

KATHERINE MCINDOE

JUDITH CLARK MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP 2017: REPORT

Dear Trustees of the Judith Clark Charitable Trust,

Thank you so much for granting me a Judith Clark Memorial Fellowship for 2017. I have just returned from completing my project, which entailed auditions in both the United Kingdom and United States for Masters programmes in Classical Performance Voice. It's been quite a process, so I'll outline how it has all gone!

The first part of the project was an audition at the Guildhall School in London, just before Christmas. The reason I chose Guildhall was to work with Yvonne Kenny – I had a masterclass with her here in New Zealand earlier in 2016, and then saw her in London for a consultation lesson later in the year. She is a wonderful teacher, and I found her style such a natural fit. I was invited to audition for the Vocal Studies programme: after passing the first round of auditions in the morning, I was called back for a second audition, and then received an email later that day offering me a place on the programme! I would love to work with Yvonne, so the Guildhall is my first choice. However, when I was offered the place, scholarship decisions had not yet been made (and still haven't been), so I decided to continue with my plans to audition for programmes in the United States as well.

I have just returned from a whirlwind two weeks there, undertaking a round of auditions in New York and Philadelphia. After sending in pre-screening recordings, I was excited to be offered auditions at the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Curtis Institute. As even the pre-screening for these schools is very competitive (especially Curtis and Juilliard), it felt like a real vote of confidence to gain a live audition in front of the faculties. I travelled to New York in mid-February, fresh out of playing Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* for Days Bay Opera in Wellington. Because of my commitments to the opera, I was unable to attend the live audition for the San Francisco Conservatory on the West Coast, but was instead able to do a regional audition for the Conservatory when I arrived in New York. This audition went very well, and I have just been offered a place in the Masters programme, to study under Deborah Voigt.

With one audition down, I then had my audition at the Juilliard: unfortunately, this audition did not go especially well, and I didn't gain a call-back. However, a couple of days later I auditioned for the Manhattan School of Music, which went well, and I received very positive feedback from the audition panel: I am still waiting to find out whether I have been offered a place, so fingers crossed!

After these three auditions in New York, I travelled to Philadelphia, where, after surprisingly mild weather for most of my trip, it suddenly plummeted to -6° and began to snow... it was quite an experience of a deep dark East Coast winter! I had my audition at the Curtis Institute, and I was happy with how I sang, and received good feedback from the panel. Unfortunately, I didn't get a call-back, but the standard was incredibly high, and only three people were called back on the day of my audition – one of whom is a current finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions! So despite not getting a call-back, I was very happy to have performed my best in such a competitive environment.

Overall, the experience of undertaking the auditions was wholly positive. As well as gaining places at two fantastic schools (so far), I was able to gain audition experience in two very different international systems,

and test myself in high-pressure situations in institutions of very high standards. I was happy with how I performed, and found that the preparation that I have had here in New Zealand (particularly, recent work on audition technique with coach Sharolyn Kimmorley and director Chuck Hudson as part of the Kiri Programme) equipped me to put my best foot forward in these auditions.

At this stage, the offer from Guildhall is my first choice: I have got so much out of working with Yvonne Kenny even in the two sessions I have had with her, and I believe that she will be a great fit for my voice at this stage. I am still waiting to hear back about funding from the Guildhall to assist with the fees, so I am still considering the American offers – I'm casting the net wide until I have all the information!

I am so grateful to the Judith Clark Charitable Trust for the opportunity to be a Fellow for 2017. The process of auditioning for these international schools is so expensive, and receiving the Fellowship enabled me to audition at all the schools I was interested in, and therefore sing for a huge range of international voice teachers and coaches – the experience, as well as this exposure, has made the Fellowship invaluable, alongside the offers for further study that the Fellowship has led to. Your support for young singers like myself makes it possible (and far less daunting!) to take this next step towards overseas study: thank you so much.

I am writing this in Auckland having just completed a module of the Dame Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Singer Development Programme. For the next five months up until leaving for my Masters, I will be coming up and down from Auckland to complete the rest of the programme, while performing in both Wellington and Auckland. Two exciting performances coming up are the soprano solo in the Brahms Requiem with the Tudor Consort in Wellington on the 27th of May, and two recitals for the Auckland Opera Studio on the 20th and 21st of May. I have also just gained a place and scholarship to attend the Aldeburgh Festival in Suffolk in June, as a Britten-Pears Young Artist, so will be preparing a range of Britten song repertoire over the next few months, to workshop at the Festival. I hope to meet you in person, perhaps at a performance, or at some other point throughout the year!

Thank you again for your support. I will update you when I have come to a decision about which school I will be attending in September. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to audition at these schools and to have a choice of where I am going – I can't wait to get started!

Yours sincerely,



Katherine McIndoe



Working with Yvonne Kenny in the Lexus Masterclass 2016.



Working with Kiri Programme Director Kathryn Harries, 2016.



Performing Tatyana's 'Letter Scene', Days Bay Opera 2017.



In New York during the auditions, 2017.