



In memory of

Rodney Macann MNZM

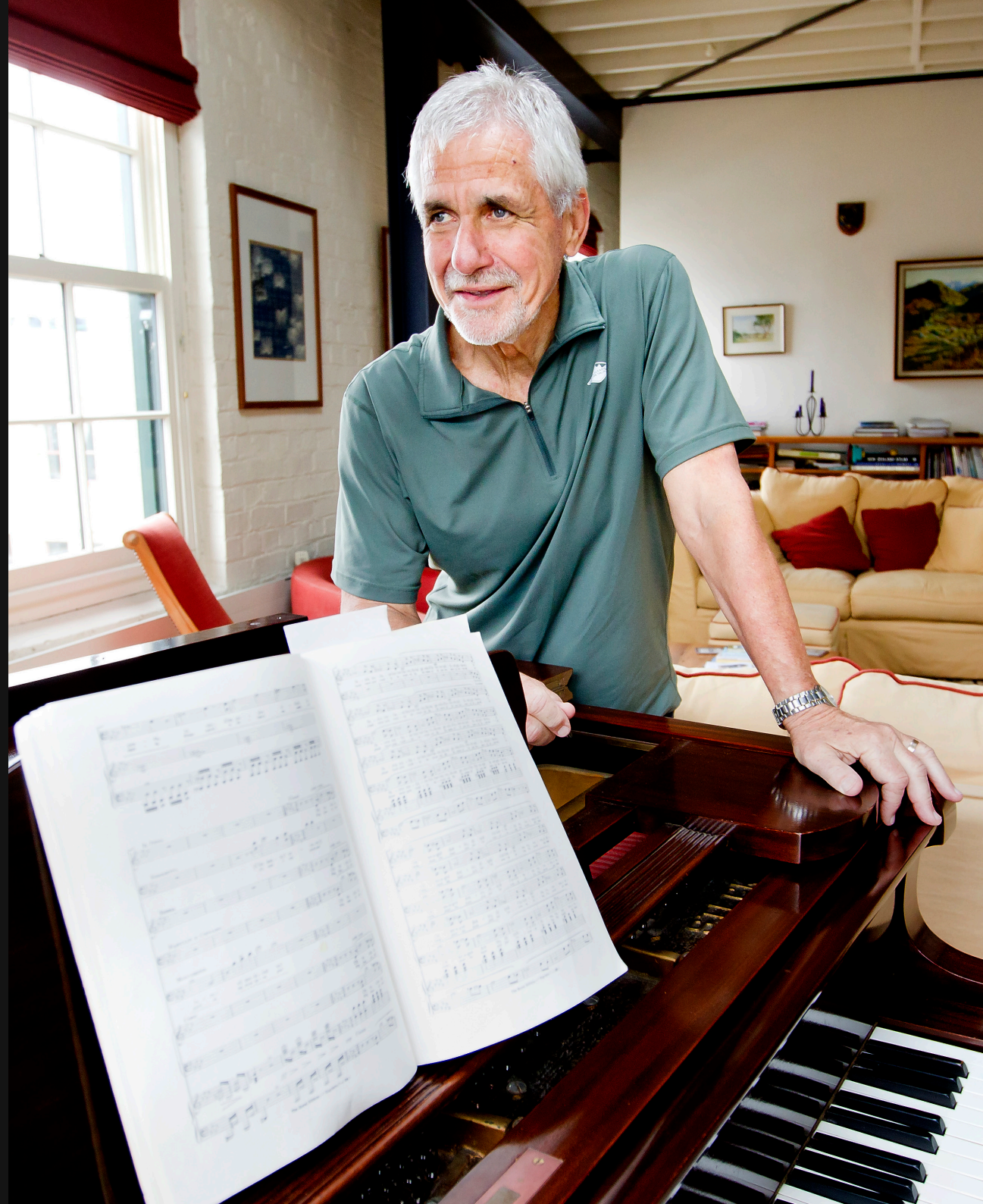
The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation recently lost one of its longest serving trustees when Rodney Macann MNZM died on January 20, 2023.

The Foundation extends deepest sympathy to Lorna and the Macann family on their sad loss.

Rodney's funeral was held at St John's Presbyterian Church, Wellington. The ceremony was live streamed and can be viewed here: [!\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f_img.jpg\)](#)



PHOTO: STUFF LIMITED



These memorial pages are dedicated to Rodney's life and work with the Foundation.

Rodney Macann – a rare human being who has left an immense impression on all who crossed his path in life. To a fault he was generous with both knowledge and time, inspirational and full of enthusiasm. His optimism was infectious – his cup was always 1/2 full! Rodney's contribution to the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is immeasurable and his input will be sorely missed.

Fellow Trustees have lost a dear and wonderful friend, a valued member of our team and above all we will be eternally grateful that he touched our lives. Thankyou Rodney – for everything.

– DIANA FENWICK, DEPUTY CHAIR, KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION



Eulogy given by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa

Many accounts of Rodney's achievements will be told today. He was a very special man and such a dear friend – I will miss him very much. My friendship with Rodney began when I was 19 years old. We would meet in Christchurch and spend time together in that beautiful city.

During my time with Rodney I found he had very strong religious beliefs – we would always attend some of his church meetings, but my faith was not as strong as his and I think he could see I was a lost cause.

I left New Zealand in 1966 at the age of 21 for music studies in the UK. I travelled by ship and arrived in Southampton where Rodney was waiting to greet me when I arrived on a cold English night in London. Our lives and careers were always connected. My dear friend you have been a special part of my life and you will leave a huge void.

Many of the Foundation singers have sent messages and heartfelt condolences. They say what can we do! How can we help? Oliver Sewell one of our young singers mentions (and I quote) ...” But for you Rodney I would not be here”. Oliver says he would have given up had it not been for Rodney –



Jarvis Dams and Rodney Macann – finale concert, Kiri Programme 2016

Rodney would never let that happen. Your care and guidance has touched so many people.

Rodney you have left an ongoing legacy of young singers who are all progressing well. Your insight, coaching, mentoring and care has created a group of young talent who will go on to achieve. You have guided them well. I know you had plans for the future but things change.

A few words from 'The Chariot' by Emily Dickinson ...

*Because I could not stop for Death,
He finally stopped for me;
The Carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality*

We will meet again.

Eulogy given by Professor Terence Dennis – Foundation Trustee

It is my privilege today to pay tribute to an area that became such a significant part in Rodney's life after his return to New Zealand: his work with the upcoming and contemporary generation of young classical singers.

I know this area in particular afforded him immense personal satisfaction, and offered many young talented singers precious gifts of mentorship and wisdom based on Rodney's long professional experience and expertise on both opera and concert stage.

From 2006 Rodney was a Trustee of the Dame Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation: as a member of the Foundation's Artistic Committee his empathy and guidance have been significant factors in the development of New Zealand's best classical vocal talent.

Realising such potential is complex, and Rodney invested our young singers with an understanding of their individual needs: not just in terms of vocal acumen, but with his special insights into the life skills so crucial in developing and sustaining a demanding professional career.



Epu Laga'aia, Samson Setu, Rodney Macann, Chuck Hudson (international tutor), Harry Grigg, Manase Latu

Rodney untiringly gave his expertise to the Kiri Project, the Mentoring Workshops of the Foundation, he invited young singers to his home for further mentoring sessions, and was always on hand to support their concert and stage appearances.

In recent years here in Wellington he founded and masterminded the Rotary series of "Singers to Listen For" concerts, recitals that showcased much top talent; and although he is no longer with us, he lives on in the fourth of these ventures, a special concert honouring baritone Philip Rhodes in a few weeks' time ... and over the last two years Rodney gave his expertise to the casting of the productions of the new Wellington Opera, designed to foster our young singers on the stage.

Of particular import was his work as preliminary and semi-finals adjudicator for several of the Mobil and subsequent Lexus Song Quests, New Zealand's most prestigious, long-standing contest for classical singers.

Eulogy given by Professor Terence Dennis – Foundation Trustee continued

Rodney and I worked closely together many times in various contexts since his return to New Zealand in the early 1990s; this was a heart-warming association that I much revere.

Many here today will remember Rodney's own stage appearances, in opera, oratorio and in concert: I hope you may permit me one reminiscence: this was back in 1992, in Salome of Richard Strauss, when Rodney sang the role of John the Baptist: in the long and colourful history of productions of this opera, how many times may it have been sung by a Baptist minister?

As a repetiteur for this I was also involved in what I dubbed "cistern duty", queuing Rodney's ascent on to the stage for his first dramatic confrontation with Salome: on one occasion, just as the stage machinery was beginning to rise, I quickly reminded him to remove his pair of glasses...

It has been moving to read the tributes so many of our young singers have sent from across the world on learning of

Rodney's passing: in this respect, that from baritone Teddy Tahu Rhodes is especially pertinent, and he has allowed me to quote from his message to the Foundation:

"Rodney was the most decent, kind and caring person and someone I held in the highest regard as well as someone to laugh and smile with..... he taught me so much more than just how to be a singer – he set an example of how to be as a person."

Rodney long served as a Trustee of the NZ Opera School, held each summer at Whanganui Collegiate School.

His death occurred the day before this year's Gala Concert: as I stood in the wings watching the singers onstage in the concert the next evening, now hardly a week in the past, I could only but think that Rodney was there in spirit, as he had been there so many times in person, and that this was a realisation of his artistic hopes for our young generation.

The Foundation received many messages of sympathy from young singers who had worked with the Foundation and Rodney Macann. Some examples ...

“What an incredible man Rodney was, and what an impact he had on the opera community in New Zealand. I’ll forever be grateful for his belief in me. I truly don’t know if I would have made it this far without his encouragement, he believed in me at times I didn’t believe in myself. He will be so deeply missed.”

– ELIZA BOOM

“What a loss for us all – the Foundation, the opera community in New Zealand, his church community and his family and friends. Rodney made such an enormous contribution in particular to the development of young singers in our country, he leaves an amazing legacy. I send you all at the Foundation my love and deepest sympathies for the loss of your dear friend and colleague.”

– BIANCA ANDREW

“My sincere condolences to all in the foundation, what a tragic loss. We, the next generation of singers have a rather large hole to fill, Rodney made a point to reach out to so many young singers with a word of encouragement and to share his genuine enthusiasm.”

– PHILLIP RHODES

“It is such sad news. Rodney was a fierce supporter of mine and so many other young singers. It was thanks to him, in a huge part, that I got involved with the Foundation in the beginning. He was amazing at always checking in to see how things were going - our interactions, fuelled by his passionate interest and earnest mentorship, throughout all my time with the Foundation were always an absolute pleasure. He changed my life – he will be hugely missed.”

– OLIVER SEWELL

“What sad news to wake up to! My deep condolences to his family and all of you as well. He was such a good, kind hearted man, and such a support to all of us. Truly a great loss to the world.”

– ANTHONY SCHNEIDER

“Rodney encouraged me and gave me a chance in the Lexus; he offered many words of advice and support when I was a part of the Foundation’s initiative for young singers. He was always on my side, and I never doubted that. With the experiences I’ve had since, I honestly can say (in total agreement with many others who have said similar things), Rodney was one of the kindest people I knew. I will always be honoured to have had his support and I will carry his gentleness and steadfast good humour in my heart.”

– MADISON NONOA



Rodney Macann – career milestones

Educated at Linwood High School

Early vocal training under Clifton Cook, in Christchurch

Finalist in 1963 and 1965 Mobil Song Quests

Career as operatic bass-baritone, concert and oratorio singer, based in the UK from the mid 1960s, then in NZ from early 1990s

Soloist at Royal Opera Covent Garden and English National Opera, London for many seasons, guest artist in European centres, USA, Japan

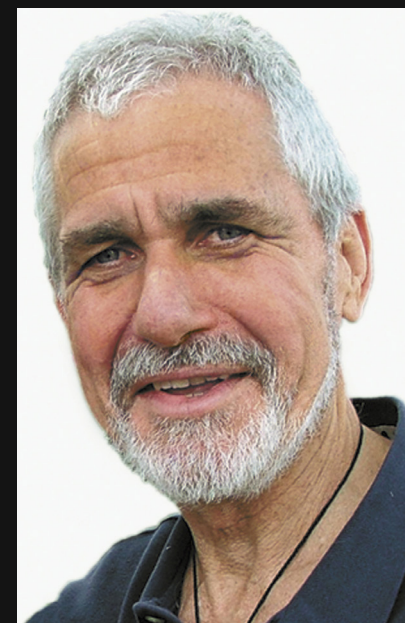
Appeared as soloist with the English National Opera in their historic tour to the Soviet Union

Regular soloist in the Bach St Matthew Passion at Festival Hall, London – which the Bach choir performed twice a year (1970's – 80's) conducted by Sir David Wilcocks.

Noted filmed performances include the lead role in Sir Michael Tippett's "King Priam" for Kent Opera, in the Nicholas Hytner production of Handel's "Xerxes" at English National Opera; also in Giordano's "Andrea Chénier" at the Royal Opera.

He sings on the Decca recording of Ponchielli's "La Gioconda", alongside soprano Monserrat Caballé and tenor Luciano Pavarotti

Memorable operatic appearances in New Zealand include John the Baptist in Richard Strauss' "Salome" for the NZ International Festival of the Arts.



*Rodney
Macann*
(1942-2023)