



Emma Ma and Darren Breeze  
Luce Dorata  
School of Music  
University of Auckland  
31st May 2024

Cc: Mark Bennet, Professional Teaching Fellow Violin, School of Music

Tēna Koutou Emma, Darren and Mark

**Re: Recognition of Luce Dorata's instrumental role for the community-based Charitable organisation BirdCare Aotearoa.**

BirdCare Aotearoa is the leading wild bird hospital and rehabilitation centre in New Zealand. Although we are a small, charitable, and community-led organisation, we respond to 6000+ avian casualties annually throughout Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau. While focussing on the welfare of our feathered friends, BirdCare Aotearoa also provide services to the community via clinical expertise, with additional efforts in education, training/ capability development, research, and advocacy. BirdCare Aotearoa is a *taonga* for national conservation and biosecurity, but operates solely on generous donations and contestable grants.

Caring for the unique clinical and rehabilitation needs of each bird-patient is very expensive, and we are currently working to strengthen our major philanthropic donor programme. We had a wine and cheese fundraising evening on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024, for which *Luce Dorata* had kindly offered their musical talents. Their violin duo was a highlight for many of our guests, with a particular note from a long-serving volunteer and Board of Trustees Chair that BirdCare Aotearoa's public outreach campaigns had never experienced such delightful live music like this!

Firstly, I highly commend *Luce Dorata*—Ms. Ma and Mr. Breeze's professionalism, communication skills, and generosity. Ms. Ma, in particular, communicated with me during the event organisation phase (a tight three-week time frame), providing bios, programme details and staging needs in a very timely and concise manner. Our hospital is a bustling hub of activity, and there were several other operations occurring immediately before the event. Regardless, Ms. Ma and Mr. Breeze confidently carried on their preparations in the green room/ General Manager's office— even when interrupted by office work around them! Further, during the event they introduced themselves and the repertoire with such passion, and professionalism. I was so impressed by the stage-



presence of these undergraduate music students, and am confident they both have strong nationally and internationally-regarded career prospects ahead of them.

The chosen repertoires greatly livened the ambience of the evening. Luce Dorata had received a simple brief to evoke sentiments of nature and birdsong. They performed four pieces, which really captured the spirit of work at a wildlife rehabilitation hospital! The slow and melancholic movements were followed by lively fluttering, reflecting the passage of a rescued bird patient—slow and serious when triaged on arrival, to finally thriving on release to nature! We were impressed by their innovation, bringing a Bluetooth speaker to provide the timbre of a full orchestra to the small “chamber” of our hospital’s tea room area. Many of our guests were truly moved by the musicians. Indeed, with their own focus on conservation, they may not have the opportunities to experience *live* classical music. Thank you for providing such a captivating instrumental session for our fundraiser evening.

I also have to thank Mr. Bennet for training his violin students with such professionalism and manaakitanga (compassion). Indeed, the excellent mahi and integrity demonstrated by Mr. Bennet’s students show strong alliance to the strategic values outlined by Taumata Teitei o Waipapa Taumata Rau (The University of Auckland 2025 Strategic Plan). I too come from an academic background at the University, and know too well the need for academics to foster and demonstrate community-level outreach and impacts. Although we write such community-engagement in our grant proposals and research/teaching evaluations, these typically require significant time commitments to develop. Ms. Ma and Mr. Breeze demonstrated such service to the community through their engaging repertoires, only three weeks after the invitation! I can immediately recognise this Violin Class’ scholarly value not just to music and academia, but also through the wider community. I previously worked with the School of Music; Luce Dorata’s stellar performance gave me such pride for the wonderful tutelage provided at 6 Symonds St!

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further details, and we hope to keep in touch!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rashmi Parker".

Dr. Rashmi Parker  
Fundraising Manager, BirdCare Aotearoa