



Dame
Malvina
Major
Foundation

30
YEARS

Rhapsody

News from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation

Summer 2020/21



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Major
Foundation**



A note from Dame Malvina

Thirty years ago, in the early day of setting up the Foundation, I never really thought about how long it would last. Obviously I hoped it would go on for a long time, but those first 2–3 years took a lot of hard work and there were a few setbacks.

The success of the Foundation has been due, in the main, to the people I have surrounded myself with – people who have been in the business in one way or another, or on the stage, dear friends who have wanted to help me ‘Share the Dream’.

I started the Foundation to help support young New Zealand performers overseas and prepare them for that experience. I had spoken at a Rotary event about how marvellous it would have been if I’d had someone to turn to when I was overseas as a young singer. It was the New Plymouth West Rotary Club that helped set everything in motion.

The Foundation has achieved far more than I ever envisioned. From its origins in Taranaki, to becoming a national organisation that has distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to hundreds of young New Zealanders and nurtured their development. To be able to support the broad spectrum of the arts, helping everyone from singers to dancers to conductors and all in between has been a pleasure and a privilege.

Over the years I have watched young people at the tentative beginning, not sure what they really want to do or even that they have a talent, and then seen them succeed in their chosen profession. Singers like Simon O’Neill, Amina Edris, Pene and Amitai Pati, jazz trumpeter Mike Taylor whose talents took him from New Plymouth to New York, Christchurch ballet dancer Tasman Davids who is now dancing in St Petersburg. I’ve often said it’s about grassroots to excellence – with our regional committees providing that initial support and encouragement – then through our other awards, prizes and scholarships, offering opportunities and assistance to help young artists develop skills and experience to build a career.

I am so proud of the 20 year association we have had with New Zealand Opera, supporting their artist development programme. And I am grateful they have chosen to align themselves with the Foundation all this time – and valued our input and involvement. I have lost count of how many of those young artists have had or

are having a successful career. It isn’t always about reaching the heights of opera, but to see them have a career that takes them around the world and get work for an overseas opera company is such a huge pleasure for me.

My dream is that we eventually have a bigger programme with New Zealand Opera covering all aspects of being a performer. That means languages, acting, stagecraft, dance and movement, mental health, agent/artist management, auditioning and all aspects of theatre – similar to the San Francisco Opera’s Merola programme or the Australian Opera Young Artists programme. We already know that our young New Zealand artists are well regarded overseas which gives them a head start when applying for study programmes internationally.

The Foundation may bear my name but its success is far from mine alone. It is all the people who work so hard in the regional committees, our Chair David Jackson, Administrator Patricia Hurley, our current Trustees Alan Judge, Anna Pierard, Robin Brockie, Thomas Fleming, Gretchen La Roche, Susan Taylor, Jenny Wollerman, and former trustees such as Angela Gorton, Lindsay Lloyd and Anna Midgley. It is our supporters – my dear friend Joan Egan, the Greenlea Foundation Trust, Ryman Healthcare, the TSB Community Trust, the William and Lois Manchester Charitable Trust to name a few, the many hundreds of individual donors, and most touchingly, those who have left us a bequest in their will – such a special legacy.

I am so grateful for your support to share the dream.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Malvina Major'.



**Dame
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30
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Artist development programmes with New Zealand Opera

Since 2000, the Foundation has collaborated with New Zealand Opera to nurture and support the development of young singers as they embark on professional singing careers. Today the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists Programme offers vocal and dramatic training, mentoring by international experts and performance opportunities with New Zealand Opera.

Bianca Andrew | Dame Malvina Major Foundation Emerging Artist 2012-13

Thinking back to 2012, Bianca recalls being loved up. “I had recently graduated from the New Zealand School of Music and was a member of the New Zealand Opera chorus. I was completely in love with opera. I loved everything about it and found the whole business of making opera utterly fascinating. I knew that becoming an Emerging Artist would give me the opportunity to further my training in this wonderful world, so I was overjoyed when I was selected for the Emerging Artist programme.”

One of the highlights was the chance to perform on the main stage. “Of course, it wasn’t only the performances themselves that provided the greatest learning curves – for me, it was the experience of being in a rehearsal process that was the most rewarding and important part.”

Bianca went on to train at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, under soprano Yvonne Kenny. She landed a position in the Opernstudio with Oper Frankfurt in Germany then joined the soloist ensemble at Oper Frankfurt, where she remains today.

“My journey from being an aspiring young singer in New Zealand to working at one of the top opera houses in Europe would simply not have been possible without the support of people like Dame Malvina and her foundation. Throughout my career, Dame Malvina and her team of incredible supporters have provided me not only with several scholarships, but also performance opportunities and mentorship. Both opera-lovers and opera-makers owe a great deal to Dame Malvina and her foundation.”



Bianca Andrew in Oper Frankfurt’s *I Puritani*, photo: Barbara Aumüller

James Harrison | Dame Malvina Major Foundation Fellow 2017

A DMMF Emerging Artist in the first year of the programme, seventeen years later, James was named DMMF Fellow, supporting his return from London to perform two roles in New Zealand Opera’s production of *Carmen*. It also provided the opportunity to mentor some younger singers, including the DMMF Emerging Artists.

“It helped confirm my desire to come back to New Zealand to focus on my teaching, a decision I’m very happy to have made!” says James.

Today James is based in Auckland teaching, coaching and performing – and paying it forward, volunteering as Chair of the DMMF Auckland/Waikato committee. He says the Foundation, and Dame Malvina herself, were hugely generous as he was starting out and so many artists, in multiple fields, could say the same.

“I was very keen to see how I could give back and keep the good work going. It’s a very rewarding experience on the committee as I get to see the work of so many talented young New Zealanders, all of whom are doing very well in many different parts of the world and across a wide range of disciplines.”



James Harrison (far right) in New Zealand Opera’s *Candide* with (from left) Amelia Berry, Natasha Wilson, Reg Livermore and James Benjamin Rodgers, photo: Simon Watt

Over its 30 years, the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has invested in young talent through a range of grants, scholarships and prizes. Here we cover the breadth of awards and hear from performing artists who have benefitted.



Katherine McIndoe in a Guildhall *Iolanta* scene, photo: Kristen Loken

Opera Studies Programme

This programme, in association with New Zealand Opera, offered specialist training for young New Zealand singers on the verge of international vocal studies. Participants received two weeks of intensive coaching from international tutors with a particular focus on recitative training – a style of delivery used in operas in which a singer adopts the rhythms of ordinary speech.

Katherine McIndoe, soprano | Opera Studies Programme participant 2017

A former DMMF Emerging Artist, Katherine was selected for this programme just before moving to London to begin her Master's at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She says the programme was a productive and special experience, and came at the perfect time.

"I was able to take part in an intensive and enriching series of coachings and classes to really focus on my singing, amongst all the stresses of visas, fundraising and applications. The programme underlined the importance of returning to the language to express the music and tell the story, and I took that with me as a major focus as I headed overseas to continue my studies."

Three years on, Katherine is now on the Guildhall Opera Course, an intensive two-year programme focused on practical stage experience. She says the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has played a huge role in her development.

"I have been supported in so many ways. I feel so lucky to be part of this community, and grateful for the generosity, positivity and encouragement that is at the heart of everything that Dame Malvina does."

Pacific Opera Programme

A collaboration with the Kia Ora Foundation, the Pacific Opera Programme ran in Christchurch in 2011 and 2012 offering intensive coaching from the directors of the prestigious San Francisco Opera Centre to 16 voice students and three repetiteurs.

Amina Edris, soprano | Pacific Opera Programme participant 2011

Amina had no idea at the time just how instrumental the Pacific Opera Programme would be in her emerging career.

"It was my first time ever participating in an opera training programme, and naively, I assumed it would just be a series of intensive voice lessons and coachings, when in reality it was so much more. Sheri Greenawald and Mark Morash led the programme and spent a great deal of time speaking to us about the business of opera and what it means to build a career as an opera singer."

After studying in Wales and San Francisco, in 2015 Amina was accepted into the San Francisco Opera Centre's Merola Opera Program and then its Adler Fellowship young artist program. Today she is a successful freelance artist working internationally.

"To say that I am beyond grateful for all the support I received from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation during my studies is an understatement. I know how much this foundation means to Dame Malvina and I can only hope to follow her lead one day and give back to future generations."



Amina Edris and Pene Pati in San Francisco Opera's *Roméo et Juliette*, photo: Kristen Loken

Arts Excellence Awards

First established by Anna Midgley in Christchurch in 2002, the DMMF Arts Excellence Awards exemplify Dame Malvina's catch cry 'From grassroots to excellence', supporting emerging young talent locally. Our regional committees in Auckland/Waikato, Wellington and Christchurch today fundraise for and administer these awards, with the DMMF Taranaki committee's awards generously supported by the TSB Community Trust.

Tasman Davids, ballet dancer | DMMF Christchurch Arts Excellence Award recipient 2010, 2011, 2013

Tasman first received a grant from the Foundation's Christchurch committee when he was 14. He went on to receive three Arts Excellence Awards as his ballet career progressed at pace.

"As the youngest of three with a solo mother, money was very tight for training in the arts. However the confidence the Foundation had in my chances of success, indicated by the awards, meant equally as much to me. Without that backing my career may have stalled before it started."

Tasman's first grant helped him attend the Australian Ballet's Summer School. His Arts Excellence Awards enabled him to train at the Vaganova Ballet Academy in St Petersburg, Russia for three years. He was the first Australasian to be accepted and ultimately graduate in the school's 282 year history.

Since then he has danced professionally for the St Petersburg State Academic Theatre – Yacobson Ballet and in 2019 was nominated for 'Best Male Performance in a Ballet', for Gamache in *Don Quixote* in the Russian National Theatre Awards, the 'Golden Masks'.

He says the Foundation feels like an arts 'family'. "It is a source of pride to have been selected as an Arts Excellence Award recipient. As I sat in the Bolshoi for the Golden Mask ceremony, I hoped that in some way my supporters in New Zealand knew that I was grateful to them and it was also their reward!"



Tasman Davids in Yacobson Ballet's *Don Quixote*, photo: Jack Devant

Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award

Established in 2010 from a legacy left by the original secretary and treasurer of the DMMF Christchurch Committee, the Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award is granted as part of the Christchurch Arts Excellence Awards to a young classical instrumentalist or vocal performer in Canterbury.

Matthew Lee, flautist | Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award recipient 2017

Originally from Gisborne, Matthew received the Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award after completing a Master in Flute Performance at the University of Canterbury. He says the funding enabled him to go to the Australian Flute Festival, for auditions, masterclasses and networking.

Today he lives in the United States and has just started a Doctorate in Musical Arts at Boston University. He was also a semi-finalist and prize winner at the 2019 Gisborne International Music Competition.

Alice Cole Piano Scholarship

Awarded annually by the DMMF Auckland/Waikato Committee to a young pianist of outstanding ability in the region, this scholarship is funded by a legacy from the late Alice Cole, whose love of music inspired a bequest in her will for an annual piano scholarship.

Tony Chen, pianist | Alice Cole Piano Scholarship recipient 2017

The Alice Cole Piano Scholarship was the first major award Tony won specifically for his piano playing. He says it gave him a much needed boost of confidence. The funding contributed to an overseas audition trip which saw him land a place at the esteemed Eastman School of Music in New York. After his first year of undergraduate studies, he returned home to win the Wallace National Piano Competition.

Despite his performance and study plans being disrupted this year due to COVID-19, he is continuing his studies via Zoom with his Eastman Professor Alan Chow. "Staying in New Zealand through the remainder of the year and possibly into the next too, I'm hoping to make the most of the rare opportunity of live concert engagements that New Zealand is proud to be able to host. I'm carefully observing how the pandemic evolves in the US before I make my safe return!"

Lexus Song Quest

Since 2012, the Foundation has provided the \$10,000 runner-up cash prize in the influential Lexus Song Quest (formerly the Mobil Song Quest), a competition that helped launch Dame Malvina's own operatic career when she won first prize in 1963.

Eliza Boom, soprano | Lexus Song Quest runner up 2018

"The 2018 Lexus Song Quest finals was such an exciting night," says Eliza. "The air felt electrified, and I would have been happy simply because of how I performed, but to be named the Dame Malvina Major Foundation runner-up was absolutely terrific!"

"It was particularly special to be awarded the prize by Dame Malvina, who in many ways was the initiator of my journey as a fully-fledged opera singer. It was while I was under her tuition that I first introduced myself to someone as an opera singer, a moment I clearly recall. To be given the prize by this wonderful woman was incredibly special."

The prize supported Eliza's study at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester – a year, she says, that was a wonderful consolidation of her craft alongside gaining experience and exposure. Since then Eliza has been a Young Artist at the National Opera Studio in London, although her time there was cut short due to COVID-19. In September 2020 she started a two-year position at the Bayerische Staatsoper Opera Studio in Munich.



Dame Malvina with Lexus Song Quest runner up Eliza Boom, photo: Norrie Montgomery

"Over the years, financial support from the Foundation has been the enabler of so many of my experiences. But there have also been years of advice, expertise and emotional support. To know that a foundation such as this is cheering me on and committed to supporting me as an artist is invaluable."



Ryman Healthcare DMMF Mina Foley Award

This award, established in 2008 in memory of Mina Foley, one of New Zealand's most promising vocal talents of yesteryear, enables New Zealand Opera to bring home New Zealanders to perform in a professional opera season. Since 2018, Ryman Healthcare has partnered with the Foundation to sponsor this award.

Anna Leese, soprano | DMMF Mina Foley Award recipient 2012

Being chosen for such an award is a huge boost for your self-esteem as an artist says Anna.

"When you're no longer studying but working the profession, there are few such supports available, and it says to a working singer that your work is valid, more than that, it is appreciated and there are people who want to support you to continue. It can mean a lot to an artist who needs a bit of a boost!"

The award supported Anna's return to New Zealand from Italy to perform in the lead role of Majenka in New Zealand Opera's 2012 production of *The Bartered Bride*.

Today she lives in Dunedin with her husband Stefano and their two young boys, Matteo and Samuel, with Anna choosing to steer her professional career towards work at or near home. She also co-founded the Tākiri Ensemble, a vocal group which regularly tours New Zealand. This year she was appointed as an Ambassadorial Adviser to the Foundation. "I was flattered to be invited, and happy to contribute to an organisation which has been so hugely positive and supportive of my career."

Italian for New Zealand Opera Singers Masterclasses

Since 2010, the Foundation has granted scholarships to enable young singers to take part in Patricia Hurley's Italian for New Zealand Opera Singers Masterclasses in Italy, offering language lessons, vocal tuition and an introduction to Italian culture as well as performance opportunities.

Pasquale Orchard, soprano | Italian for New Zealand Opera Singers Masterclasses Scholarship recipient 2019

To call the experience and lessons learnt in Italy as life-changing is an understatement according to Pasquale. She says it was an honour to be selected and the amazing opportunity has been highlighted by the ensuing outbreak and impact of COVID-19.

"The immersive nature of the course provided an inspiring learning environment to develop not only my language skills but also my understanding of Italian vocal repertoire. The encouragement from fellow artisti and maestro Wyn Davies supported the essence of creativity that permeated the entire trip."

Pasquale has since finished her Master of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, with classes online since April. She is now undertaking its Postgraduate Diploma course under scholarship.



Caption: Pasquale Orchard in Royal Northern College of Music's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, photo: Robert Stewart

Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Scholarship

Set up in 2009 in honour of Christchurch theatrical designer and teacher Peter Lees-Jeffries, this occasional scholarship is awarded to New Zealand opera designers and directors.

Jacqueline Coats, opera director | Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Scholarship 2018

The Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Scholarship enabled Jacqueline to immerse herself in the Italian language in preparation for directing New Zealand Opera's *La Bohème*. She received Italian coaching from Victoria University linguist and translator Marco Sonzogni, an expert in translating opera libretti and performative uses of Italian.

"The coaching proved invaluable in developing a deeper understanding of the libretto, as well as gaining confidence in pronunciation of text."

Since then, Jacqueline has continued her professional development with a Pettman DARE Fellowship in Music Education and Community Engagement. Despite COVID-19

bringing her back from the United Kingdom earlier than expected, she has continued part of her fellowship with New Zealand Opera, completed a postgraduate diploma online and lined up numerous directing engagements well into 2021.

She says the Foundation's scope to assist those who are more established to take professional development opportunities when they might not otherwise be able to was one that she deeply appreciated.

Lockwood New Zealand Aria

From 2008 the Foundation has partnered with the Lockwood New Zealand Aria to provide the \$20,000 first prize in this prestigious singing competition, held annually in Rotorua.

Pene Pati, tenor | New Zealand Aria winner 2009

“The New Zealand Aria win was a pivotal point in my soul search to become a singer,” says Pene. “At the time, I was finishing up my studies and I decided to take on the Aria as a sort of test to see where I rank with New Zealand singers. Winning meant so much because I realised my potential. I realised that maybe, I could have something special.”

The prize opened the door for Pene to compete in the prestigious McDonalds Aria in Sydney. The following year he won the competition and was shoulder tapped by Dennis O’Neil at the Wales International Academy of Voice to study his Master’s. “None of this would have been possible without the prize. If it were not for the New Zealand Aria, I would never have

gone to Australia to compete, and would never have been heard in that capacity.”

From there, he went on to become a Merolini with San Francisco Opera then an Adler Fellow. Today he is a successful freelance opera singer with international engagements lined up years ahead.

Pene says Dame Malvina has played an instrumental part in his career. “Dame Malvina always encouraged me to pursue greatness and she saw something in me at a time I doubted myself. The support from the Foundation gave me the chance – that’s all you need, the chance to see what you could achieve. If it were not for the Foundation, I would have had a completely different trajectory.”

Sir Howard Morrison Vocal Scholarship

This scholarship was offered from 2010 to 2019, in recognition of the late Sir Howard Morrison’s unique talents. It was backed by two of his friends, Sir Owen Glenn, who funded the scholarship, and Dame Malvina who provided the vocal tuition.

Joel Aмоса, bass-baritone | Sir Howard Morrison Vocal Scholarship recipient 2016

Joel says it was a huge honour to be selected for this scholarship – and a bit of a surprise. “I shared the scholarship with a great friends Jarvis Dams and Madison Nonoa. I was still a young buck in my singing career at the time so it was the extra inspiration and support I needed to really tell myself maybe I do have a good enough voice.”

He says the scholarship really opened up an inner confidence he never knew he had. “For me, it meant that I have to learn how to work hard, sing well and stay healthy. Without these foundations I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Since 2015 his opera career has been on a steady rise, including winning the Lexus Song Quest in 2018 and being selected as a Dame Malvina Major Foundation Young Artist with New Zealand Opera in 2019.

“Having the support of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has been an absolute blessing and a confidence booster. Thank you for continuously looking out for me and having my best interests at heart, even when I don’t know them myself.”

Regional aria competitions

Over the years, the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has provided prizes for regional aria competitions across the country, offering invaluable performance and competition experience for promising young singers.

Christian Thurston, baritone | Dame Malvina Major Foundation Wellington Aria winner 2014

Winning the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Wellington Aria was an integral step in Christian’s emerging career. He says it helped him transition from studying at the New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī, to becoming a Dame Malvina Major Foundation Emerging Artist with New Zealand Opera, then heading to New York to start his Master of Music at the Manhattan School of Music. He was later accepted for Minnesota Opera’s prestigious Resident Artist program.

The aria prize funded his initial applications and audition trip to the United States. “Looking back, it was so enormously important! Without the prize, I would not have been able to apply to a variety of programs, and may not have been able to make the trip at all. So my current career would be in a very different state without that prize.”

Christian says having support back home has always been key. “But what this support has really meant in real terms is opportunity. It has given me the opportunity to explore the various options abroad. Whenever I speak of the Foundation’s support and network to colleagues, they are always gobsmacked and quite envious!”

Tenor Amitai Pati receives inaugural \$50,000 Dame Malvina Major Award

A \$50,000 annual opera award honouring Dame Malvina Major has been established, with tenor Amitai Pati the inaugural recipient.

The Dame Malvina Major Award had been funded by Joan Egan who wanted to acknowledge Dame Malvina's legacy and celebrate the Dame Malvina Major Foundation's 30th anniversary.

Dame Malvina says the award is "hugely generous".

"Joan has created this award out of a mutual respect and her admiration for what the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has achieved for young performing artists over 30 years. She also knows the significant costs these young people face as they forge their careers."

Dame Malvina says Amitai is a very worthy first recipient, and demonstrates the commitment and tenacity needed to succeed.

"He is endowed with a superb tenor voice and is dead set on making his dream come true. He shows grit and determination and a nothing-will-get-in-his-way attitude which is absolutely necessary in the business of opera or theatre. Amitai wants it and has a plan laid out. He heard the audience clapping his big brother once when he was very young, and he told himself he wanted that too in his own right."

The winner of the 2012 Lexus Song Quest and member of the acclaimed musical trio SOL3 MIO says he is hugely honoured and grateful to be selected for this prestigious award.

"An opera career is not an easy journey and my many colleagues here in New Zealand and abroad can attest to that. I'll be able to continue my coachings, learn new repertoire and study further whether in New Zealand or overseas. It will enable me to travel to my engagements both locally and internationally and covers my expenses. It takes a lot of pressure off my shoulders, both mentally and financially. One less issue to worry about which means I can focus on what really matters and that is the music."

Amitai, whose plans for 2020 have been significantly disrupted by COVID-19, has just completed a successful season in New Zealand Opera's *Semele* as recipient of the Ryman Healthcare DMMF Mina Foley Award. He was due to fly to Germany at the end of November where he is double cast with his brother Pene Pati in Oper Dortmund's *Frédégonde* but this has been postponed with recent COVID-19 restrictions. He has engagements lined up in Norway and Hawaii, and here in New Zealand, in 2021.

"This last year has seen me return prematurely from Europe, have performances in China cancelled and SOL3 MIO gigs postponed, but it's also seen some unique opportunities arise here at home, including taking on a breakfast radio gig on Flava FM with SOL3 MIO. While I don't expect the next year to be plain sailing, with this backing from the Foundation I can at least look forward confidently. Despite the challenges facing all in the performing arts sector, I am excited for what the future holds."

Amitai says he will be forever appreciative of the support he has received from Dame Malvina and her Foundation.

"They've been there for me since the very beginning. Dame Malvina always sees the best in people and she took a chance on me. She encouraged me and my passion for opera – and still does. She has guided, nurtured and supported my vision of becoming an established performer and I am truly grateful for everything she has done. New Zealand singers are very fortunate to have someone like her in their corner."



Amitai Pati with Emma Pearson in New Zealand Opera's *Semele*, photo: Garry Brandon

Creativity in a time of coronavirus

In a year that has seen the performing arts sector stopped in its tracks as the world reels from the COVID-19 pandemic, artists globally have found ways to adapt and carry on – including our Kiwi creatives.

Among them, singers Anna and Angus Simmons, who set up Opera in Giardino in level 3 lockdown, bringing live opera to local gardens and backyards in Tauranga while they waited for a return to 'normal'. Wade Kernot and Emma Pearson also took music to the streets, setting up Avenue Opera to offer live classical music outside people's Wellington homes, maintaining strict social distancing requirements.

In Northland, local singers Sophie Sparrow, Kawiti Waetford, and Eliza Boom established Reo Takurua Winterless Opera in alert level 2, offering masterclasses and live classical music to venues around the region.

And Eliza made the most of new opportunities to compete on a virtual global stage, winning the Classical & Opera and Musical Theatre categories of ASC@Home – the Australian Singing Competition's response to the pandemic. The pivot online meant the competition reached a much larger pool of international singers – with seventeen countries represented in the 137 entries.

Many young artists were forced home during lockdown, returning from studies overseas and across New Zealand. But that didn't mean they were idle, with lessons taken online. Among them, this year's Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists, Anna Simmons, Harry Grigg and Felicity Tomkins, who continued their programme via the internet

with weekly virtual voice lessons and language coaching, as well as special workshops with international experts.

New Zealand Opera also helped inspire COVID-19 creativity with their Echoes of History project. Deciding to dive into the history of opera being written and composed in Aotearoa throughout the years, they tasked three singers – Will King, Oliver Sewell and Eliza Boom – with researching historical New Zealand operas that had a personal connection and conceiving a filming concept, showcasing New Zealand beauty or landmarks. The resulting videos are available at <https://nzopera.com/echoes-of-history/>

And performances continued, albeit in a different format. Tenor Filipe Manu, who remained in London, performed as a Jette Parker Young Artist in the Royal Opera's Live in Concert event livestreamed from Covent Garden – the first event since it closed its doors to the public in March. And a number of Kiwi artists performed in the Tait Tuesdays At Home concerts, giving lockdown streaming concert performances from their homes in support of the Tait Emergency Relief Fund for Australian & New Zealand Artists.

The Foundation was also proud to support the WHĀNAU London Voices concert featuring Kiwi singers, filmed at the Royal Albert Hall and broadcast internationally in late November.



Eliza Boom performing from home for the ASC@Home competition



Ensuring the Foundation's future

David Jackson, Chair

The Dame Malvina Major Foundation has always reflected the passion and dedication of Dame Malvina and her strong commitment to young performing artists. I believe this is not only the secret to its success, but will also ensure its future.

While Dame Malvina coined the phrase 'From grassroots to excellence' her driving ambition is supporting excellence. Her ability to identify and encourage young people who have the potential to be excellent is impressive – she will give a helping hand as needed but is demanding when required. She will only back those who back themselves.

Dame Malvina has never been afraid to ask for help. She is focused and determined in this way. While her success and reputation typically get her in the door, support for her foundation has come because people have responded to her engaging personality, compassion and vision. She has gathered around her others who share her dream. This has included friends who have set up our regional committees, organisational sponsors such as Ryman Healthcare, through to generous donors and trusts who have backed the Foundation's investment in future talent.

The careers of countless New Zealand performing artists who have enjoyed international success reflect the impact of the Foundation but more importantly Dame Malvina's own influence on individuals. Their respect and admiration for her is testament to the personal interest she takes in each of them. She has the rare ability to reach out when she sees an individual needs support or guidance.

As we look back on the last 30 years and forward to the next 30, one thing is certain: we must continue to identify and support young artists who have potential for excellence, individuals who can emulate Dame Malvina's many successes. And we must continue to surround ourselves in those who share her passion and vision – from Trustees who represent a balance of artistic and commercial experience, to our many supporters.

Importantly, we must also continue to build our capital fund to provide an annual income for our annual programme of grants, prizes and scholarships. For this we continue to reach out to our supporters to help 'share the dream' – through donations, sponsorship, endowed funds and bequests.

Dame Malvina's legacy is her Foundation. As she once said to me, this is more important than a statue in a garden somewhere with a pigeon perched on her head. Let's ensure her legacy outlives us all.

Help secure the next 30 years

We need your support to ensure Dame Malvina's vision to 'share the dream' continues for the next 30 years and beyond.

Help us make her legacy last and nurture the next generation of talent by making a donation, leaving a bequest or sponsoring a scholarship or prize.

dmmfoundation.org.nz



Full circle for founding Chair

The Dame Malvina Major Foundation's founding Chair, Robin Brockie QSM, has rejoined the Foundation's trust board, 30 years after he first stepped up to help Dame Malvina 'share the dream'.

Robin was first involved with the Foundation in a project initiated by the Rotary Club of New Plymouth West, following an address made by Dame Malvina to the club.

"Among other things, she articulated her dream to have a foundation to help support young talented and aspiring vocalists through their development. The dream had its origins from the challenges that Dame Malvina confronted with her own development that she wished that the next generation may not need to endure.

"I was a member of the club and led a group of dedicated Rotarians to establish the framework for the development of the 'dream' – an ambitious national philanthropic trust for young people."

Robin says the idea was an amazing gift of generosity from Dame Malvina who gave her time tirelessly at a period when she was still performing internationally.

"That generosity was also extended by the founding Trustees – Sir Ron Trotter, Hon Dr Michael Bassett, Sir Ross Jansen, Christopher Doig, Angela Gorton and Maurice Cleland – and by the individuals, groups and business who got behind the project."

After standing down from the original Trust Board in 2000, Robin went on to chair the Taranaki Committee, a position he still holds. He says the committee is unique in its enduring relationship with the TSB Community Trust which has provided in excess of \$1 million of funding since 2005.

The Dame Malvina Major Foundation has proved that anything is possible over time, says Robin "The opportunities for the future are boundless and the need for it will persist, so that is a good future to look forward to."

A 20 year partnership

In November, the Dame Malvina Major Foundation and New Zealand Opera celebrated their 20 year partnership with supporters in 'A Tribute in Song to Dame Malvina Major' at the Freemasons New Zealand Opera Studio in Auckland. The event featured performances from artists who had benefitted from the artist development programme the two organisations have fostered over many years.



During the event, mezzo-soprano Katie Trigg, soprano Katherine Winitana, baritone Samuel Downes and pianist Ben Kubiak were announced as the 2021 Dame Malvina Major Foundation New Zealand Opera Studio Artists.

New Zealand Opera Director Thomas de Mallet Burgess says the team at New Zealand Opera is so appreciative of the years of support the Dame Malvina Major Foundation has provided young singers, and the immense personal contribution that Dame Malvina has made to our artform.

"The list of opera singers who have come through the programme partnership between the Dame Malvina Major Foundation and New Zealand Opera testifies to the strength of this 20 year relationship and the significant help it gives to young New Zealanders in achieving their potential in the performing arts.

"Now, more than ever, we need faith in the future and the strength to nurture the talent that will take us there."

From left: Katie Trigg, Dame Malvina, Samuel Downes, Katherine Winitana, Ben Kubiak

From the regions – from grassroots to excellence

Our regional committees experienced their share of COVID-related disruption this year, but all adapted and continued to provide invaluable support to young performing artists locally.

\$21,000 was distributed through five 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, which has agreed to extend its support into 2021 with another \$120,000 grant.

Auckland/Waikato committee Chair James Harrison says the committee was acutely aware how challenging this year has been for those involved in the arts, and made the decision to extend the awards to artists who had already seized incredible opportunities but needed assistance to keep hold of them.

The Christchurch committee made two additional awards – the annual Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award and the DMMF Stick & RG Award (gifted by committee member Raemon Greenwood), with the Auckland/Waikato committee awarding the annual Alice Cole Piano Scholarship, plus a runners up prize.

Committee fundraising events were thwarted by lockdowns, but many have been rescheduled for the coming year, including the Wellington committee's 'Narropera' fundraiser – a production of Weber's *Der Freischütz*, and the Christchurch committee's 'Catch the Rising Stars' fundraiser for the Isaac Theatre Royal.

Wellington committee Chair George Troup says the committee had planned a repeat of last year's successful concert in partnership with Samuel Marsden Collegiate School in St Mary of the Angels church. "This had to be rescheduled, and

eventually took the form of a concert in the school hall. Unlike last year, when we made a donation to the school from the takings, the school insisted that all of the takings go towards the Foundation's work."

The committees finish the year with a series of concerts at Ryman Healthcare villages across the country, as part of Ryman Healthcare's longstanding support for the Foundation and its young artists.



Bass William O'Brien received a DMMF Christchurch Arts Excellence Award for the second year running. His studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music have been deferred until 2021. Photo: Sebastian Boyle

Grants and prizes 2020

Dame Malvina Major Award sponsored by Joan Egan: tenor Amitai Pati

Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists with New Zealand Opera:
soprano Anna Simmons, soprano Felicity Tomkins, tenor Harry Grigg

Arts Excellence Awards

Auckland/Waikato: collaborative pianist Amy Chang, pianist Delvan Lin

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

Wellington: baritone Benjamin Reason, violinist Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Christchurch: bass William O'Brien

Prizes in vocal competitions

**Dame Malvina Major Foundation Waikato Conservatorium
of Music Aria (Greenlea Foundation Trust):**

First prize Lemauseafa Siololesio Lemau Sio-Lolesio, second prize
Emmanuel Fonoti Fuimaono, third prize Katherine Winitana

Scholarships and grants

Ryman Healthcare DMMF Mina Foley Award: tenor Amitai Pati

Cecily Maccoll High Achiever Award Canterbury: violinist Thomas Bedggood

Alice Cole Piano Scholarship Auckland/Waikato: Sunny Le; runner up Audrey Guo

DMMF Christchurch Stick & RG Trust Award: singer Charlotte Taylor

WHĀNAU, voices of Aotearoa, far from home: support for opera singers in
London, recording project Royal Albert Hall

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