderful orchestral playing and the top notch singing. It was a great way to finish up my time in London.

My final, very welcome, task was to meet again with Dame Kiri and talk over the project and my experiences. I had another opportunity to sing for her, and again Jonathan Papp was able to play for me and another soprano whom she has been working with and we all spent a very fruitful day working through some more repertoire. We were looking at both technical and stylistic aspects, and it was wonderful to have more comments from Dame Kiri on the Mozart repertoire which she knows so well.

Coming Up In The Next Weeks

I am now back in New Zealand and preparing to write up the research I have done ready to pass on the information to New Zealand singers and teachers. More on this later!

To Make Contact About The Project or the Survey:

If you are a young singer considering overseas study, or a New Zealand based singing teacher, and would be prepared to take part in the survey as mentioned at the beginning of this report, please contact me on: jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

You can also email me as above if you would like more information on the project or if you have any helpful comments or suggestions to make. Alternatively you may contact Paul Gleeson, Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation administrator on:
foundation@kiritekanawa.org

My update reports can be found on the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation website at:
<http://www.kiritekanawa.org/news>

Jenny Wollerman – 24th May 2007

Appendix 2: New Zealand based singers and teachers survey form

Project To Research Ways To Better Prepare Young New Zealand Singers For Advanced Study In The UK

Jenny Wollerman: Research Project

Survey Of New Zealand Based Singers And Singing Teachers On Perceptions Of Advanced Singing Study Overseas

Please complete only the sections of this questionnaire that apply to you. Some of the sections are marked to be completed by Singing Teachers, and others by Singers. Please determine under which of these categories you are completing the questionnaire and then follow the instructions in the section headings.

It is not necessary to complete every question: if you are uncomfortable about responding to a particular question, please leave it blank. Completion of the survey form is expected to take approximately 1 hour.

You may complete the form by typing the answers on the form in Microsoft Word and returning it to me by emailing it as an attachment, or by printing the form out and returning it by post. Or you may answer the questions in an email and send that to me. Email and postal addresses for returning the survey are given at the end of this document.

Please return the survey, preferably by email, by 30th April 2007.

A: Preliminary Background Questions

Name: _____

1. Are you completing this form as a TEACHER or as a SINGER?
2. If you are completing it as a singer, please give the following information:
 - What age are you now? _____
 - How many years have you been studying singing? _____
 - Who is your current singing teacher? _____
 - Please give details of any tertiary study you are doing or have completed including the names of your singing teachers where applicable:

B: Questions to be completed by both singers and teachers:

3. If you were able to choose any place of study in the world for advanced singing study, where would you choose and why? (which country, which school, which course, which singing teacher)?

4. What difficulties do you think a New Zealand student might face in making the transition from NZ to the UK or other chosen place of study? What do you think the most difficult things would be that you would have to cope with when studying overseas?

5. In what specific areas would you expect a singing student coming from New Zealand:

a) to have an advantage over the local students in the UK (or elsewhere)?

b) to be disadvantaged when studying alongside the local students?

6. Are there any particular aspects of studying overseas that you feel you would like to know more about that you have had difficulty finding information on? Are there any specific areas you would like to see being researched as part of this project?

7. How does one get noticed by those employing young singers in the UK? Which of the following are the most important for this? Please indicate the three you think would be successful the most often in furthering a young singer's career.

- Auditioning for agents
- Auditioning for opera companies and impresarios
- Recommendations by your school
- Recommendations by your singing teacher or coach
- Performances in school concerts and operas
- Summer school performances
- School competitions and prizes
- Non-school competitions

The following questions are for singers. If you are a teacher, please skip to the last section (E)

C: Questions for singers only:

8. What are your short term and long term goals as a singer?

9. Are you considering overseas singing study?

If so, please complete questions 10 through 15. If not, please skip these and go on to question 16.

10. Please indicate which regions you are considering to undertake your advanced singing study in: UK/USA/Australia/Europe/Canada/other?

11a. What will be the most important factors which will influence your decision about which country and school to study at?

11b. What other factors will you consider?

12. If you are considering advanced overseas singing study, and your aim is to go on to a career in singing, how long do you expect you will need to study at your chosen institution before moving on to professional work?

13. After your overseas study do you intend to return to NZ:

- After establishing a singing career
- After studies, to establish a singing career in NZ
- Not at all
- When you have retired from your singing career
- Other? (Please explain)

14. If you have decided already which country and/or course you want to take overseas, do you have a specific teacher with whom you want to study? Who is this? What makes you want to study with this teacher? How did you find out about them?

15. Please indicate in what areas you mainly hope to work or perform as a singer: (you may indicate more than one.)

opera soloist/opera chorus/oratorio soloist/solo vocal recitals/professional chorister in a choir/teaching singing/other?

**16. Please explain what you understand to be the role of a vocal coach?
If you don't know, please say so.**

17. Study in the United Kingdom

Without reference to any sources of information please outline your current understanding of the following aspects of study at the major institutions in the UK (e.g. Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music etc)

- a) Cost of study – high, low, approximate amount in NZ\$ for tuition fees per year?**
- b) Living costs - high, low, approximate amount in NZ\$ for living costs per year?**
- c) Study visas and work visas – are these easy to obtain for NZ students during their study and afterwards?**

- d) Entry level standards – what would you need to show in an audition to be accepted for advanced study in the UK? What level of previous study and experience do you think would be expected to be accepted into advanced study at a UK institution?

18. In your view, how does the United Kingdom compare with other potential countries in terms of advanced study? In what ways is it more or less attractive for advanced singing study?

D: Personal Background Questions - for singers only (optional):

19. Please provide a short summary of your personal background including
- Singing study to date, including private teachers and university or other courses of study including lengths of time with each teacher
 - Grade exams passed in singing, theory and any other instruments
 - Other courses of study or degrees taken or achieved and highest secondary school level achieved (e.g. NCEA 3, University Entrance etc) and singing summer schools attended
 - Details of any singing competition successes you have had, including local, regional and national comps, which year this was and prize money amounts if relevant
 - Languages and/or singing diction study undertaken and to what level
 - Performance experience – in chorus, choirs and as a solo singer

E: Teaching Background Questions – for teachers only (optional):

20. Please provide a short summary of your background in teaching students who have gone on to advanced study overseas, including:

- How many of your students have done so in the past 5 years?
- Where did they tend to go and why?
- Based on their experiences, where would you recommend that young singers should do their advanced singing studies? Why?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Please return it to me, preferably by email, by 30th April 2007.

Email and postal addresses for returning the survey are as follows:

Email address:

jenny.wollerman@nzsm.ac.nz

Glossary

Explanations of some of the specialist terms and abbreviations used within this document.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
CIAV	Cardiff International Academy of Voice
Coaching	A 'coaching' is a session given by a vocal coach, as opposed to a 'lesson' given by a singing teacher. (For an explanation of the term 'vocal coach', see below).
Consultation lesson	A lesson that a prospective student takes with a teacher, or a lesson that a singer takes with a teacher for advice or to hear the teacher's opinion of their singing. Consultation lessons are usually offered by institutions after a student has been accepted for study. See more information under 'When and how to choose a teacher', in Part Two Section 2.
Diction	The teaching of singing diction (also known as 'lyric diction') involves teaching singers to pronounce sung words so they are perceived by the listener both as correct in terms of pronunciation and in terms of the distinctive style of the language. In some languages the traditional way to pronounce sung words may differ from the way they are spoken in common usage.
ENO	English National Opera
EU	European Union
GSMD, Guildhall	The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London
The 'Home Office'	The Home Office is the name of the UK government department that deals with immigration.
IPA (International Phonetics Alphabet)	IPA is a system of symbols used to denote specific speech sounds, both vowel sounds and consonants. It is used by singers and teachers of singing diction as a means of defining the sounds of a language quickly and easily, as it makes it possible to relate the sounds of different languages to each other. It also helps a student to understand the sounds of their own language and appreciate the specific differences between accents.
JPYAP	Jette Parker Young Artists Programme
NOS	National Opera Studio
Portfolio career	In a portfolio career, you manage a 'portfolio' of part-time jobs that result in the equivalent of full-time employment. See more information under 'Career Aspects In General' in Part Two Section 8.
RAM	The Royal Academy of Music in London
RCM	The Royal College of Music in London
Repertoire, Rep	The music (songs, arias etc) chosen for a particular occasion or that forms the body of work that is being studied or is known by a singer.
Repetiteur	An accompanist who specialises in playing for opera rehearsals and has the requisite specialist skills for this.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
RNCM	Royal Northern College of Music
ROH	Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
RSAMD	Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
Singing teacher, voice teacher	A singing teacher or voice teacher, as opposed to a vocal coach, is someone who is responsible for teaching a student <u>how</u> to sing. While they may teach many of the same aspects as a vocal coach, this is where the two disciplines diverge, as a vocal coach is not expected to <u>teach</u> vocal technique, even though they may at times touch on some aspects of it.
Technique, technical training	Aspects of singing teaching that focus on teaching the student how to gain functional control of their instrument so they are able to maintain conscious control over the sounds they are making, particularly in terms of tone colour.
Vocal coach or repertoire coach	A vocal coach is someone who is responsible for working with a singer on interpretative aspects. While they may cover many of the same aspects as a singing teacher, a vocal coach is not expected to teach vocal technique, even though they may at times touch on some aspects of it. For more on vocal coaches, see Part One Section 6.6.

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- Legge, Anthony (2001) *The Art of Auditioning*
London: Peters Edition
- National Opera Studio Prospectus* (undated)
- Royal Academy of Music International Students' Handbook (July 2006)*
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Note: I found this under Study & Departments > Student Support > International students.
- Royal Academy of Music Prospectus 2007*
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- Royal College of Music, London - Prospectus for entry 2008/2009*
- RNCM Life – Royal Northern College of Music Prospectus 08/09*
- The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama*
Guide for International Students – Session 2007/08
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- The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama Prospectus 08/09*
- Shanks, Roland et al. (2005) *London Student Housing Guide 2005-2006*
London: University of London Accommodation Office
- UKCOSA Guidance Notes for Students 2004-2005*
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Useful websites

These addresses are for websites I have made use of in my research and which contain useful information for prospective students and their teachers. The information given here is correct as at June 2007.

Please remember that website addresses and site structures may change over time. This is why I have generally not quoted addresses within the body of the report and have not included addresses of any specific pages within the sites.

If you find any of the addresses below are no longer valid, just use a search engine such as 'Google' to search for the name of the institution or organisation in order to find the new website address.

Colleges and Institutions and Admissions Services

Royal Academy of Music
<http://www.ram.ac.uk/>

Royal College of Music
<http://www.rcm.ac.uk/>

Guildhall School of Music and Drama
<http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/>

Royal Northern College of Music
<http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/>

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
<http://www.rsamd.ac.uk/>

National Opera Studio
<http://www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk/>

Royal Opera House – Jette Parker Young Artists Programme
<http://info.royaloperahouse.org/JPYAP/>

Cardiff International Academy of Voice
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/ciav/>

CUKAS – UK Conservatories Admission Service
<http://www.cukas.ac.uk/>

Organisations Giving Study And Funding Related Information

UKCOSA - Council for International Education - UK Council on Overseas Student Affairs
<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/>

British Council – Grants information and scholarships database
<http://britishcouncil.org/>

London Student Housing Guide
<http://studenthousing.lon.ac.uk/>

Creative New Zealand
<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/>

Government Immigration Websites

UK Visas Government Website
Note: I suggest you use the site map page to search for things on this website
<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk>

Home Office Border and Immigration Agency Government Websites
<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk>
<http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk>

I-UK Website – run by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the British Council et al. For information on 'Visiting the UK, Education and Business in the UK'
<http://www.i-uk.com>

Other Miscellaneous Websites

Belsize Music Rooms – practice rooms for hire at Belsize Park and pianos for hire on a weekly basis
<http://www.belsize-music-rooms.co.uk>
http://www.belsize-music-rooms.co.uk/page.php?page=music_rooms

Journey Planner – gives up to the minute transport information for London
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>

Streetmap – gives UK maps searchable by street, post code etc
<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/>