



The newsletter of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation



Issue 9/2009 – Five years of making a difference

Welcome to the March 2009 edition of 'Aria' - the newsletter of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation.

In this newsletter you will read about the recent concert at Black Barn, Phillip Rhodes' progress at the Academy of Voice in Cardiff, the Solti Te Kanawa Accademia and the inaugural Opera Factory Masterclass. There is also a report from Dame Kiri, an update on the Laurie Coon Scholarship, and much more....

AN UPDATE FROM DAME KIRI – HELPING OUR YOUNG STUDENTS MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES



I can't believe that its 5 years since we launched the Foundation – its been 5 years of hard but enjoyable work and I want to thank my Trustees for their untiring efforts to achieve our goals. I firmly believe that we are beginning to make a difference.

Since creating our Foundation many aspects of music have opened my eyes to the needs of students who are just starting on their careers. Although my original focus was on raising the important funds to enable us to make significant grants I also started slowly helping students in the most basic ways. As I got more involved it became much clearer that what these singers needed was help with vocal technique, knowledge of vocal management, good health habits and the ability to know when to say 'No'. Although I have assisted many young singers there are a number of students in particular that I am currently focusing on – some of them need vocal technique security, others need help with everyday social behaviour to be able to present themselves in the most positive way to agents, managers, sponsors and artistic directors and others need advice about technique and repertoire.

The importance of being prepared for the role

In the case of repertoire I won't take the responsibility of saying absolutely 'yes' or 'no' to a role that has been suggested to these singers. In these cases I always get a second or third opinion before offering advice to a singer that a particular role is correct for them at this stage of their development. By way of an example – occasionally singers asked me if I think they could do a particular Mozart role. My immediate question is 'do you know the role now' and 'when would the first performance be' ? If they don't know the role and the first performance is within 2 months my advice would be they should not to do it – if it was a year away they would have time enough to become familiar with the role. This process gives young singers an opportunity to gauge if the role suits them taking time to slowly get the muscles to work around the music.

Talent not enough

I was reminded again recently about the importance of this process when I read a story about the 50th anniversary of Motown which appeared in the 'Time Out' supplement of the NZ Herald on February 21, 2009. In the



interview Mary Wilson (an original Supreme member) said “I have to applaud Motown and Mr Gordy who recognized we needed to know how to carry ourselves, and that is something missing in today’s market strategies. You can’t just throw someone out there just because they are talented”.

The importance of saying thank you

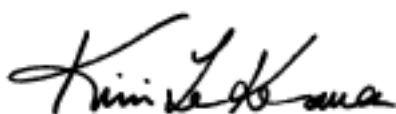
I also stress to the singers how important it is to acknowledge anything that is done for them. I encourage them to write handwritten thank you letters (not emails) to sponsors, concert organizers – anyone who has supported them or shown an interest in their development.

Ironically I never had this sort of advice when I first set out on my own career but now realize just how important it is. There are so many people who are happy to support young singers with finance and other resources – they all deserve a simple acknowledgement.

Setting the right level for sponsorship support

However it is a fact that some of those who support young singers want to become more involved than is necessary in the young person’s career. I always advise that this be kept to a minimum because of the possible affect on their studies. In the main however I believe there are many sponsors who are encouraged by what we are doing and want to be involved for minimum exposure in return.

Thank you for your continued support of the Foundation and help for all those young singers and musicians to realize their dreams.



RECENTLY THE FOUNDATION MET TO REVIEW CURRENT PROJECTS AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE AND TOOK TIME OUT WITH DAME KIRI TO CELEBRATE THE FOUNDATION’S FIRST 5 YEARS. THEIR DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS.



Trustees: (back row) Paul Gleeson, Diana Fenwick & Rodney Macann;
(front row) Dame Kiri, Dame Cath Tizard & Terence Dennis
Absent: Ian Fraser, Paul Harrop and Stephen Dee

ONGOING SUPPORT CONFIRMED FOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING INTERNATIONAL CARDIFF ACADEMY



One of the world’s leading opera stars has joined with Cardiff University to create an international academy to train the singing stars of the future. The brain-child of and directed by renowned tenor Dennis O’Neill the Cardiff International Academy of Voice provides a highly specialized and unique environment for a small number of exceptional singers at the early-professional stage, selected and recruited globally, to develop and polish their talent to the highest professional standards.

The best coaches, language experts and technicians are complemented by visiting eminent conductors and international stars from the operatic world.

There are currently two New Zealander singers studying at the Academy with support from the Foundation:

Young Gisborne-born lyric soprano **Claire Egan** who was the inaugural winner of the Laurie Coon Foundation Scholarship used it to take up an invitation to attend the Academy. Dame Kiri was recently a special guest at the

Academy where she had the opportunity to meet with Claire and observe her work. She confirmed that her studies are going well and that she is dedicated and focused.



L-R Phillip Rhodes, Dame Kiri, Claire Egan

At a recent meeting the trustees of the Foundation confirmed its ongoing significant financial support, in partnership with the Dame Malvina Major Foundation and the Deane Endowment Trust, for **Phillip Rhodes** (a young New Zealand Baritone from Hawkes Bay – a former winner of the 2005 Lockwood Aria and the 2007 Lexus Song Quest) who is currently in his second year at the Academy.

Dennis O'Neill recently provided the Foundation with an update on both singers in which he described their progress.

"Claire Egan has increased her repertoire and sense of style enormously. Her voice, unusual in its strong lyricism but with a very unusual coloratura extension, is developing along with

her technique. There can be no doubt that she has every chance of an excellent future.

Phillip Rhodes has worked hard consistently and continues to stun our concert goers with his striking stage presence and ability to portray. As a 'natural' singer, he has had to tackle major work in developing his understanding of technique and at this very time is making a major breakthrough in that area. The combination of this with his existing gifts bode very strongly in his favour for his upcoming career.

All concerned are to be thanked and congratulated for their generosity and foresight in assisting these gifted New Zealanders on the difficult and competitive journey into the Operatic World."

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SINGERS ATTENDING THE SOLTI ACCADEMIA



The Solti Accademia di Bel Canto was formed in 2003 by Lady Valerie Solti in the name of her late husband Sir George Solti to further the careers of young singers by providing a teaching platform as well as a bridge between life as a student and the life of a musician with a responsibility to the public.

Each year the Accademia stages its Summer Academy in Tuscany which is attended by 18 young singers who have been selected following auditions which take place at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Each year the group selected is international – in 2008 students came from Australia, China, Korea, Lithuania, Mexico, Serbia, United Kingdom, Russia, South Africa and New Zealand (the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation has previously supported Ana James, Kirsten Simpson and Kristen Darragh to attend).

The three-week course is supervised by seven staff under the artistic direction of Jonathan Papp, internationally renowned accompanist and a teacher at the Royal Academy of Music. Some of the best coaches from the most prestigious international institutions collaborate with the Accademia and offer students precious insights into all aspects of Bel Canto.

Last year the Accademia honoured Dame Kiri by announcing their new name - the Accademia Solti Te Kanawa. Dame Kiri has always maintained an interest in the Accademia and is now devoting more time to ensure its long-term success.

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation recently entered into a partnership with the Accademia and agreed to partially fund two New Zealand students to attend the Accademia each year for the next 3 years.

HIGH STANDARD OF APPLICANTS FOR LAURIE COON FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Laurie Coon Foundation Scholarship in Singing which is administered and presented by the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is aimed at assisting outstanding New Zealand singers with genuine financial needs to develop international careers at the highest level. The annual scholarship carries a value of \$10,000.

When applications closed recently for the 2009 scholarship five excellent applications had been received which are currently being reviewed by the scholarship panel.



'CURTAIN UP' WORKSHOP A REAL WINNER

The Foundation's agreement to financially support a two-year project of specific workshops and training for senior and advanced students proved to be very wise decision. The workshop organized by the Opera Factory Trust in Auckland was held over a 3 day weekend and attracted 34 aspiring opera singers under the expert tutelage



of Dame Kiri, Dame Malvina Major, Rosemary Barnes, Terence Dennis, Helen Medlyn and Raymond Hawthorne.

Event organizer and Opera Factory Director Sally Sloman said the workshops provided the opportunity for the singers to explore a wide range of fundamental opera topics, including vocal presentation and performance, role study, stagecraft, repertoire, characterization and interpretation. "A wonderful Masterclass was held to conclude the project on the last evening and we were delighted that Dame Kiri was able to lead and inspire the selected participants alongside other professional tutors and a most enthralled large audience of supporters. It

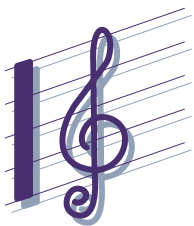
was an exciting, challenging, non-stop and inspirational three days" she said.

"Opera factory principally provides a stepping stone into the industry and with the support of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and other philanthropists; we have an increasing number of successful graduates.

Opera Factory also has a lesser known role in that we provide employment, training and valuable work experience for professional or emerging artists, directors, tutors, technicians, stage managers or administrators seeking entry or re-entering the opera or related industry – and above all we aim to encourage and inspire the future audiences and supporters for opera in New Zealand". "We are already planning the 2009 Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation workshop" she added.

MEET ONE OF OUR EARLIEST SUPPORTERS

Few people today will be familiar with the name Dorothy Frances Craig yet this little known New Zealander played an important role in the establishment of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. With the assistance of John Leaning (a family friend) we have been able to piece together a brief picture of her life.



Dorothy was raised on a farm near Waipukurau as an only child of older parents. She attended school at Woodford House in Havelock North. On completing her schooling she worked on the family farm during the depression. Not long after she sailed with a group of her friends to the United Kingdom not to return to the land of her birth until much later in life.

In the UK she lived in a tiny flat in Nell Gwynn House in Sloane Street and had a rather sad life after an unfortunate love affair. She apparently had lots of friends to whom she was very kind whilst being somewhat reclusive. In the mid 1990's she developed Alzheimer's disease which forced her return to NZ where she lived in Auckland in care of the Caughey Preston Rest Home until her death.

After she died those handling her estate found many items in her small flat relating to Dame Kiri including records, books and cassettes – she was obviously a great fan. Although most of the estate had been left to other charities the executors decided that £20,000 would make a fitting bequest (in her name) to create the fund of the fledgling Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation which was in the final stages of being established.

"I never knew Dorothy but she obviously had a great love of my music so I can only imagine the scene if we had both met – to be alone in her apartment listening to my music – a sad yet joyful thought" said Dame Kiri.

So Dorothy Craig provided the Foundation's first bequest and we must be forever thankful to her and the executors of her estate. This bequest together with her own contributions provided the motivation for Dame Kiri to fast-forward plans already underway to announce the formation of the Foundation.

What better way to reflect your love of music than by leaving a legacy – a bequest in your will for the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation. Leaving a bequest is a simple procedure that allows you to include the Foundation as a beneficiary of your will. Bequests are usually directed to the Foundation for use at the trustee's discretion but they can also be directed towards a specific need such as a music scholarship for a talented singer, musician or conductor identified by the trustees as meeting all the required criteria.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or would like a copy of sample language for your lawyer please contact the Foundation office.



BLACK BARN CONCERT FULL OF SURPRISES

The recent concert at Black Barn Vineyards (Havelock North, New Zealand) was a bonus for the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and Havelock North Intermediate School. The concert hosted by Black Barn Vineyards featured Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Dame Malvina Major in a rare collaboration featuring a wide repertoire of songs that kept the sell-out audience entranced.



Dame Kiri had earlier announced that her performance fee would be donated to the Foundation but the real surprise came during orchestral rehearsals at Havelock North Intermediate School when it was discovered that one of their four sports houses was called 'Te Kanawa House'. Schedules were revised to allow Dame Kiri to meet nearly 200 house members. She told the students to 'grow big and strong, study well and achieve to the best of your ability. Do your homework, be inspired and ask lots of questions'. She also explained the legacy of the Maori warrior Te Kanawa who overcame boundaries in the face of doubt.

Before returning to the rehearsals Dame Kiri presented the school with a fig tree to mark the occasion.

NEW TAX RELIEF FOR DONATIONS

The tax cap on donations was lifted last year. Individuals who make donations to the Foundation can now claim a 33% tax rebate for their donations, up to a maximum equal to their annual taxable income. By way of example – Gerry donates \$2400 and now receives \$800 back; Anne donates \$15,000 and now receives \$5,000 back.

The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation is a registered charitable trust which offers a range of opportunities to support its work. The Foundation welcomes donations of any size and these may be sent by cheque (to the address shown at the end of this newsletter) or by credit card – email or phone the Foundation for details.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF ARIA WILL FEATURE MORE NEWS ABOUT THE FOUNDATION.

If you'd like us to email you information about the Foundation please contact us. However, if you do not wish to receive further editions of Aria please advise us by sending an email.



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It is believed that the contents of this newsletter are a full and fair representation. Interested parties should make their own enquiries to satisfy themselves on all aspects.

PRIVACY POLICY:

Under the Privacy Act 1993 any address or information you supply us with will be held in secure circumstances by the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and used to communicate with you about the Foundation events, its associations and activities.

Our mailing lists are available only to the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation and are not available to any third parties or organisations.