



Te Pae Kōkako TANZOS

Our year so far...

July 1, 2023

Our inaugural year has been incredibly intense and we have only been running for five months! So far, it is clear that the model is working - we have managed to deliver all our planned projects and events without mishap (other than the late finishing of our dedicated Te Pae Kōkako Room refurbishment!) and the progress of each student has been outstanding.

Here is a breakdown of the programme so far:

- The students have been immersed in intensive days of coaching. We have had the privilege of hosting some of Australasia's finest vocal coaches and teachers, including David Harper, Sharolyn Kimmorley, Anna Leese, Andrew Crooks, Lindy Tennent-Brown and David Kelly, as well as our beloved primary teachers, Nikki Li Hartliep and Kristin Darragh on campus, and Catrin Johnsson in Auckland.
- International star baritone Sir Simon Keenlyside and his wife, Zenaida Yanowsky (principal ballerina with The Royal Ballet in London for 23 years, and now associate director) joined us for a week of intensive sessions and masterclasses which we were able to open up to a wider group of singers, and which culminated in a public masterclass and reception in Christchurch, generously hosted by the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. Sir Simon was in rapture whilst working with our artists in New Zealand and is desperate to come back again. He was very impressed with what we are doing here at TANZOS, writing afterwards:

"Training is no different in the arts than it is in sport, and youngsters need to be nurtured, trained and monitored. That requires institutions and funding. Nobody walks off the street ready to take on the world: not in any walk of life. Elite singers, contrary to what you read in the media, are not spoiled rich wannabes. Just like your sportsmen and women they are simply the best. If you want the best, then you will need to invest in them and create an elite group of young musicians, wonderfully trained and ready, as some of their forebears were, to take-on the ever more competitive world of classical music and opera. Te Pae Kōkako - The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio at Waikato University is a shining example of such an institution and its values and duty of care for the ambitions of talented young singers is exactly what you need to promote the next generation of cultural ambassadors."

- Sir Simon Keenlyside

- Our broader subject classes have also been an exciting challenge for our singers, including stagecraft with theatre directors, John Davies and Jon Hunter, Yoga and wellbeing with Kailash Saraswati and Susie Fourie, Performance Psychology with Rod Corban (Silver Ferns, NZ Olympic Team etc), historical dance with Declan Patrick, Feldenkrais with Alistair Greenwood, Song and Recitative with Anna Leese, Baroque Performance Practice and Oratorio with Peter Walls and Rachael Griffiths-Hughes, German language with Norman Franke and Italian/French with Luca Manghi.
- Trimester A was a particularly busy one as they had assessed recitals (some of which were livestreamed and you can still view online [here](#)) as well as some group recitals.
- All of the artists have been involved in external performances: At the beginning of the year, Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono, Katherine Winitana and Taylor Wallbank, all alumni of Project Prima Volta in Hawke's Bay, were part of the Festival Opera production of Die Zauberflöte which was very sadly cancelled for the second year in a row due to Cyclone Gabrielle, but the NZSO has come to their aid and are supporting Festival Opera with an NZSO-accompanied performance in September. You can book [here](#). Emmanuel also sang a wonderful Arturo in Wellington Opera's Lucia di Lammermoor. Alfred Fonoti-Fuimaono sang a phenomenally masterful Gianni Schicchi (title role) and Taylor Wallbank sang a beautiful Rinuccio in the University Vocal Faculty production, directed by John Davies. Rhiannon Cooper, who is also a Studio Artist with NZ Opera, was part of the 'NZ Opera in Schools' Tour, singing in Respighi's The Sleeping Beauty and Cecilia Zhang has produced fantastic recitals to aid fundraising for her studies at the RAM commencing later this year.
- TANZOS Artists have been winning awards in New Zealand and abroad: Katherine Winitana, Cecilia Zhang and Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono won 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively at the Becroft Aria competition here in New Zealand, and Emmanuel has just won the prestigious Opera Scholarship (worth \$45,000) in the Sydney Eisteddfod!
- The other reason Trimester A has been so busy is that we have our major company residencies offsite. The first of these has been with NZ Opera during their production of Così fan tutte, and it's been amazing for the students to watch the director and wonderful soloists at work, and we are so grateful to NZ Opera for being so open and welcoming to our TANZOS artists.
- On June 13, the students travelled to Sydney for a two-week residency at Opera Australia where they joined the OA Young Artists in stagecraft and movement sessions, received coaching from their music staff, culminating in their first audition for an international company on an international stage - at the Sydney Opera House, which for some, will be their first journey outside of New Zealand - dipping their toes in to what it's like to work as an international opera singer! Please read the detailed account below!

Te Pae Kōkako TANZOS Residency at Opera Australia

June 13-23, 2023

Our residency with Opera Australia was more than we could have hoped for – a whirlwind of world-class coaching sessions, workshops, attending studio and stage rehearsals, attending performances, learning about the inner workings of a large opera company and developing wonderful relationships and memories that will linger for a very long time.

This was an unprecedented opportunity for any young singer or programme from Aotearoa and we are proud to be the first to have partnered with Opera Australia and their own Young Artist Programme, paving the way for an improved intercultural relationship between the two countries in the world of opera at this pivotal point of development

The highlight of this trip for our artists was the opportunity to audition on the stage in the Joan Sutherland Theatre at The Sydney Opera House. This iconic stage is a Mecca for all opera singers, and for these young artists, the chance to sing there was overwhelming – but they absolutely rose to the challenge and, sitting through the auditions in the theatre, I was very proud of how all of them have progressed over these past six months. Several of them particularly impressed the panel, and the feedback was hugely positive.

The audition was attended by Stuart Stratford and Fiona MacSherry (Director and Head of Music for Scottish Opera, respectively), Michael Black (Head of Music and Chorus Master for Chicago Lyric Opera), Tahu Matheson (Director of Music, Opera Australia) and Joanne Goodman (Opera Australia).

The TANZOS artists quickly became accustomed to the fact that every coaching, workshop and interaction with people from within the industry should be treated as an ‘audition’, as many of these people have the ability to employ them, but even more than that, to make sure they are ALWAYS being entirely themselves, both in general conversation and in performance. By the time they auditioned, it was very clear that they felt extraordinarily privileged to be there and all gave their best possible performance on the day.



Here is some of the feedback from the students regarding their experience of the audition:

The experience of singing on that stage was inspiring and just big enough to feel a little bit daunting but not overwhelming. I don't often say that I feel like I sang well but I am incredibly proud of myself for what I gave on that day. It felt like my voice could bloom in the space and I felt very in tune with the stories I was telling, I can't wait to be back there one day, hopefully performing a role for Opera Australia... There aren't enough words to describe my gratitude for being able to take part in this experience and the invaluable teachings I'm able to take away from it. I feel incredibly privileged to have been supported in participating and these are memories and experiences I'll refer to and hold close for many years to come. "

– Rhiannon Cooper

“When I was first introduced to opera as a teenager, the first thought that came to mind was “Ah the Sydney Opera House”. At that time, I never would've thought I'd sing on the main stage. Much like our time with Simon Keenlyside, it's taking a while to come down from what was the most joyful and eye-opening experience I've had yet. I'm very blessed and grateful that on my first day outside of New Zealand, I had the opportunity to do what I'm most passionate about. Of my 26 years, the ten days in Sydney were my favourite days to be alive. It's difficult to accurately describe how I feel about it all as it's deeper than what words can achieve. I'm excited for what lies ahead and am very proud to know that I will always be a part of TANZOS and what this programme is doing for aspiring artists.”

– Alfred Fonoti-Fuimaono

The TANZOS / OA Residency **at-a-glance:**

- **1 audition** on the iconic Sydney Opera House stage, attended by representatives of three different international opera companies.
- **18 hours** receiving repertoire and vocal coaching (3 hours each) with Donna Balson, Glenn Winslade, Michael Black (Chicago Lyric Opera) and Brian Castles-Onion (Opera Australia).
- **17 hours** participating in workshops focusing on movement, audition technique, vocal care, repertoire, stylistic interpretation and language alongside the OA Young Artists
- **12 hours** attending stage rehearsals of the incredible OA production of Verdi's *Aida* starring Leah Crocetto in the title role, fresh from performing the same at The Metropolitan Opera, New York
- **6 hours** attending performances of Verdi's *Rigoletto* from the perspective of the perch (above the stage) and the orchestra pit, (2 people at a time over three performances, switching positions during the interval)
- **6 hours** attending studio rehearsals of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at The Opera Centre in Surry Hills, the home of Opera Australia
- **2 performances** attended as guests of Opera Australia: *Aida* and *Rigoletto* (from the auditorium!) – these were also a huge highlight for all of us and some of the artists received some lovely hugs from Leah Crocetto, the star of *Aida*.
- **2 guided tours** of the Sydney Opera House and Opera Centre in Surry Hills from fellow Kiwi and OA chorus member, Katherine Wiles, seeing the inner workings of the company and the vast scale of everything made on site, not to mention the impressive scale of the Sydney Opera House.
- **Countless meals** in the Green Room Restaurant!



An extraordinary amount of work went in to the scheduling of this residency from Li Li Fisher (Artistic Manager, Opera Australia) and Joanne Goodman (Senior Artistic Manager, Opera Australia) and we were made to feel very welcome right from the outset. Our main point of contact during the day-to-day, Rebecca Mychael (Artistic Coordinator, Opera Australia) was fabulous and all of them went far beyond the call of duty to make sure we had the best possible experience at every turn. Additionally, during a debrief, Joanne and Li Li expressed a desire to repeat this residency annually, which is an incredibly positive indicator for the future and an exciting and attractive prospect for future cohorts.

As a result of this residency, our artists feel far less daunted by the idea of working internationally. The impact of that is huge, as they now all feel that the next step in their career outside of New Zealand is within their reach and that is a powerful boost for their confidence - so much so that they are all far more clear about how they plan to take the next step and where - and we will be supporting them all the way.

There is more to come though...!

What's still to come in Trimester B...

Trimester B highlights:

TANZOS will be exclusively on campus for the whole of Trimester B, but in addition to all the coaches and ongoing sessions we've mentioned who were with us in Trimester A, we have some incredibly exciting guests and opportunities coming to us:

- **November: Jack Livigni Visit** - Giaocchino (Jack) LiVigni (Italy, USA) is one of the most in-demand Bel Canto and operatic vocal technicians on the planet at the moment, and he travels the globe teaching artists from The Met Opera, The Royal Opera UK and throughout Europe - and for the first time, Aotearoa! There is HUGE excitement about his visit and we will be welcoming some artists from Australia who are travelling here for sessions with him, too. He will also be conducting a public, livestreamed masterclass.
- **December: Covent Garden Visit** - The Heads of the Jette Parker Artist Programme, Elaine Kidd and David Gowland, are coming for a week of workshops, individual coaching sessions and a public masterclass. This is an incredible opportunity for our artists, and we will also be offering access to singers from around Aotearoa.
- **December: Anthony Legge Visit**: Anthony Legge is one of the UK's most respected coaches across all operatic repertoire. He works mainly with artists at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, but travels internationally as a coach and conductor, particularly in Australia.

There are a number of exciting events in Trimester B, too - be sure to visit our [Events Page](#) for up-to-date information and mark your calendars!

- **July 15: Winter Gala Fundraiser for the NZ Opera School** - TANZOS artists will be presenting a winter opera concert and dinner to raise funds for our partner organisation, the New Zealand Opera School
- **August/October: Assessed Recitals** - All of our artists have more recitals to showcase their progress as part of their MMus Assessments. Most of these are public and are listed on our [Events Page](#).
- **August 18: Opera at the Cathedral** - In association with Auckland Opera Studio, TANZOS will be showcased in performance at an opera gala concert at Holy Trinity Cathedral.
- **October 7: Opera at the Château** - Our inaugural annual fundraising concert will be held at Château Fleur de Lys, the home of Sir William and Lady Judi Gallagher. All proceeds will go towards a scholarship for one student to attend TANZOS in 2024.
- **10 November: Contemporary Scenes** - Every opera singer needs to be able to tackle new opera works and this will be a showcase of scenes from some of the great contemporary opera in the opus, directed by Jon Hunter.

