

August - December 2025 Report



TOMAIRANGI HENARE

TE PAE KŌKAKO- TANZOS YOUNG ARTIST

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Tomairangi Henare began his opera journey in high school, joining the Hawke's Bay youth initiative Project Prima Volta. From there he studied at Victoria University as the recipient of the Deane Endowment Trust scholarship in 2019. Since his study Tomairangi has sung roles across the country including Pandolfe (Massenet's *Cendrillon*), Aeneas (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*), the Parson (Janacek's '*Cunning Little Vixen*') and more. He is an alumni of the New Zealand Opera School 2024 - 2025.

# Personal Statement

Kia Ora,

*Ko te mihi tuatahi, te mihi runga rawa*

*Ko te mihi tuarua ki te hunga mate, moe mai ra.*

*Ko te mihi tētahi atu ki te iwi o Waikato, nga akona me nga kaiako o Te Pae Kōkako.*

*He waka eke noa,*

*Tena koutou katoa*

First off, I would like to wish you a very happy holidays, may 2026 provide you with prosperity and joy.

I am writing once again to express my gratitude for your generosity, letting me continue my studies as a Young Artist in the TANZOS programme, this has been an incredibly busy year and I have walked away with many important lessons I won't soon forget. I hope I am able to update you to the best of my ability with this report.

Ngā mihi maioha,  
Tomairangi



# Vocal Progress

The end of 2025 has been a pivotal time in my vocal development. I hit some lows and some highs within the span of a half year and the highs were all thanks to the lovely coaches that have visited us along with our teacher Nikki-Li.

The main focus of the semester was breath and trust. I learned that a singer can not be successful without complete control over the breath and I found quickly that this was an area that I was struggling in. Thankfully, this was a struggle that became fixable once the underlying issue was found which was my confidence. Confidence became key to growing this semester and steadily I found that as my trust in the programme grew, so did my singing. Nikki-Li has been fantastic in creating a safe space for me to grow and I have enjoyed every moment of being taught by her. The wealth of knowledge she presents, and the kindness she does so with has helped me to grow immensely.

The visiting coaches have been amazing as well. Nick Fletcher, Caroline Dowdle and Elaine Kidd all recently visited from the Royal Opera House it amazed me to see such elite professionals still showcase such warmth and understanding to us young singers in Aotearoa. I enjoyed working with Caroline on my breath support and also finding a shimmery colour in the text of Tosti's "Ideale". Elaine Kidd had a lot of fun pushing me to go out of my comfort zone by encouraging me to feel the characters I was singing as myself, instead of acting in a totally wild way unlike myself. I felt this challenge singing the aria "Cruda, funesta smania" from Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor". Finally, I had the privilege to perform my final recital with Nick Fletcher's accompaniment on the piano. It was such an honour to perform with someone with his level of artistry and I felt myself feel more confident to trust my own musicality with pieces knowing he was putting his in too.

We were also lucky to be joined by Glenn Winslade in October. Having worked with Glenn at the NZ Opera School before I was excited to be able to see him again and continuing the growth that we took. I felt myself feeling braver in my lessons with him unlike in my time at Opera School and in turn, he was able to fully give me advice on how to free the voice up. He is an expert in teaching male voices how to sing feeling less restricted. To this day I use his vocal exercises in every practice session as it helps my throat relax and for the voice to lose any tension it may have felt earlier. I am excited to see Glenn again at Opera School 2026, I think any young singer is blessed to be able to work with him.

# Repertoire

With the vocal progress I saw in the second semester I also saw a growth in repertoire. As a young baritone the direction of where the voice is headed always feels rather muddy around my age. Every day I find it becoming clearer as I continue to learn new things about my voice.

My ultimate goal in the long term is to be able to take on the more mature lyrical roles like Verdi and Puccini. This is a very long process and I have come to understand that and be okay with it. Through this however I am very excited that my repertoire is beginning to move into that direction.

Two arias that have defined the second semester are Donizetti's "Cruda, funesta smania" from Lucia di Lammermoor and Mozart's "Hai già vinta la causa" from Le Nozze di Figaro. Both arias present different challenges that I must learn to adapt to. As mentioned before, mastery of the breath is essential with these arias.

Mozart's quick phrases and high tessitura make it the perfect stepping stone for me into the baritone repertoire. The phrasing is difficult and the F# at the end presents a daunting ending but I am finding it easier as I practice it in. "Cruda, funesta smania" also sits in the more lyric baritone range. I found this piece very comfortable at first but it soon presented its own challenges. The main challenge is stamina, it is a long and large sing with phrases sitting high with limited rest in between. I enjoyed the challenge and I continue to grow with the aria every time I get to perform it.

My repertoire has grown within other repertoire as well. I have been delving into more oratorio, even having the honour to perform my first Messiah this Christmas season. I became more curious in art song as I delve into a Brahms' lieder cycle and the famous "Let Us Garlands Bring" song cycle by Finzi. Both composers have been among my favourites in their respective language of art song and I am so happy I finally took the shot of performing their music.



# Group Classes

As part of TANZOS we also have received some amazing teachers in other fields of the opera career.

With Norman Franke I have felt my German slowly and steadily improving. I thoroughly enjoy his vast range of knowledge, especially when we get to here the passion he has for history. When I've had the opportunity to take some of my German repertoire to Norman for language coaching I always enjoy his deep dives into the historical context of the poetry.

The fitness aspect of the career is demanding so I am incredibly grateful that TANZOS has a wide array of physical classes. PT with Fazeel is gritty and challenging but I always walk away feeling accomplished and I noticed by the end of the semester that my mobility and cardio had drastically increased. Yoga and Pilates was a great introduction to flexibility for me (a concept I have yet to learn). All of the teachers involved were patient and supportive, it is clear they have a deep understanding of their fields and the way they were able to help me feel excited about getting physical is no easy feat.

I was always excited for Michael's Musical Context class as it allowed for deep and thoughtful discussion behind the music we love to sing. I found my ability to learn music and understand the patterns of certain composers and periods had increased by the end of the year when it came time to learn my recital repertoire.

Finally, I really enjoyed the discussions we had in our Resilience Trainings. A personal highlight for me was the class we had on agencies and core values with Paul. I found his introduction to agencies and management companies really intriguing as it is something that is not offered here in Aotearoa. I find these discussions on the career really important to us, especially when they put into perspective how limited the resources here can be.

# Concerts and Opportunities

Another valuable lesson I learned this semester was to always be ready. There were two instances where I was given the opportunity to step up and be reliable and I am so grateful to have had that blessing come to me.

The first step was completing my final recital. I found it challenging as I had reached a hard point in my singing. However, through TANZOS I have learned to trust my voice and trust my teacher. This, with the beautiful artistry of Nick Fletcher, led me to put on a successful recital which, while it had some bumps, I was still very proud of.

The first was to step in to the Joyce DiDonato Masterclass hosted in Wellington by the NZSO. The whole trip to Wellington already felt like a gift to end the semester; go for a trip, sing in a concert, watch a legend like Joyce DiDonato. However that all changed when I was called in a couple of hours before the class started. Unlike other times, I leaped at the opportunity given to me because I knew the trust I had in my teachers and the programme and that they had that trust in me. Joyce was such a kind person to work with and we had so much fun navigating the character of Humperdinck's aria "Ach wir armen Leute".



Following the masterclass we sung our first TANZOS concert in Wellington. The audience was full of familiar faces for me and I really loved the experience of working a semi staged production directed by Elaine Kidd. Caroline provided a lot of guidance through the music to ensure full confidence and I felt the performance was a really special occasion. The semi staged concept tested my limits in how much I can connect with an audience but I appreciated the learning experience and I think it yielded a great result.

With Napier Civic Choir I was able to build my oratorio repertoire in a safe space back home. In October I performed my first "Lord Nelson Mass" by Haydn and In December I was privileged to sing Handel's "Messiah" for the first time. It was a trialing but fulfilling time for me performing these pieces. I am most proud of the fact that now I am fully equipped to be able to sing repertoire that is so commonly performed.



# Competitions

Throughout 2026 I made a personal goal to be strategic and effectively put a halt on participating in many competitions. This semester I competed in both Dunedin's regional competition and the Rotorua BMW NZ Aria. Both competitions were amazing experiences and I was honoured to be a finalist in both.

Dunedin was a smaller more community based competition and there were many reasons I wanted to enter. The first was the adjudicator, James Harrison. I have always sought out opinions from other baritones, especially those who I know I can learn a lot from. James is someone I've met a few times and each time he has been lovely and keen to give constructive feedback. I really enjoyed performing in this competition and also exploring Dunedin, a city I don't often get to visit. It was also a successful competition with me earning third place in Oratorio and Lieder while also being one of eight finalists. There I was able to perform a piece that is very close to my heart, "Questo amor, vergogna mia" from Puccini's "Edgar".

The second competition, the BMW NZ Aria competition is a staple in a young singers journey. To have such a large gathering of like-minded singers all on various parts of the journey is such a blessing. This was my third time entering and I always had the mindset of doing my best and not being upset if things don't go my way. It was very different this year. A long time dream was always to perform in the Aria Final as it is the opportunity to sing with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra. I guess this year I was naive to the amount of growth TANZOS has given me as I was chosen to be among the ten finalists, in a competition of over forty singers. The process was scary but ultimately I was blessed with the people around me including my teacher, TANZOS programme coordinators, three current cohort members and three alumni. It really put into perspective how much people can thrive in TANZOS and I was so proud to stand among them in the finals.



# Moving into 2026

TANZOS is already lining up to have an exciting year in 2026. In a few days as of writing this I will be attending my third NZ Opera School and I have a lot of goals with this including staying healthy and taking in every opportunity. I want to be braver in putting myself forward as someone who is reliable. Now that I am one of the more experienced students there I want to step up and be a leader.

I am also very excited for the trip to Christchurch. It is a city I love and I have seen the work of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra which is a very high level. I think it is a great opportunity for TANZOS to branch out nationwide and for the young singers like myself to have these opportunities to perform across the country.

Ultimately I am looking forward to finishing TANZOS strong. My role studies are very important to me and I can't wait to coach these and work on them with Nikki-Li. I feel like it is essential to learn roles to build my repertoire. I hope that it will lead to a fulfilling experience as I take on this responsibility.

Thank you so much for reading through my report. TANZOS has been a life changing experience and I look forward to ending it on a high note.