

Rhapsody

News from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation



**Dame
Malvina
Major**
Foundation

A note from Dame Malvina



It is always a treat when, every second year, the Lexus Song Quest and New Zealand Aria both feature on the calendar.

As two of Australasia's most prestigious singing competitions, both attract applications from the region's most promising young opera talent. By the time we get to the finals, we are assured of some outstanding performances – and very difficult decisions for the judges.

I was very pleased to be able to get along to both the Lexus Song

Quest and the New Zealand Aria competition this year, and was reassured that the future of opera in New Zealand is bright and that the Foundation's investment in both events is sound.

The Song Quest still holds a very dear place in my heart – 55 years since I won the first prize in Hamilton (I didn't even have to travel from home to compete!). The competition has evolved since those days, but it remains an invaluable opportunity and springboard for young singers entering a professional career.

The Foundation sponsors the \$10,000 second prize of the Song Quest. So while we were thrilled for the winner – bass-baritone Joel Amosa – we always have a soft spot for the runner-up. And this year it was lovely to see my former student, Eliza Boom, take that prize.

The Foundation has been sponsoring the first prize of the New Zealand Aria competition for 10 years this year – today a princely sum of \$20,000 for the winner. Tenor Manase Latu was a very deserved winner of that prize this year. As one of our Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artists with New Zealand Opera in 2018, Manase has had a big year, and I look forward to seeing what's next for him.

Alongside sponsorship of aria prizes, we have continued our programme of scholarships and grants this year, and a busy calendar of fundraising concerts across the country, thanks to the work of our volunteer committees. I extend my heartfelt thanks to them all for their time and energy in fostering 'from grassroots to excellence'.

Lastly, and always, thank you to our supporters. It is through your generosity and passion that we can help young performing artists achieve their potential. We have 27 years under our belts and plan to be around for many more. Please think about making a bequest to the Foundation as a valuable and enduring way of helping me 'share the dream'.

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Experiencing opera where opera began

A dream to immerse young New Zealand singers in the land of opera's birth has today become a reality for more than 60 up-and-coming Kiwi artists.

Patricia Hurley's Italian for NZ Opera Singers Masterclasses has seen the likes of Anna Leese, Bianca Andrew, Moses Mackay, Oliver Sewell, Polly Ott and Marlena Devoe benefit from daily Italian language lessons, vocal tuition and performance opportunities as they soak up la bella vita.

Patricia Hurley says the seed was first planted when, as manager of the opera company in Wellington during the 1990s, she realised that while 80% of the operas performed were from the Italian repertoire and sung in Italian, none of the singers were getting the opportunity to study Italian or do further training in Italy.

"It was just too hard. The Embassy no longer had a cultural attaché, there were no New Zealanders on the ground there to help."

Patricia says singers need to experience Italy where opera began four hundred years ago.

"It might just mean sitting in a piazza watching Italian behaviour and gesticulation, or visiting the homes of Puccini and Verdi for inspiration, or singing a Rossini aria to an Italian audience who laugh in different places from an English speaking audience, having hopefully understood the words!"

The programme has been running out of an 18th century villa in Tuscany for nearly 20 years as part of Patricia's Opera Tours. Singers receive scholarships funded by generous individual donors and fundraising concerts. Early on, Dame Malvina visited the villa in Tuscany and saw the value of the experience, performing with the singers there and in Rome. Since 2012 the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has been helping fund the scholarships.

Patricia says it is an intense but invaluable week-long programme for the young "artisti".

"Each morning they receive intensive Italian language classes with our expert teacher from nearby Siena. The daily programme continues with individual tuition with the Maestro working on solos, duets and ensembles from the Italian repertoire preparing for the concerts at the end of the week or future opera roles. There are two or three concerts – one in the villa, then in the nearby town of Monteverchi, in a theatre in Umbria, or sometimes at the New Zealand Embassy in Rome.

"Often there are also visits to the towns, homes and museums of composers like Verdi and Puccini, watching opera performances in major theatres, and visits to historic places and art galleries to broaden the cultural experience."

Wellington soprano Katherine McIndoe, a former Dame Malvina Major Foundation Emerging Artist with New Zealand Opera, attended the 2016 programme.

"My ultimate impression of the trip was of the extraordinary way in which Italian opera is tied to its country, people, landscape, and culture. I was struck by this when we visited Bevagna, and performed in the beautiful Teatro Francesco Torti. Oliver [Sewell] was onstage singing 'Una furtiva lagrima' from Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore, and I was standing backstage waiting to go on after him, to sing Adina's aria from the same opera.

"As I was listening to Ollie singing, I looked out the window onto the cobbled square behind the theatre, where night was falling and people were sitting around talking and eating at tables in the street. I felt that this scene could have been unfolding in exactly the same way in that square when Donizetti was writing the opera, and that this could well be the lovesick Nemorino's small town."

Artistic Director Maestro Wyn Davies says the gift that the week affords young singers is the experience of doing Italian things in Italy.

"The music is all in Italian, as are the language lessons. The staff at the villa are Italian and will be speaking Italian, the food and the wine are Italian. I even do my best to do my coaching in Italian.

"And the marvellous thing about the week is that it continues to happen. That is due to Patricia's persistent enthusiasm and championing of young Kiwi talent, the financial backing of individual well-wishers and of course the indispensable support of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation."

This year's scholarship recipients are soprano Joanna Foote, mezzo soprano Elisabeth Harris, tenor Harry Grigg (assistance from Greenlea Foundation Trust) and baritone Ben Reason (assistance from Greenlea Foundation Trust).

Emerging artist takes off

A 2018 Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist with New Zealand Opera, soprano Natasha Wilson now has her feet firmly on Californian soil as she commences her studies under César Ulloa at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. We asked her a few questions before she headed off...

How did you get into opera?

My dad brought home a CD of Phantom of the Opera when I was 12 and I was taken by the classical technique that was needed to sing Christine. From there, I sang in choirs at high school, where my classical technique developed under the tutelage of Morag Atchison. I then went on to complete a Bachelor of Music (Honours, first class), at the University of Auckland. It was definitely my time at university where my passion for opera developed, and where I was given amazing opportunities to perform.

How has the Dame Malvina Major Foundation helped you on your path to becoming an opera singer?

I have received so much support and opportunity from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation, particularly in the past year. Their support through the regional competitions, as well as giving me the opportunity to be a part of their Opera Studies Programme, which enabled me to take part in Patricia Hurley's Italian for NZ Opera Singers Masterclasses in Italy, have been building blocks towards getting me ready to head overseas.

What does it mean to be an Emerging Artist? How has it helped your career development?

Being a Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist this year has been such a privilege. It has been one of the most challenging roles I have ever done, but I am so grateful for all of the wonderful opportunities I have been given. To have performed three principal roles and understudied two in New Zealand Opera's 2018 productions has been a huge learning curve and I have gained so much knowledge and experience.

What challenges do young opera singers face in New Zealand?

Given the smaller market for opera, it's sometimes difficult to get the experience to develop the way you need or want to as a young singer. This means you typically need to go overseas to get this experience. It's a challenge, but it's also so important, and exciting.

What have been your career highlights to date?

Being a Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist has definitely been a highlight. I also enjoyed performing with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra throughout 2017, performing as the soprano soloist in both their touring concert series.

What are your dreams for the next 10 years?

I'm hoping to get into some of the highly acclaimed young artist programmes in the United States, the United Kingdom or Europe. The dream would be to gain roles through these programmes and eventually become a principal for some of the acclaimed opera houses around the world. My ultimate dream is to become the best artist I can possibly be.

Natasha Wilson (second from left) in NZ Opera's *Candide*.
Image: Simon Watt



2019 Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artists

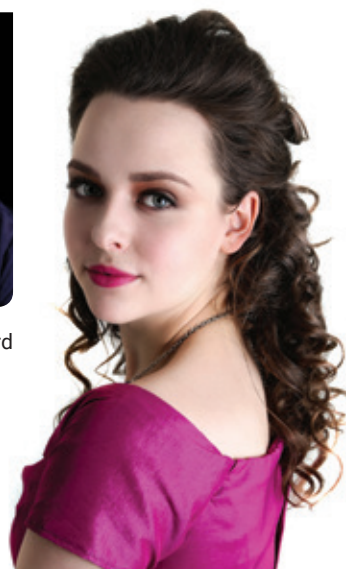
The Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artists for New Zealand Opera's 2019 season are Will King (baritone), Pasquale Orchard (soprano) and Angus Simmons (baritone).

As Emerging Artists, the singers will participate in a professional development programme that includes coaching, career guidance and performance opportunities.

Dame Malvina says the Foundation has enjoyed a longstanding and successful partnership with New Zealand Opera, with the Emerging Artists programme at the heart of it.



Will King, Angus Simmons & Pasquale Orchard



"The Emerging Artists programme can be life changing for a young opera singer, offering a unique opportunity to work with professionals in the opera industry and develop the skills required to prepare for a career in opera." Dame Malvina



Amelia Berry as Musetta in
NZ Opera's *La bohème*
Image: David Rowland

Ryman backs Foundation to support return of Kiwi opera singers

Long-term supporter of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation, Ryman Healthcare has partnered with the Foundation to sponsor the Ryman DMMF Mina Foley Scholarship.

Enabling talented young singers to return to New Zealand to perform in a professional season with New Zealand Opera, the scholarship was this year awarded to soprano Amelia Berry to perform in the role of Musetta in *La bohème*.

The scholarship was started in 2008 in memory of one of New Zealand's most promising vocal talents of yesteryear, soprano, Mina Foley, whose career was an inspiration for Dame Malvina.

Dame Malvina says the Foundation is thrilled to cement its long-standing relationship with Ryman Healthcare and "Share the Dream" through this worthy scholarship.

"Ryman has been supporting the Dame Malvina Major Foundation for more than 15 years," says Ryman Healthcare Chief Executive Gordon MacLeod. "Over that time Dame Malvina and her students have entertained thousands of our residents. We can't think of a better way to support our talented artists."

Mina Foley Scholarship recipients

2018	Amelia Berry
2017	Jonathan Abernethy
2016	James Benjamin Rodgers
2015	Rachelle Pike
2014	Madeleine Pierard
2013	Shaun Dixon
2012	Anna Leese
2011	Andrew Glover
2010	Wade Kernot
2009	Wendy Dawn Thompson
2008	Ana James



Regional events showcase talent and dedication

Dame Malvina Major Foundation events across the country in 2018 showcased not only the talent of young performing artists, but also the dedication of our regional volunteer committees.

The committees organise events to raise funds for regional DMMF Arts Excellence Awards and to provide performance opportunities for young artists.

The Auckland and Waikato Committee ended the year with a return to Willowbrook Park in Hamilton. Sopranos Bryony Williams and Felicity Tomkins, tenor Emmanuel Fonoti Fuimaono, bass baritone Tavis Gravatt and cellist Matthias Balzat performed at a fundraiser at the beautiful country estate while guests enjoyed wine and canapés and bid generously in the charity auction.

The Taranaki committee hosted a showcase extravaganza at the Theatre Royal in September to celebrate some of the individuals, groups and organisations in the region who have been recipients of funding from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation. The audience was entertained by dancers and dance groups, speech and drama students, chamber music groups, a choir and singers, the Taranaki Youth Orchestra, with special appearances from Brad Carter, who returned from his studies with the Sydney Dance Company for the concert, and Bryony Williams.

In Wellington, a very special fundraiser was hosted in the ballroom of the Residence of the Dutch Ambassador, His Excellency Rob Zaagman. More than 80 guests enjoyed a concert featuring Bruce Greenfield (programme coordinator and accompanist), Maaike Christie-Beekman (soprano),

Simon Christie (baritone) and Theo Moolenaar, with the programme including operatic arias by Mozart and Rossini, Lieder by Schubert, Dutch cabaret songs, and songs from American musicals.

A highlight for the Christchurch committee was their 'Young Stars at home' event at Holly Lea village in Christchurch with DMMF artists ballet dancer Tasman Davids and pianist Bradley Wood. Tasman and his partner Anya shared their lives as ballet dancers in St Petersburg Russia with footage from performances. Bradley, fresh after success at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, gave a recital in the glorious setting of the drawing room.

During the year, the regional committees awarded \$17,000 to five young performing artists in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, with more than \$100,000 distributed by the Taranaki committee with support from the TSB Community Trust.



Bryony Williams performing with the Taranaki Youth Orchestra

Share the dream

By supporting the work of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation you can help us do more for young talented performers. As a registered charity we rely on and hugely value the support of our donors, sponsors and partners.

www.dmmfoundation.org.nz



Yes, I would like to share the dream

- ☐ I would like to donate \$_____ to the Dame Malvina Major Foundation.
- ☐ by cheque (payable to the Dame Malvina Major Foundation)
- ☐ by internet banking (A/C name: The Dame Malvina Major Foundation, A/C number: 06 0594 0077477 00.
Please use your surname as reference. Date deposited: / /)
- ☐ I would like to find out more about making a bequest
- ☐ I would like to discuss supporting a specific programme, scholarship or artist
- ☐ I would like to volunteer for a local committee
- ☐ Please send me updates about the Foundation and invitations to events.

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Please email your details to info@dmmfoundation.org.nz, phone 04 384 9745, or send this completed form to:
Trust Administrator, The Dame Malvina Major Foundation, PO Box 9976, Wellington 6141.

The Foundation is a registered charity, Charities Commission No. CC10225. Donations qualify for a 33% tax credit and are acknowledged with a receipt.



Grants and prizes 2018

Manase Latu, New Zealand Aria winner 2018
Image: Tony Whitehead

Dame Malvina Major Fellow with New Zealand Opera 2018:
Tenor Thomas Atkins

Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artists with New Zealand Opera 2018:
Soprano Natasha Wilson, baritone Samson Setu, tenor Manase Latu

Arts Excellence Awards

Auckland: Cellist Sally Kim, soprano Sophie Sparrow

Taranaki with support from the TSB Community Trust:
Many individuals and groups associated with the performing arts

Wellington: Actor James Costello Ladanyi

Christchurch: Conductor Vincent Hardaker

Prizes in vocal competitions

New Zealand Aria, first prize: Tenor Manase Latu

Lexus Song Quest, second prize: Soprano Eliza Boom

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Napier Aria, first prize: Soprano Natasha Wilson

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Wellington Aria, first prize: Baritone Will King

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Christchurch Aria, first prize: Soprano Laura Loach

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Dunedin Aria, first prize: Soprano Olivia Pike

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Waikato Conservatorium of Music Aria (Greenlea Foundation Trust):
first prize: Katie Trigg, second prize: Taylor Wallbank, third prize: Calla Knudson-Hollebon

North Shore Becroft Aria, second prize: Baritone Will King

Scholarships

Ryman DMMF Mina Foley Scholarship: Soprano Amelia Berry

Sir Howard Morrison Vocal Scholarship: Soprano Pasquale Orchard

Greenlea Foundation Trust: Tenor Emmanuel Fonoti Fuimaono, tenor Taylor Wallbank

Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award Canterbury: Baritone Angus Simmons

Alice Cole Piano Scholarship Auckland: Siyu Sun

Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Scholarship: Opera director Jacqueline Coats

Patricia Hurley's Masterclasses and Concerts for New Zealand Opera Singers in Italy:
Soprano Joanna Foote, mezzo soprano Elisabeth Harris, tenor Harry Grigg (assistance from Greenlea Foundation Trust)
and baritone Ben Reason (assistance from Greenlea Foundation Trust)