

# Rhapsody

News from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation



## A note from Dame Malvina

I'm not long back from a wonderful trip to Europe where I was lucky enough to join Patricia Hurley, our Trust Administrator and a dear friend of mine, on one of her Italian opera tours.

The tour included the masterclasses and concerts programme Patricia runs for young opera singers, which the Foundation has supported since 2012. It is unsurpassed in New Zealand as a training experience and learning place for our young aspiring hand-picked

artists. This year they were singers Pasquale Orchard, Joel Amosa and Stephen Diaz and pianist and conductor Timothy Carpenter. After a week of language immersion and vocal coaching from Maestro Wyn Davies, the young artists put on a number of concerts and each year the audiences grow. The locals love the singing and the students, and what Patricia ("La Contessa") brings to their region. It was wonderful to see the full houses and standing ovations.

It has been a year of change for the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Trust Board with the retirement of Anna Midgley after 18 years. I am thankful that she will remain Chair of the Christchurch Committee for the time being. Lindsay Lloyd also steps down as trustee at the end of this year and has likewise made a significant contribution over many years. The pair epitomise the balance we seek to maintain on the Board – of artistic and commercial experience.

But with these sad farewells I am also excited about the future of the Foundation as we welcome three new trustees, including my eldest grandchild, Thomas Fleming.

Over the last twelve months the Board has spent time reviewing where we are and how we position the Foundation for the future. We've reviewed our programmes to ensure we provide the right opportunities for young artists, and will focus our energies on several key areas. This includes ongoing support of New Zealand Opera's young artist development programmes – in 2020 the DMMF Studio Artists – and the Mina Foley Scholarship (with the support of Ryman Healthcare). We will continue to sponsor the New Zealand Aria first prize and Lexus Song Quest second prize, the Italian masterclass scholarships, as well as named scholarships and bequests on behalf of trusts and individuals. Of course, we will also offer our Arts Excellence Awards in Auckland/Waikato, Taranaki, Wellington and Christchurch, organised by our local committees, to ensure we continue to meet our aspiration to support young people from 'Grassroots to Excellence'.

As always, we rely on and are grateful for the donations and bequests that help us do more for young artists in New Zealand. If you are in a position to support us – now, or in the future – we would love to hear from you and are happy to discuss ways you may be able to personalise your giving to help 'Share the Dream'.

### Opt in for email

Would you prefer to receive Rhapsody by email instead of by post? If so, email [communications@dmmfoundation.org.nz](mailto:communications@dmmfoundation.org.nz) with your name and current postal address and the email address you'd like us to use for future communications.



## Opera greats join forces to help ensure Dame Malvina's legacy

Two well-known and well-loved figures of the New Zealand opera scene came together earlier this year to share their appreciation for Dame Malvina and the impact she has had through her Foundation.

Moses Mackay and Simon O'Neill joined Dame Malvina at New Zealand Opera's Parnell headquarters to take part in a fundraising video for the Dame Malvina Major Foundation.

Baritone and member of Sol3Mio, Moses first met Dame Malvina around 10 years ago when, after studying classical music at university, he "on a whim" decided to audition for the New Zealand Opera chorus. Through that, he got the chance to audition for the Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist programme.

"At the time I was looking for opportunities to perform. What the programme provided was a solid foundation surrounded by the right coaches – a different world that I could be part of. It provided possibility, what could be."

The 29-year-old has gone on to achieve more than many manage in a lifetime. Sol3 Mio's debut album spent 16 weeks at number one and the group was awarded New Zealand Music Awards Album of the Year, Best Group and Highest Selling New Zealand Album three years running.

He says there is no one else like Dame Malvina here in New Zealand.

"She was the first person that I came across who saw me. Not as an opera singer, not as someone who could be the top choral singer, but as a performer. She told me it was the performing that she loved too. And from that, we were connected – I saw her and she saw me."

He says that as a country, we punch above our weight in performing arts. "So to have someone like Dame Malvina,

who sees that and is willing to really nurture that opportunity for a lot of youngsters coming through, that's something a lot of other countries don't have."

Simon O'Neill also attributes his success to being spotted by Dame Malvina. The international star tenor plays to sold out audiences on some of the biggest opera stages globally but remembers when he was lucky to get a solo line in the choir.

Studying classical music at the University of Otago back in the early 1990s, the brass and piano player was also part of the national youth choir and admits to having "a voice, or at least a potential voice."

"Dame Malvina heard me and invited me to come on a nationwide tour with her and Richard Greager. They were the established artists, and Karen Heathcote and myself were the two young artists. So it started there, and I'm so grateful for that," says Simon.

"What I love about Dame Malvina and her Foundation is that they're not always after the winner. Dame Malvina grew me from a baritone into a tenor, she supported me through the Foundation with performance opportunities. The Foundation is there to enrich and encourage singers who might have a kernel of potential. People like me."

He says the Foundation is an absolute pillar of vocal development for our country and we need to keep it there.

"The Foundation has been unbelievably generous to a huge number of young opera singers and pianists in our country. It's important to hang on to that legacy."



Hannah Bryant with members of her Tron Songsters children's choir and the Hamilton Civic Choir  
Image: Cassey Numkung Photography

## A decade celebrating the legacy of Sir Howard Morrison

A vocal performance scholarship in recognition of the late Sir Howard Morrison's unique talent has enabled talented young singers to receive vocal tuition from Dame Malvina Major over the last ten years.

The Sir Howard Morrison Scholarship was established in 2009 to enable Sir Howard Morrison's enduring wish to recognise emerging talent. The scholarship has been a fitting tribute to Sir Howard by two of his friends – Sir Owen Glenn, who has funded the scholarship, and Dame Malvina.

The final scholarship was awarded earlier in 2019 to music educator Hannah Bryant. The Hamilton-based singing teacher and children's community choir director has been studying towards a Licentiate of Trinity College London Diploma of Singing and a Graduate Diploma of Teaching in Secondary schools from Waikato University.

Hannah says being awarded the scholarship has let her combine her two loves: music education and singing.

"I knew that I wanted to further develop my technical knowledge. Being afforded the opportunity to have regular lessons with Dame Malvina while I completed my teaching diploma has helped me to continue to grow through music – both personally and professionally – over the last year.

"It's a privilege to have a teacher whose vast experience is coupled with a warm personality and a sense of humour that never fails to bring a good dose of laughter to every lesson!"

Hannah says Dame Malvina has helped her develop the vocal and musical skills needed to be an effective singing teacher, soloist and chorister.

*"Studying under Dame Malvina has been a wonderful reminder of how to learn, and why we learn. When your teacher has such an ear for detail, it motivates you to bring to life the smallest notes and words of a phrase as you work. In turn, I feel constantly inspired to pass on my new discoveries and learnings to my own students."*

### Sir Howard Morrison Scholarship recipients 2010-2019

2019	Hannah Bryant
2018	Pasquale Orchard
2016	Blaire White
2015	Madison Nonoa, Jarvis Dams, Joel Amosa
2014	Oriana Kershaw
2013	Oriana Kershaw
2012	Amina Edris
2011	Amina Edris
2010	Te Waikamihī Korohina-Ormsby

# From grassroots to excellence

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Arts Excellence Awards and regional events underpin the Foundation's commitment to nurturing the talent of young performing artists in their local communities. Organised by our regional volunteer committees, this year \$20,000 was distributed through six Arts Excellence Awards in Auckland/Waikato, Wellington and Christchurch, with more than \$120,000 distributed by the Taranaki committee with support from the TSB Community Trust.

In Christchurch, the local committee organised and supported a range of events to showcase young talent and raise funds. This included a concert at Diana Isaac Retirement Village, a luncheon and performance by former Arts Excellence Award recipient Polly Ott with 'GANZ A Capella' at The Piano, and a showcase at the Ashburton Event Centre in conjunction with the Ashburton

Youth Institute. The committee's year culminates with 'A Festive Christmas' concert with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra at the Christchurch Town Hall on Saturday 21 December.

A highlight for the Wellington Committee was the concert and reception held at Government House in August, hosted by the Governor General and Sir David Gascoigne. A full house was delighted with the offering of mostly operatic material from Wade Kernot, Emma Pearson, Michaela Cadwgan, and LJ Crichton, accompanied by Bruce Greenfield. Earlier in the year the committee presented a concert with choirs from Samuel Marsden Collegiate School in St Mary of the Angels church. The school welcomed the opportunity to perform for a live audience ahead of the choirs' participation in the Big Sing festival.



Felicity Tomkins



Anna Simmons



Harry Grigg

## 2020 Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists with New Zealand Opera

The New Zealand Opera Artist Development Programme, supported by the Dame Malvina Major Foundation for the last 20 years, provides an opportunity for some of New Zealand's most promising young opera singers to develop their craft within the context of our national opera company.

This year's Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists are sopranos Felicity Tomkins and Anna Simmons and tenor Harry Grigg.

The programme equips artists with the skills necessary for an opera career through a programme of vocal and dramatic training encompassing languages, movement, interpretation, stagecraft and mentoring by international experts. They are supported through role-study and performance opportunities with New Zealand Opera. The programme is tailored specifically to meet the needs of each individual artist under the guidance of New Zealand Opera's Head of Music, Lindy Tennent-Brown.

# Grants and prizes 2019

Dame Malvina Major Young Artist with New Zealand Opera 2019: Bass-baritone Joel Amosa

Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artists with New Zealand Opera 2019:  
Soprano Pasquale Orchard, baritone Will King, baritone Angus Simmons

## Arts Excellence Awards

Auckland: Violinist April Ju, collaborative pianist Amy Chang

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

Wellington: Ballet dancer Macy Cook, conductor Vincent Hardaker, soprano Pasquale Orchard

Christchurch: Bass William O'Brien

## Prizes in vocal competitions

New Zealand Aria, first prize: Soprano Elizabeth Mandeno

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Napier Aria, first prize: Tenor Manase Latu

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Wellington Aria, first prize: Soprano Sophie Sparrow

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Christchurch Aria: first prize: Soprano Anna Simmons,  
second prize: Soprano Olivia Sheat

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

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Waikato Conservatorium of Music Aria (Greenlea Foundation Trust):  
first prize: Baritone Aidan Phillips, second prize: Baritone Alfred Fuimaono, third prize: Soprano Tayla Alexander

North Shore Becroft Aria, second prize: Soprano Christina McDonald

## Scholarships

Ryman DMMF Mina Foley Award: Conductor Holly Mathieson

Sir Howard Morrison Vocal Scholarship: Music educator Hannah Bryant

Greenlea Foundation Trust: Baritone Julien Van Mellaerts – commission of "Huia" song,  
part of Song Cycle New Zealand Birds by Gareth Farr and Bill Manhire; soprano Sophie Sparrow

Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award Canterbury: Conductor Daniel Cooper

Alice Cole Piano Scholarship Auckland/Waikato: Ashani Waidyatillake, Jessica Chi

Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Scholarship: Ballet dancer Abigail Boyle

Patricia Hurley's Masterclasses and Concerts for New Zealand Opera Singers in Italy:  
Soprano Pasquale Orchard, bass-baritone Joel Amosa, counter-tenor Stephen Diaz, pianist and  
conductor Timothy Carpenter

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# Board changes

Three new trustees have been appointed to the Dame Malvina Major Foundation, joining a Board committed to Dame Malvina's vision to 'Share the Dream' with New Zealand's next generation of talent.

Among them are Dame Malvina's eldest grandson, Thomas Fleming, an advisor at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, who was asked by Dame Malvina to join the Board to ensure her legacy continues and that the Foundation maintains a strong connection with her family.

Chief Executive of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and musician Gretchen La Roche has also been appointed along with Wellington-based lawyer and the Chief Executive Officer of Financial Services Complaints Ltd Susan Taylor.

"These individuals will inject new energy, insight and expertise into a board whose focus is on nurturing a Foundation that will outlive all of us and continue long into the future the dreams and aspirations of Dame Malvina Major," says Chair David Jackson.

## Fond farewells

In welcoming our new trustees, we've also had to farewell two longstanding trustees – Anna Midgley and Lindsay Lloyd – who retired from the Board this year.

Anna's relationship with the Foundation stems from a long friendship with Dame Malvina, which began in the 1960s when they performed *The Magic Flute* together at London Opera Centre. Anna formed the Christchurch Committee – which she continues to chair – and started the Arts Excellence Awards.

Lindsay has been a trustee since 2007 and has brought invaluable legal and commercial expertise to the Board as a partner and now consultant at Christchurch's MDS Law.



Thomas Fleming



Gretchen La Roche



Susan Taylor

# 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.

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*Yes, I would like support the work of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation and share the dream with talented young artists.*

- I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ 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:     /     /     )
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- 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

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Trust Administrator, The Dame Malvina Major Foundation, PO Box 9976, Wellington 6141.

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