

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

WELLINGTON OPERA



WELLINGTON OPERA

GIVING RISE TO AOTEAROA VOICES

Opera is more than it sounds. A collaboration of many art forms - music, drama, movement, costume, set design, lighting - Opera is the epitome of emotive storytelling, transporting audiences through the soul-stirring power of voice into relatable and revelatory worlds.

Wellington Opera is also more than it sounds. Based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington Opera is a national force; giving rise to the voices of Aotearoa by nurturing emerging and existing talent and telling our people's stories.

We bring internationally successful Aotearoa opera singers to their home stage to wow audiences and inspire the next generation. We support Aotearoa opera composers to tell our unique stories through our own voices. We debut Aotearoa opera singers on their way to the world stage. And we invite Aotearoa to experience opera in a highly engaging way.

In 2025 we staged the world premiere of the culturally significant *Mate Ururoa* by Dame Gillian Karawe Whitehead giving breath to a Māori Gallipoli story, integrating taonga pūoro, karanga and waiata from the subject's iwi and whānau. In 2026 we welcome home world-renowned Aotearoa singers Pene Pati, Amina Edris and Phillip Rhodes for the classic opera, Manon. In the coming years, we will continue to foster up-and-coming operatic talent, many of whom are Māori and Pacific.

Aotearoa voices are the heart of Wellington Opera. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington is the place it all comes to life. Integral to the cultural ecosystem of the capital and Aotearoa, we collaborate with leading schools such as Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music, Te Pae Kōkako The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio and Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School, and punch above our weight in enhancing the city's vibrant cultural economy. With 50% of our audiences coming from outside the city and across Aotearoa, Wellington Opera, quite literally, moves people.

"Powerful storytelling with aroha and pride
... an intensely affecting work."

ELIZABETH KERR, FIVE LINES ON MATE URUROA



CONTENTS

Wellington Opera: Giving Rise to Aotearoa Voices....3

Vision and Purpose....6

Message from the Chair....7

Priorities....8

Message from Artistic Director....9

By the Numbers
Wellington Opera 2025....10

A Masked Ball....12
Mate Ururoa....14

Our Impact
Wellington Opera over 4 years....16

Notes from the Front....17

Our Impact
Audiences....18

Audience Reach....19

Our Impact
Opera Aotearoa....21

Our Impact
Aotearoa Talent....22

Emerging Artists....24

Schools' Experiences....25

About Wellington Opera....27

Artists and Crew....28

Our Donors....29

Thank You....30

Financial Report
Statement of Financial Performance....31
Statement of Financial Position....32

Funders and Supporters....34



VISION

To grow the future of opera in Aotearoa by creating exceptional opera experiences that deeply engage communities across the motu. We celebrate Aotearoa voices and nurture emerging talent to build a legacy of excellence, Aotearoa stories, and opportunity that reflects Aotearoa's identity.

PURPOSE

To create exceptional opera experiences for Aotearoa from our home in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, presenting our internationally recognised New Zealand voices and emerging talent. We build on our artistic and box office success to foster and promote access, education, development opportunities and cultural impact in opera for Wellington and across Aotearoa.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

For Wellington Opera the year in 2025 marked several milestones and successes – our first world-premiere, the staging of Mate Ururoa by New Zealand composer Dame Gillian Karawe Whitehead (Ngāi Te Rangi) with three sold-out performances at the Hannah Playhouse and a season of Verdi's A Masked Ball that was a wonderful artistic success. A large inbound audience once again contributed to Wellington's cultural economy.

We have gained the trust of audiences from Wellington and across the country who understand we create exceptional opera experiences that deeply resonate with communities across our region and beyond, celebrating Kiwi voices and nurturing emerging talent.

Wellington Opera has now staged six productions since we launched during Covid in 2021, and in all respects the company keeps growing from strength to strength.

The company had challenges in 2025 too. Funding investment has been uncertain and our residency at the Opera House for A Masked Ball was not optimal for converting the box office sales that we rely on.

Presenting opera in a small city is challenging, even with our New Zealand wide audience. Wellington Opera has survived in 2025 thanks to some amazing major funders including the New Zealand Opera Foundation, Wellington City Council, Adam Foundation and the Turnovsky Endowment Trust, donors, underwriters and, of course, our Circle 500 members.

We are particularly indebted to The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for their support as presenting sponsor with both funding support and top flight singers from their stable.

And, of course, we are indebted to our magnificent Executive Artistic Director, Matthew Ross and his team.

DAME KERRY PRENDERGAST
CHAIR, WELLINGTON OPERA TRUST

PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Artistic excellence

We create exceptional opera experiences passionately supported by audiences across Wellington and Aotearoa.

Priority 2: Commitment to Aotearoa talent

We present New Zealand singers and creatives first because Aotearoa talent is so strong, offering our singers and creatives the opportunity to perform and develop roles while presenting unique opportunities for Aotearoa audiences to hear our singers at home.

We also offer emerging singers, directors and creatives unique opportunities to develop their work and careers, supporting journeys to international success.

Priority 3: Grow Opera Aotearoa

We reflect Aotearoa in opera through supporting Aotearoa composers, singers, creatives and artists, staging new Aotearoa opera and building a legacy of Aotearoa stories in opera that are deeply connected with iwi, whānau and communities.

Priority 4: Engagement and education

We make opera opportunities accessible to schools, music groups, institutions and other communities across the region and the wider motu, with access to rehearsals and events inside and outside the theatre, and relationships with national educational institutions.

Priority 5: Collaboration across the Wellington arts ecosystem and opera in Aotearoa

We work and coordinate with arts, civic and commercial organisations across Wellington and Aotearoa to nurture the artform and create mutually beneficial artistic and economic opportunities.

Priority 6: Sustainability – Financial, Operational and Environmental

Wellington Opera has lean, right-sized operations, a deliberate non-touring model and creates our productions in Wellington that together ensure highly efficient and effective use of funding and benefactor support with investment going into the art and artists, not spend on travel and logistics.



A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

As a team we must reflect on our 2025 season with immense satisfaction in what we have achieved together.

Bringing Gillian Whitehead's ***Mate Ururoa*** to the stage for its world premiere is an absolute highlight of 2025. For the company, this was a major milestone to deliver programming outside of the mainstream, something we had been working towards for several years. Thanks to Dame Gillian Whitehead and David Tahere — who commissioned this work — along with Director Sara Brodie, for their tenacity in helping bring this production to life.

Our mainstage season of ***Un Ballo in Maschera* | *A Masked Ball*** was widely recognised by audiences and critics together as a wonderful artistic success. It is a challenging work to present and the success is a reflection of the talent we have in the company to create compelling new productions — for *Un Ballo* led by Director Jacqueline Coats — together with our artist principals who made this their own as they added new roles to their repertoire.

With the lack of government funding support being an existential challenge, we are incredibly grateful for the benefactors that stepped in to provide support for this season.

Wellington Opera acknowledges the essential support of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation as the presenting sponsor for A Masked Ball, and other major funders including the New Zealand Opera Foundation and the Wellington City Council.

MATTHEW ROSS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, WELLINGTON OPERA

BY THE NUMBERS

WELLINGTON OPERA 2025

3,284

Audiences for *A Masked Ball* and *Mate Ururoa*

6

Performances

1

World Premiere

232

Artists, Creatives, Team

220

School Students at Dress Rehearsal

2

Opera Aotearoa works in development



A MASKED BALL

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

6-10 August 2025

Our season of Verdi's A Masked Ball was another artistic highlight for the company. A challenging work to pull off for everyone involved, it was received very enthusiastically by audiences that were moved by the monumental power of the music. The excited chatter about why this opera has not been seen in New Zealand for 30 years was a validation of our decision to go outside of safe repertoire, and for good reason – the fit for our principals who wowed audiences.

While the Opera House is a somewhat problematic venue for access and logistics, the intimacy and acoustic drew audiences close to this production and the compelling cast.

Wellington Opera extends our thanks to The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation for their support once again as Presenting Sponsor of our mainstage season. We're also grateful to the many other foundations and benefactors that supported Wellington Opera in this difficult year.

Amelia
Madeleine Pierard†

Gustavo
Jared Holt‡

Count Renè Anckarström
Julien Van Mellaerts^

Oscar
Natasha Te Rupe Wilson^

Ulrica Arvidsson
Kristin Darragh^

Count Ribbing
Samuel McKeever

Count Horn
Morgan-Andrew King^

Guidice
Lila Crichton§

Cristiano
Daniel O'Connor

Amelia's Servant
Chris Anderson

^ Artist presented in association with The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

† Supported by the Dame Malvina Major Foundation

‡ Supported by the Turnovsky Endowment Trust

§ Supported by the Deane Endowment Trust

Conductor – **Brian Castles-Onion**

Director – **Jacqueline Coats**

Set Design – **Michael Zaragoza**

Costume Design – **Lee Erihāpeti Williams**

Lighting Design – **Rowan McShane**

Chorus Director – **Michael Vinten**

Wellington Opera Chorus

Orchestra Wellington

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION

A MASKED BALL

“

☆☆☆☆☆

I congratulate you on such a stunningly good production. It is by far the best produced opera in New Zealand this year.

It was a marvelous production! The whole cast were wonderful!

Congratulations Wellington Opera, and thank you for bringing us an opera we haven’t seen before!



MATE URUROA

DAME GILLIAN WHITEHEAD

World Premiere, 11-13 July 2025

Bringing Mate Ururoa to the stage for the world premiere on Friday 11th July 2025 was an absolute high point of our 2025 season. Achieving an effectively sold-out three night season is a testament to the work, the composer and the artists. It is also wonderfully encouraging for Wellington Opera as it shows a pathway for the staging of new Aotearoa opera in Wellington, and shows audiences will support this mahi.

The drive of David Tahere and Gillian Whitehead in their commitment to creating this powerful new work, and their dedication to pursuing the opportunities to perform it, is to be admired.

The support, advice and collaboration from the Dansey whānau, as well as guidance from Ngāti Toa for the performance of their taonga, Ka Mate, were vital to bringing this work together with the integrity and kaupapa it demanded. The artists felt a strong sense of whanaungatanga as they wore the korowai of the whānau in performance.

Having the whānau and iwi of Captain Roger Dansey in attendance on opening night was a privilege. The waiata they performed to honour their tīpuna at the closing of the opera was hugely moving.

COMPOSED BY & TEXT BY **DAME GILLIAN WHITEHEAD** (Ngāi Te Rangi)
CAPTAIN ROGER DANSEY – **DAVID TAHERE**
COMMANDING OFFICER – **BRENT ALLCOCK**
TAONGA PŪORO AND VOICE – **ARIANA TIKAO**
ENSEMBLE – **STROMA**
CONDUCTOR – **HAMISH MCKEICH**

COMMISSIONED BY DAVID TAHERE WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND

DIRECTOR – **SARA BRODIE**
LIGHTING AND PROJECTION – **JACOB BANKS**
COSTUME & SET – **REBECCA BETHAN JONES**

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha kua whakarauikatia mai ki tēnei kaupapa, tēnei mātou te whānau Tanihi (Dansey) e mihi nei, e whakatau nei i a koutou, naumai, haere mai.

As the whānau of Major Roger Dansey, we warmly welcome you to this special performance honouring his story and legacy. It is with aroha and pride that we share in this creative retelling of his life. *Ko te tangata, ko te kōrero* – the person lives on through the story. Thank you for joining us in remembering and celebrating our tupuna Roger's journey.

This season was supported by

Lilburn Trust

Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

MATE URUROA

“

☆☆☆☆☆

A significant artistic achievement ...
Bold, elegant and filled with mana.

HARIATA MORIATI (THEATREVIEW) ON *MATE URUROA*

Powerful storytelling with aroha and pride... thank you Wellington Opera and Stroma for staging this important premiere.

ELIZABETH KERR (FIVE LINES) ON *MATE URUROA*



OUR IMPACT

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

19,346
Total Audience

$1.47M
Box Office Sales

44%
Funded by Box Office

980
Artists, Creatives and Team

6
Full Productions
(and 6 other events)

1
World Premiere

8,899
Audience Inbound to Wellington (46%)

$6.3M
Economic Impact for Wellington

NOTES FROM THE FRONT

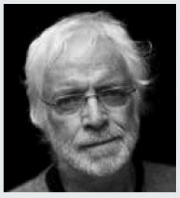
SEVEN SONGS, WITH TEXT BY VINCENT O'SULLIVAN WRITTEN FOR RICHARD GREAGER

1. Visions, much later
2. The notes
3. What we don't tell them at home
4. On a different note
5. Pretty much verbatim
6. Close as this
7. Song for Winifred

This group of songs relates to Alexander Aitken, the brilliant mathematician and gifted amateur musician, who managed to smuggle a violin through both Gallipoli and France, playing it in the trenches. He enlisted with the Otago Infantry as part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

The first draws on the breakdowns he periodically suffered during the rest of his life, the images taken from his own record of these episodes. The second refers to his managing to play his violin during the major campaigns he took part in. The third details the reality of the trenches, which those at home were scarcely aware of, while the fourth refers to the music which paradoxically he was able to take to the front lines. 'Pretty much verbatim', as the title suggests, is taken from Aitken's own tribute to a close Dunedin friend who held an exploding grenade close against himself, to save his mates. The sixth song concerns the surreal experience which apparently was not uncommon, of thinking one saw a soldier who already was dead, and places this experience back in the Otago Aitken returned to after the War. 'The Song for Winifred' declares, as he did, his debt to his wife, a fellow Dunedin student, and the return to 'normal' life.

ROSS HARRIS COMPOSER



Arts laureate Ross Harris is one of New Zealand's leading composers.

He has written more than two hundred compositions including opera, symphonic music, chamber music, klezmer and electronic music. He has been a finalist in the prestigious SOUNZ Contemporary Award many times and won the award four times. Harris received a QSM in 1985 for his opera *Waituhi* with libretto by Witi Ihimaera, the CANZ Citation for Services to New Zealand Music in 1990 and the CANZ Trust Fund Award in 2016.

His major works include twelve string quartets, nine symphonies, a violin concerto (premiered by Anthony Marwood in 2010), a cello concerto (premiered by Li-Wei Qin in 2012) and a clarinet concerto (premiered by Julian Bliss in 2024). The symphonies and the concertos are available on the Naxos Label. His collaborations with poet Vincent O'Sullivan have produced three operas, two symphonies, the oratorio *Face*, three song cycles and *Requiem for the Fallen*.

One of the song cycles *The Abiding Tides* (for soprano Jenny Wollerman and the New Zealand String Quartet) was described by music critic Rod Biss as "...a work that instantly enriched our heritage of New Zealand music". *Requiem for the Fallen* (2014) has been described as "a devastating commentary on the ravages of war." and "a never-to-be-forgotten experience for all who attended."

RICHARD GREAGER TENOR



Richard Greager has sung on most of the major operatic stages of Europe, Britain and Australia. In the 1990s he sang many major roles at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Since returning to New Zealand he continued working throughout Australasia and Asia in opera and concert and over a career spanning 45 years has sung more than 80 operatic roles and over 40 concert works as well as pursuing an active recital career.

In 2004 Richard sang the role of Mime in State Opera of South Australia's production of Der Ring des Nibelungen, which was released on CD by Melba Recordings.

As well as continuing a career as a professional singer, more recently in the world premiere of Ross Harris' 'Requiem for the Fallen' both in the 2014 NZ International Festival and also in the Dunedin and Auckland Festivals, Richard has recently retired after 8 years as Senior Lecturer in Classical Voice at the Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand School of Music. He was also Senior Vocal Tutor at the NZ Opera School in Wanganui for 6 years.

Richard is an active Adjudicator in many Vocal Competitions and Aria prizes both in New Zealand and Australia. Including the Marianne Mathy Prize in Sydney, the Handa Australian Singing Prize in Sydney, Lexus Song Quest, Lockwood NZ Aria, and the Dame Malvina Major Aria Prizes.

MATTHEW ROSS VIOLIN



Matthew is well known as a violinist and Music Director.

Matthew was Concertmaster of Orchestra Wellington until 2015 and was previously a 1st violinist with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. He toured with the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra and was Concertmaster of the Stockholm Royal College of Music Orchestra and the New Zealand Youth Orchestra.

Highlights include performances of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with Footnote New Zealand Dance and Orchestra Wellington, and Rimsky Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. along with regular performances of the major violin solos in the orchestral, opera and ballet repertoire, including *Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Coppélia*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Capriccio Espagnol* and *Capriccio Italien*. Many of these recordings are played regularly on Radio New Zealand.

His teachers include Clace Schwabe, Jan Tawrosewicz and Karl-Ove Mannberg.

EMMA SAYERS PIANO



Emma Sayers was a student of noted Wellington teacher Judith Clark, later studying at the Ferenc Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary with renowned Hungarian musicians Rita Wagner and Ferenc Rados.

As a performer Emma has been involved in a wide range of activities, both ensemble and solo. Her long-standing relationship with music by New Zealand composers includes many premieres, including the Third Piano Concerto by Anthony Ritchie which was written for her. She was a member of contemporary ensemble STROMA for many years, has worked with both the NZSO and Orchestra Wellington, and has been an active chamber music performer in events all around the country.

OUR IMPACT

AUDIENCES

Reaching audiences through the power, drama and relevance of opera.

In 2025, Wellington Opera has again created opera experiences that have been passionately supported by audiences across Wellington and Aotearoa.

Our audience satisfaction ratings are consistent and industry leading, and we continue to develop a strong audience base from across the motu.

Wellington Opera is very deliberately located *here* in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, the foundation of a model that is financially and artistically efficient — funding goes toward our art form not travel, transport and logistics.

Our artistic profile and blossoming reputation for compelling artistic excellence ensures we sustain audiences, artists, creatives and students from across Aotearoa.

3,284

Audience for Mate Ururoa and A Masked Ball

98%

Audience satisfaction rating

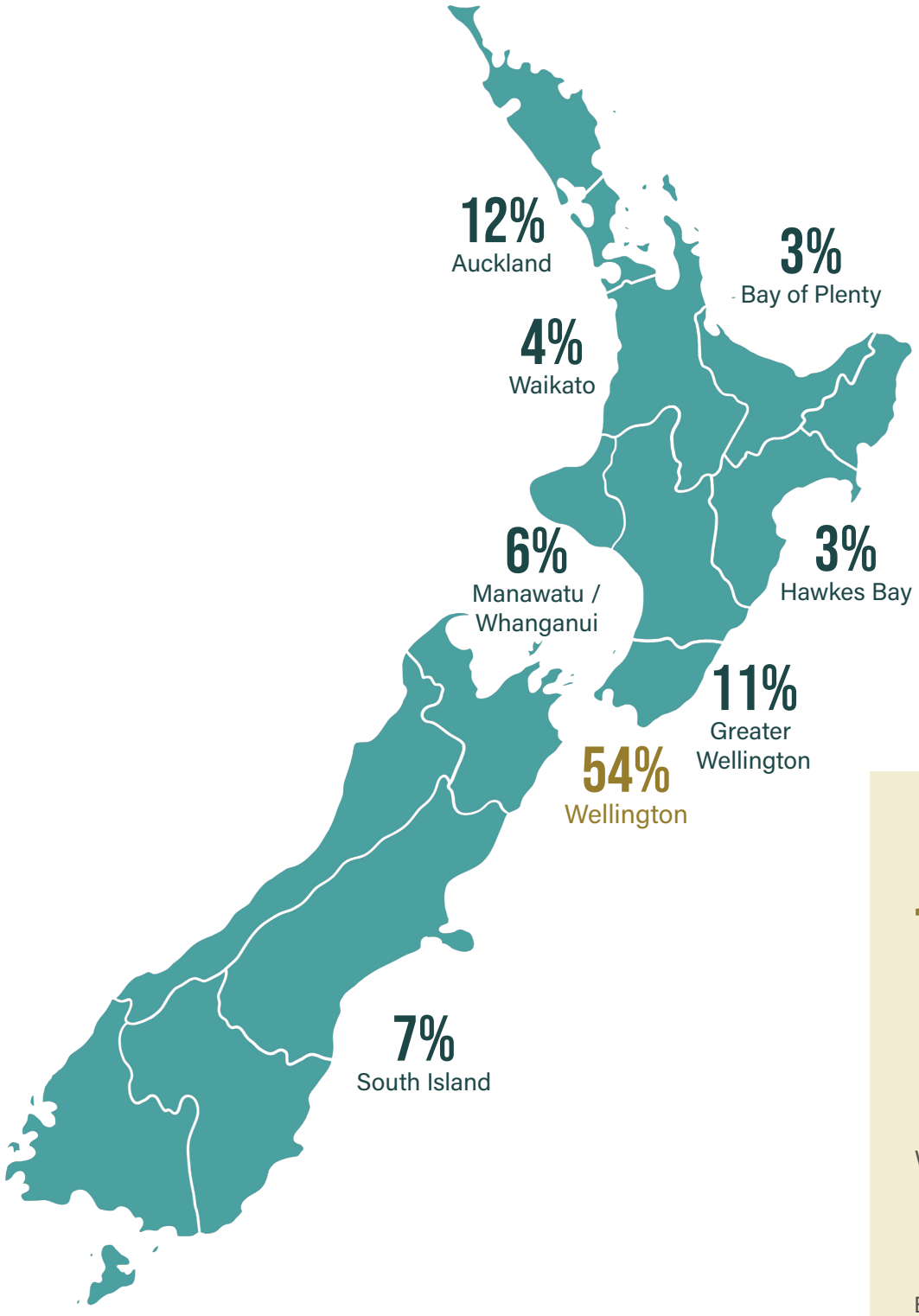
220

School students at Dress Rehearsal

46%

Audience from outside Wellington

AUDIENCE REACH



SEASONS 2021 - 2025

19,346
Audience

8,899
Inbound to Wellington (46%)

$6.3M
Economic impact for Wellington



OUR IMPACT

OPERA AOTEAROA

Reflecting Aotearoa in opera through supporting composers and artists, staging new works and building a legacy of Aotearoa stories in opera.

We're very proud to have successfully staged Dame Gillian Karawe Whitehead's ***Mate Ururoa*** in 2025, presented to a capacity audience over three nights at the Hannah Playhouse, the culmination of two years of development and support of this work.

Our ***Opera Aotearoa*** programme is focussed on creating further cultural relevance in opera through nurturing and presenting Aotearoa opera, working with New Zealand composers, building a legacy of Aotearoa stories in opera and deepening engagement with iwi, whānau and other communities through opera.

Since 2023 the company has worked on the development of three new operas by Aotearoa composers – development workshops for Vicki Yiannoutsos' ***Persephone Returns***, the full production of Dame Gillian Karawe Whitehead's ***Mate Ururoa*** and the development and scheduling of Ross Harris' ***Freda du Faur*** with libretto by Vincent O'Sullivan.

1

World Premiere

595

Audience for the world premiere of Mate Ururoa

3

Aotearoa works in workshop and development

OUR IMPACT

AOTEAROA TALENT

In 2025 Wellington Opera continued our Aotearoa artists first model, with the full casts of principals and covers being New Zealand singers.

We set a new record with 100% of our principals making their role debuts across both of our 2025 productions, *Mate Ururoa* and *A Masked Ball*.

This goes to the fundamentals of Wellington Opera — that both established and emerging singers are supported in the opportunity to present roles at home in Aotearoa and create roles that they will take afar in the future.

Beyond the principal singers, Wellington Opera provides structured development opportunities for emerging singers, directors, designers, technicians, and students across multiple institutions, including Te Kōki New Zealand School of Music, Te Pae Kokako The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio and Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School.

12

Role debuts
(100% of both casts)



"In this career as opera singers, we have milestones and learning opportunities. This was both for me. My voice is developing and this new repertoire, Verdi, is the next step in my vocal development. The chance to come home and prepare this role, perform it to a home public, and work with leading professionals on and off stage, came at the perfect time for me. These steps take care and dedication, and I had that in spades from Wellington Opera."

- JULIEN VAN MELLAERTS

EMERGING ARTISTS



Wellington Opera supports young and emerging Aotearoa singers through professional performance opportunities and cover roles while also providing coaching and mentoring.

We provide opportunities for other creatives in opera including through internships in stage management, production and costume roles.

These initiatives create vital pathways, ensuring artists gain the experience and confidence needed to build their careers.

By working alongside experienced performers and practitioners, these emerging artists gain invaluable insights, tools, stage experience and a network, helping to shape the future of opera in Aotearoa.

5

Emerging Artists

30

Emerging Artists and Alumni

(2021 - 2025)

Emerging Artists 2025

Samuel McKeever – Count Ribbing
Lila Crichton – Giudice
Jasmine Jessen – Oscar cover
Joseph Haddow – Count Horn cover
Ethan Rawhiti-Hotter – Repetiteur

EMERGING ARTISTS
ALUMNI 2021-2024

2024 Tosca

Manase Latu – Spoletta
Morgan King – Sciarrone
Breony Bearman – Tosca cover
Waitahi Aniwaniwa McGee^ – Assistant Director

2023 Lucia di Lammermoor

Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono – Arturo
Hannah Ashford-Beck – Alisa
Jordan Fonoti-Fuimaono – Normanno
Christina Ellison – Lucia cover
Samuel McKeever – Enrico cover
Morgan King – Raimondo cover
Michaela Cadwgan – Alisa cover
Xavier Krause – Normanno cover
Waitahi Aniwaniwa McGee^ – Assistant Director

2022 La Traviata

Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono – Gastone, and Alfredo cover
Samuel Downes – Barone
Samuel McKeever – Marchese
Katherine Winitana – Annina
Hannah Ashford-Beck – Flora cover
Tomairangi Henare – Commissioner cover
Xavier Krause – Gastone cover
Michaela Cadwgan – Annina cover
Nino Raphael^ – Assistant Director

2021 Don Giovanni

Carla Camilleri – Zerlina cover
Joe Haddow – Masetto cover
Matthew Kereama^ – Assistant Director

^ Recipient of the Peter Lees-Jeffries Memorial Award from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation



SCHOOLS' EXPERIENCES

Our students and young people consistently report transformative experiences at Wellington Opera.

"As a music teacher at a girls' high school with a choir that is nearly 60% Polynesian/Pasifika, Wellington Opera is reaching a totally new group of people; not only reaching them, but holding them. These girls aren't attending as a one-off, they are excited that there are more performances to see and new stories to watch unfold."

- GEORGIA, CHILTON ST JAMES MUSIC TEACHER

Schools and groups that attended our Dress Rehearsals:

Aotea College
Chilton St James
Mana College
Sacred Heart College
Naenae College
Onslow College
Otari School
Porirua College
Rata Studios
Rongotai College
Sacred Heart College
Scots College
St Catherine's College
St Mark's School
St Mary's College
St Patrick's College
Tawa College
Wellington College
Wellington East Girls
Wellington East Girls special unit
Wellington Girls
Wellington High
Naenae College
Kapiti College
Paraparaumu College
Aotea College
Chilton St James
Mana College
Project Prima Volta
Virtuoso Strings

What our audience is saying...



It was the first time I had attended an opera and loved it.

A Masked Ball was brilliant and I'm glad we went to see it. Our 14 year old son, who had been to see the dress rehearsal on a school trip, was raving about it so we decided to go. Just wow. Fun evening. Bravo!!!

I enjoyed it immensely, it was incredible and I was captivated.

I have taken my sister-in-law to the last two Wellington Opera productions, she's new to opera, and she loves it.

Loved it, wonderful experience... Next time I would probably take a few more people too because it's so amazing.

It was brilliant! We loved it. So impressed with Wellington Opera productions.

ABOUT WELLINGTON OPERA

WELLINGTON OPERA TRUST

Dame Kerry Prendergast – *Chair*
Elizabeth Aitken – *Deputy Chair*
John Boshier – *Treasurer*
Sally Abernethy
Jan Dunne
John Hunn (retired)
Jenn Little
Matt McNeil
Matthew Ross

WELLINGTON OPERA MANAGEMENT

Matthew Ross
Executive Artistic Director

Oliver Frost
Administrator

Hannah Jones
Marketing & Development Manager

With sadness, Wellington Opera notes that retired trustee John Hunn passed away in March 2026. We recognise the support and wisdom that John provided to Wellington Opera as a trustee and as a benefactor together with Margaret. John will be greatly missed at Wellington Opera.



ARTISTS AND CREW

UN BALLO ARTISTS
Madeleine Pierard
Jared Holt
Julian Van Mellaerts
Natasha Te Rupe Wilson
Kristin Darragh
Samuel McKeever
Morgan-Andrew King
Lila Crichton
Daniel O'Connor
Chris Anderson

MATE URUROA ARTISTS
David Tahere
Ariana Tikao
Brent Allcock
Richard Greager
Emma Sayers
Matthew Ross

CHORUS
Olivia Fraser
Emilia Gray
Ruth Armishaw
Cadence Chung
Gemma Conn
Francesca Fagan
Rose Aldridge
Geneviève Gates-Panneton
Sinéad Keane
Helene Page
Zoe Stocks
Matilda Wickbom
Chris Anderson
Peter Bisley
Patrick Coelho
Lila Crichton
Bayley Goldstone
Patrick Geddes
Elias Nguyen
Ben Priest
Charles Wilson
Joe Clinton
Minto Fung
Daniel O'Connor
Matt Painter
Brent Allcock
David Barrow
Richard Dean
Charle Rainey
Matthew Terry

CONDUCTORS
Brian Castles-Onion
Hamish McKeich

MUSIC TEAM
Michael Vinten
Bruce Greenfield

REPETITEURS
David Kelly
Ethan Rawhiti-Hotter

COMPOSERS
Dame Gillian Whitehead

DIRECTORS
Jacqueline Coats
Sara Brodie

COSTUME DESIGN
Lee Erihāpeti Williams
Rebecca Bethan Jones

SET DESIGN
Michael Zaragoza

LIGHTING
Jacob Banks
Rowan McShane

LIGHTING OPERATOR
Cameron Nicholls

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Nicholas Batey

STAGE MANAGER
Boo Pantoja-Frost

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER
Charlie Adams

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Jamie-Lea Little

STAGE MANAGEMENT INTERNS
Axel Wentworth
Eilidh Hamilton

WARDROBE SUPERVISOR
Jennie Woodford

HEAD DRESSER
Lisa Hawken

WARDROBE DRESSER
Maysie Pyatt

WARDROBE INTERNS
Alex Erickson
Fritha Johnston
Makini Calliste-Woollard

HEAD MACHINIST
Katherine Pepperell

COSTUME BUILDERS
Lee Erihāpeti Williams
Alice Preston
Daniella Sasvari La Roche

HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGNER
Michele Perry-Madsen

MAKEUP ASSISTANTS
Georgia Croasdale
Xin Gu
Nikita Magnus
Lola Graham-Wiggins

SCULPTOR
Richard Fennell

HEAD MECHANIST
Glenn Watts

FLYMAN
Ben Ogden

STAGE MECHANIST
Ash Armstrong

STAGE MECHANIST INTERNS
Georgia Yeats
Taine de Jong

STAGE RUNNER
Lukey Bell

FIGHT DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT
Braden Lister

SET CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR
Giovanni Maule

SET CONSTRUCTION
Tāwhiri

DOG HANDLER
Daniel Kidd

SURTITLE OPERATORS
Christine Pearce MNZM
Jim Pearce

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Julie Zaragoza
Danica Prowse

TAONGA PUORO
Ariana Tikao

ORCHESTRAS
Orchestra Wellington
Stroma

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THANK YOU!

Our audiences, supporters, artists and collaborators have all been essential contributors to Wellington Opera's achievements in 2025 — creating exceptional opera experiences and Opera Aotearoa stories.

Wellington Opera is very grateful to the foundations and donors that have made our 2025 season possible, with special recognition of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation as the presenting sponsor for A Masked Ball, and other major funders including the New Zealand Opera Foundation and the Wellington City Council.

What the company has achieved in 2025 — the exceptional artistic successes of ***Mate Ururoa*** and ***A Masked Ball | Un Ballo in Maschera*** along with the performance and development opportunities for so many artists — has only been possible because of the broad Aotearoa-wide support for the company.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Wellington Opera Trust
For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
REVENUE			
Donations, Koha, Bequests, and Other General Fundraising Activities	1	556,414	446,941
Revenue from Commercial Activities	1	215,329	364,757
Interest, Dividends and Other Investment Revenue	1	1,923	4,428
Total Revenue		**773,665**	**816,127**
EXPENSES			
Expenses Related to Commercial Activities	2	719,149	687,594
Other Expenses	2	65,661	55,445
Total Expenses		**784,810**	**743,039**
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Period		**(11,144)**	**73,088**

The full 2025 Performance Report for the Wellington Opera Trust, including the notes as referenced, is available from our website or the Charities Commission website.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Wellington Opera Trust
As at 31 December 2025

	Notes	31 Dec 2025	31 Dec 2024
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and Short-term Deposits	3	148,315	141,037
Debtors and Prepayments	3	37,253	17,817
Income Tax Receivable	3	2,096	1,461
Total Current Assets		**187,664**	**160,316**
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment		1,063	2,126
Total Non-Current Assets		**1,063**	**2,126**
Total Assets		**188,727**	**162,441**
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	5	336	1,727
Income in Advance	5	175,715	136,894
Total Current Liabilities		**176,050**	**138,621**
Total Liabilities		**176,050**	**138,621**
Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)		**12,676**	**23,821**
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Accumulated Surplus (Deficits)		12,676	23,821
Total Accumulated Funds		**12,676**	**23,821**



FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Wellington Opera thanks the presenting sponsor for essential support of this season:

KIRI TE KANAWA FOUNDATION

WELLINGTON OPERA THANKS THE FOLLOWING MAJOR FUNDERS:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wellington Opera acknowledges the support of the Lilburn Trust for the world-premiere production of Mate Ururoa.

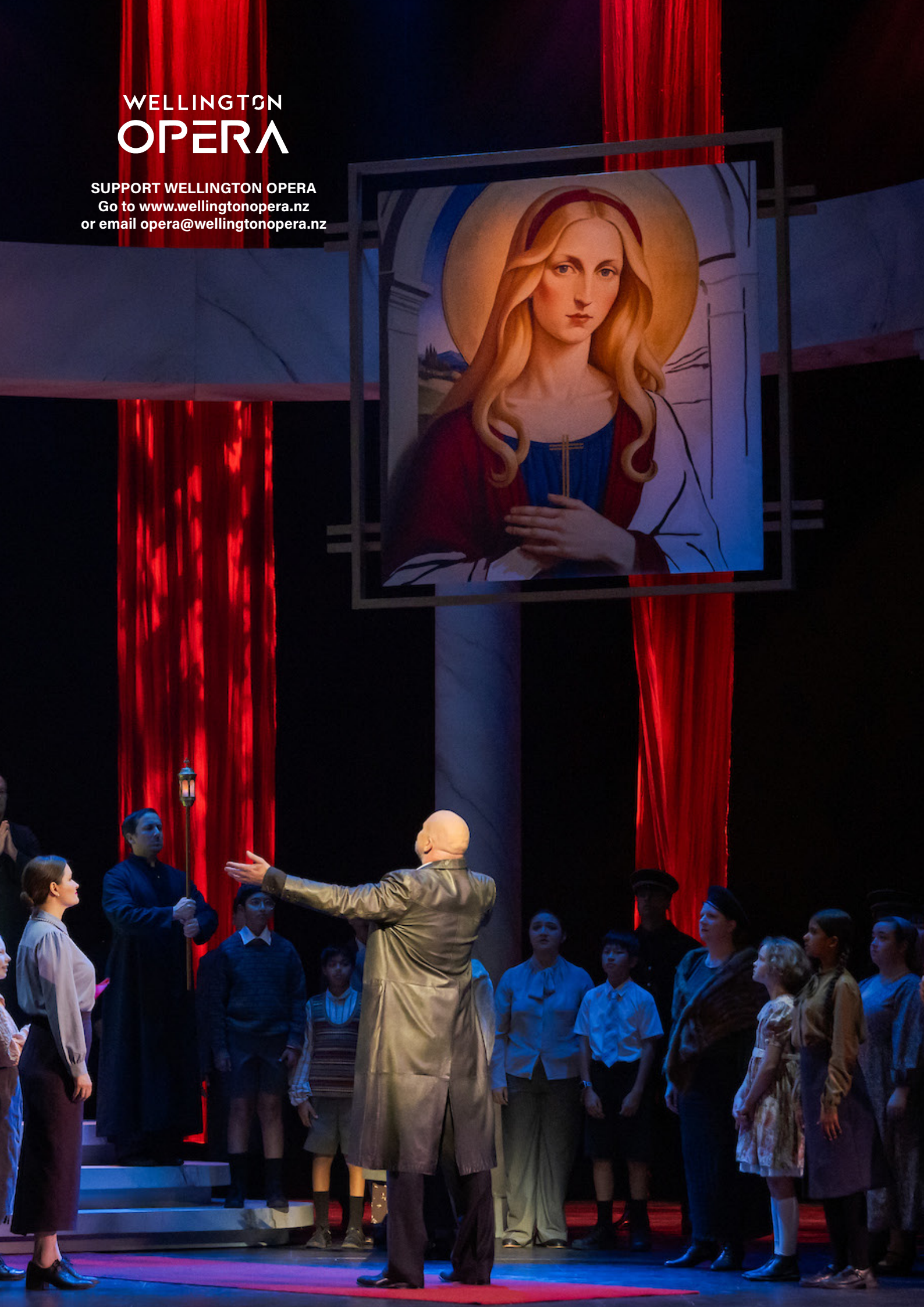
Wellington Opera is grateful to Geoff and Marion Eades, and Robyn and Philip Vavasour for their support with accommodation.

Wellington Opera thanks Elizabeth Aitken and Rob Morgan, and Sally and Euan Abernethy for sponsoring hospitality this season.

Wellington Opera acknowledges the underwrite commitment from Chris and Kathy Parkin, Dame Kerry Prendergast and Rex Nicholls, John and Margaret Hunn and Bill Falconer.

Wellington Opera acknowledges the foundational support of the Margaret Doucas Trust.

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