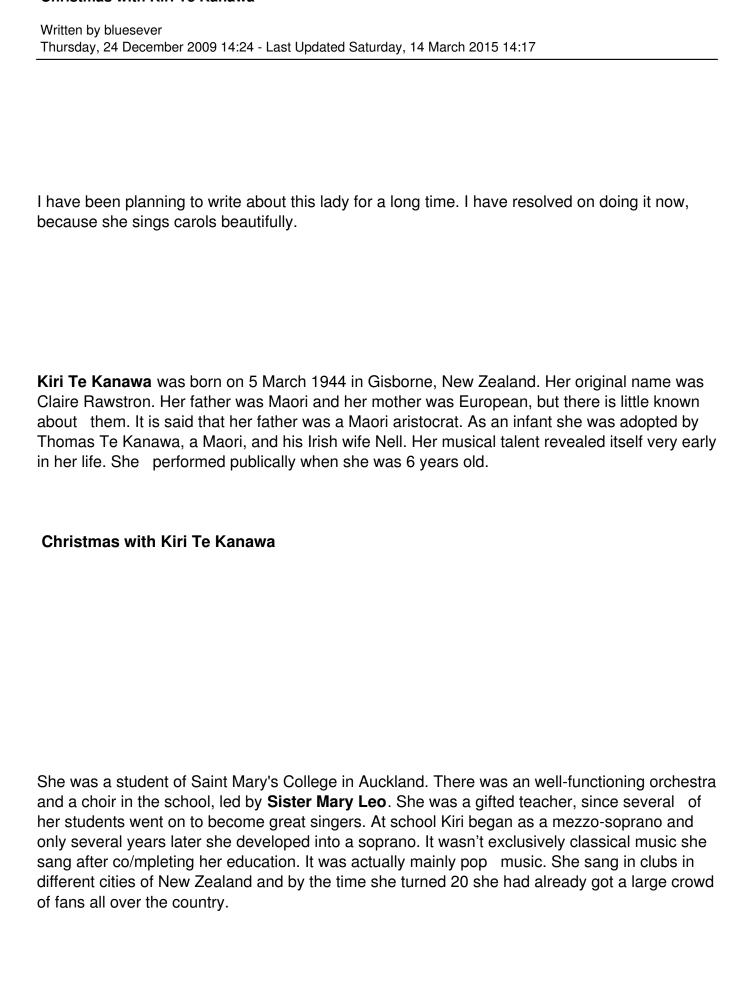
Christmas with Kiri Te Kanawa



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Written by bluesever Thursday, 24 December 2009 14:24 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 March 2015 14:17



The breakthrough came in 1965. Kiri Te Kanawa took part in Mobil Song Quest competition, where she sang *Vissi d'arte* from Puccini's "Tosca". She was an uncontested winner. As a prize she was offered scholarship in London. In 1966 she began to study at London Opera Centre and was tutored by Vera Rozsa and James Robertson. They both agreed that although Kiri's technique needed some polishing, her voice charmed the listeners from the start.

The first public appearance on stage took place in 1968 in Sadler's Wells Theatre. She sang there several times Mozart, Haendel and Donizetti. The following year she took part in Camden Festival, singing an aria from Mozart's *Idomeneo*. The result of this performance was a three-year contract with Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Colin Davies, a famous conductor, led the orchestra when Kiri auditioned for the role of role of the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro. This is what he had to say about her singing: '

I couldn't believe my ears. I've taken thousands of auditions, but it was such a fantastically beautiful voice

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