

2025

Final REPORT

TE PAE KŌKAKO: THE AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND OPERA STUDIO



BY :

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TANZOS ARTIST 2024-25

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AOS picnic concert

I enjoyed every bit of the festive celebrating it with family and friends from the Cook Islands and I feel that this has helped to rejuvenate my well being and mental health to prepare me for the year ahead.

I have been very fortunate to have been selected again to perform with Auckland Opera studio for their Opera picnic in the garden concert held over two weekends. The first concert was held in Queenstown, and the second in Matakana, with amazing views. Both shows were a success and packed out,. The second show however we experienced a heavy down pour during the second half of the show which had 60 percent of the audiences leaving the concert due to this. Despite this matter the show must go on and on it went very successfully. I have attached a recording below of the Matakana concert for your enjoyment.

Matakana Picnic Show:

https://youtu.be/F_c0OOL_2Uk?feature=shared

Coachings-Preparations

There had been a lot of discovery during this period, my voice had changed and matured a lot more and will continue to keep growing. So with the guidance of my wonderful teacher Nikki-Li we had such a fun time discovering this new sound and changing up my repertoire choices to suit my voice. This was also crunch time for role studies where we had to prepare three roles from three different operas and perform sections such as arias, ensembles, recitative spoken or sung if necessary. Each role had a duration of 30 minutes each.

I had the pleasure of working with Coach Thomas V Johnson who was very phenomenal and such a magnificent musician and teacher. He had so much patience and helped me overcome my frustrations when learning difficult passages in my music. He helped graciously and with ease which helps keep me motivated and eager to learn. He created an environment where I wasn't judged whenever I made a mistake, or when we had to repeat certain phrases constantly he made sure I understood it before moving on. I enjoyed working with Thomas and look forward to working again with him in the near future.

Coachings-Preparations

I also had the privilege of working with Catherine Norton who I have always admired and respected as a musician. We worked through preparations with my role studies and new repertoire which I am currently working on at the moment. She is very engaging and I love her attention to detail, and provides the best support system in a working space. Catherine will continue to inspire singers who collaborates with her, she is such a Joy to work with always and brings light to the room with her skills and magnificent playing.

Donna Balson was our resident coach in May whom i love working with, she is based in Australia and is a renowned international coach. Donna is a gem, she has so much patience and works at your pace, through the music, language and the finer details of the music pieces. She was also a great help towards my preparations for my role studies, especially with the role of Des Grieux which is sung in French from the opera Manon. I get very overwhelmed learning a new language, but she made it very simple for me to cope with and get through with determination. I look forward to working with Donna in the near future.



Masterclass/Highlight

I also had the privilege to work with International renowned baritone André Heyboer in a masterclass setting and learned so much from this amazing man. What helped me a lot was understanding how much to give (energy wise) through a phrase to save yourself if you're preparing for an entire role in this case the role of the Duke of Mantua from the Opera Rigoletto. I have attached a link below to access this masterclass. I think what was most fascinating about André was he trained as a tenor before making the transition down to baritone. So already he had so much information about my aria as it was one of the pieces he sang as a tenor. He also emphasised on the importance of keeping the same inside the mouth more rounded which then keeps the purity and warmth of the tone and sound. I learnt so much within the 20 minutes I spent with him, and so grateful we as singers get this lifetime opportunity. I performed for him the aria: *Ella mi fu rapita! Parmi veder le lagrime* from the opera Rigoletto.

Masterclass with André:

https://youtu.be/a2OCtQWFdew?si=YKQjfpI4U_g7eG8O

One of the most outstanding highlights of mine was experiencing New Zealand's Operas production of *La Bohème*, and it was my first live performance of the opera and was a game-changer for me. I was completely swept away by the music, the drama, and the passion on stage. As a young aspiring opera singer, I knew right then and there that I wanted to be a part of this world.

I particularly enjoyed the tenor Rodolfo as I was drawn to his character like a magnet. His passion, his vulnerability, his love for Mimì, I felt inspired knowing that I wanted to play that role one day. His role was so complex yet Ji-Min Park who played Rodolfo made the singing seem effortless and enjoyable to listen to, especially the infamous tenor high C in the aria *Che gelida Manina*.



Sydney Eistedfodd Competition



In February I applied for the Sydney Eistedfodd international competition in Australia which required a submission of two performance videos of contrasting arias. Thanks with the help of Tanzos I managed to get two professional videos taken for my audition and made it to the semi final rounds. Making the semi final rounds was already a huge step for me, but I stayed focussed and prepared meticulously through my arias to be ready for performance day. There were 19 total in the semi finals, three from New Zealand and the rest from around Australia. which is great.

The room was tense and everyone went through their own routines of warm ups and preparations before presenting their pieces in front of the Judges. I feared an aria that I had to sing that night, but manage to overcome my fear and went for it which left me really happy. When I was announced one of the five finalist, my body felt numb and was in so much disbelief and kept pinching myself to wake up to the reality that I am good enough. I felt so many emotions that night and every time i think about it i feel tear up about it. This was my very first International competition and to have made the finals was an accomplishment in itself one that I am proud of. I came home with first- runner up overall in the competition and I was so grateful and very pleased with this placing. This award will help alleviate some financial burden towards overseas cost with audition fees, travel and accomodation. This award has also opened many performance opportunities for me here in New Zealand and has also given me great recognition by the wider community. This competition has been a reminder of how far i have come and a testament to what rewards you gain from hard work which I plan to continue to keep working that way.





Role Study

Role: Duke of Mantua

Opera: Rigoletto

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi

Role: Le Chevalier des Grieux

Opera: Manon

Composer: Jules Massenet

Role: Macduff

Opera: Macbeth

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi

The day had finally come for our final examination for Tanzos presenting three of our roles we had prepared over the last 6 months. I am so grateful and lucky to have had the help of everyone who played a huge role in my preparations. From the many hours spent playing my notes, languages, coaching, refining and finally putting it into performance. My teacher Nikki -Li has been there every step of the way, her guidance, knowledge, nurturing, kindness and positive attitude got me through every step of the way. Each role came with its challenges, the music was quite demanding on the voice and there were sections in the music that were challenging. During the exam what I found quite difficult was performing my duets with no one to sing with. So I had to memorise their lines so I knew where and when to come in when it was my turn to sing. I was so proud of my performances, and I look forward to performing these roles on international stages around the world.

Final concert

This was my final performance alongside my colleagues before officially signing out from Tanzos. I was very emotional after this performance just knowing that this was the end of what has been such an amazing experience over the past 18 months and now it's all over. It's hard to put into words just how much it impacted me mentally and vocally. The Journey has been incredible from where I started to where I am now, I feel like a completely different person. The program has given me so much then just vocal training and being exposed to work with incredible international Coaches, it taught me discipline, perseverance, and the value of hard work. I've grown now not only as a singer but as a person. Though the programs come to an end, I know the lessons I've learned and the growth I've experienced will stay with me forever. I'm so thankful for this opportunity and I'm excited to see where this journey takes me next.



Many thanks

To everyone who was part of my incredible master's program with Tanzos, I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude.

To my teacher Nikki-Li Hartliep, thank you for sharing your vast knowledge and expertise with me. Your guidance and mentorship have been invaluable, and I'm so grateful for the time and effort you invested in helping me grow as a singer.

To the tutors, mentors, administration team, and coaches, your collective wisdom and support have been instrumental in my journey. Your passion for opera and commitment to nurturing young talent are truly inspiring. I have learnt so much and have enjoyed everyone's contribution towards my development.

To Madeleine Pierard and Dame Malvina Major, thank you both for your vision and leadership in making this program a reality. Your dedication to providing opportunities for singers to thrive is making a tangible difference. And I believe this program will only grow and develop over the years and I am excited to see the next lot of aspiring singers come through this program.

To the sponsors and generous supporters, I'm deeply grateful for your financial backing and trust in this program. Your investment in the arts is empowering singers in New Zealand to pursue their dreams and reach new heights. You have created an opportunity for us all here in New Zealand to access international coachings and many performance opportunities, and above all a chance to have our talents exposed to the outside world.

Thank you all for being part of this remarkable journey. Your contributions have not only shaped my skills as a singer but also enriched my life in countless ways.

Kia Orana e Kia Manuia no te tuatāu ki mua