

Ara Guzelimian NZ Trip report

2nd to 7th of March 2015

Dean and Provost of the Juilliard School Ara Guzelimian made the trip to New Zealand as a trustee of the Kia Ora Foundation, to meet and share information with the 5 university music schools across the country. It was a hugely beneficial exercise for the schools, who all relished the opportunity to hear him speak and ask him questions about current music education trends across the globe, and specifically how Juilliard are leading the way in music tuition. The Universities all have strength and weaknesses, so it was interesting to see the way they structured Ara's visit at their school.

Ara was particularly good communicating with the students and answering their questions about studying abroad and all the issues that comes with overseas study. He has an incredibly positive outlook and very natural way of connecting with the students and they loved picking his brain.

As a foundation, it was hugely beneficial for us to hear directly from students and staff as to where they are at and where they need help and support. There certainly seems to be a reluctance from the students to take the plunge and study abroad, and even the cost of auditioning for schools is a pricey undertaking. Ara was very helpful in sharing ways that you can help with these costs, and particularly spoke about the need to think outside the square when it comes to finding the funds.

The whole week was hugely informative, and the Universities greatly appreciated Ara's visit.

Here is a Diary of the week of Ara's visit:

Day 1 - We had a very successful day at Otago University today. They very much appreciated Ara's visit and talk. Its not a huge music school, but they were very keen to talk to Ara about his experiences.



Ara was welcomed onto the campus with a Powhiri, and then spent 1 and a half hours talking to staff. We were given a tour of the campus and were able to speak with more staff over lunch. Ara spent a considerable amount of time talking and answering questions from students, and then presented a one hour talk to staff, students and public about studying overseas and the sorts of programmes that Juilliard has to offer, as well as current music trends around the world.

Day 2 - We had an early flight from Dunedin to Christchurch and made our way to Canterbury University, where we were met by staff of the music school, and straight into an hour-long session and a very open dialogue. Lots of good conversations were had about the school, and the current rebuild they are going through, as well as the issues they are

facing, not only in recruiting students, but in being relocated from their premises and the challenges that that has with it. It was a slightly somber session, as it seems the school is some way off finding the right mix, and it has already been a long road for them. Nevertheless, it was a good session, and a good sharing of information.

After coffee, Ara presented a 2 hour class to students, staff and public. This included many questions and a forum for students looking to study abroad to get information from Ara. We have also been talking in some depth in each place about the work of the Kia Ora Foundation and the Scholarship.

Day 3 - Ara was welcomed onto Victoria University at the Marae with a traditional Powhiri. I am sure Ara will agree that it was a very moving and special ceremony.

We then moved up to the Music School where Ara presented a wonderful session with staff and students. It was a fantastic presentation, and everyone really appreciated it.

We were then taken to lunch at the Wellington Club, where we met members of Victoria University and the NZ School of Music, the Wellington City Council, NZSO, and Chamber Music NZ over lunch, and had a thorough discussion about a new Arts Hub that is being planned for Wellington. All the guests greatly appreciated Ara's input and the parallels to the Lincoln Centre. The new arts hub in Wellington is looking like it will be a fantastic new initiative, and they relished picking Ara's brain on the topic.

Ara was then taken around campus, and met with various sections of the music school, before being shown the Town Hall in the city where the Arts Hub will be located.

A very rewarding day!



Day 4 - We left Wellington early, and flew to Hamilton where we were greeted by Annette and Ruedi, who took us into the University to meet with Dame Malvina and leaders of the University. A nice morning tea followed before we headed to the lovely concert hall they have for Ara to present his talk. The talk was well received and attended, and some interesting questions followed before we were treated to a concert of the finest students from the school. We were all in agreement that the standard was certainly in good shape, and the work they are doing at Waikato University is putting them in good shape to further their studies abroad.

Day 5 - We drove to Auckland after our day in Hamilton, and Ara and I headed up to the University the next morning to be shown around the historical music section of the music school. Ara then presented 2 talks, the first, the 'Juilliard Experience' to mainly students and a few staff, and then 'Meeting point - Integrating university musicians with the community' to a good number of staff, students and guest from the community. A good discussion followed before Ara was shown around another facility where the jazz school works out of. It was an enjoyable day, and capped of a full-on but rewarding week. Ara was extremely well received, and the dialogue both ways between the university and the foundation was very productive. I hope this will be the first of many of these types of ventures, I think we have learnt a lot, and I know the students and staff have benefited immensely from Ara's visit.

