



**NEW ZEALAND**  
Embassy WASHINGTON  
TE AKA AORERE

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Contacts:  
Michelle Parish (New Zealand Embassy): 202.701.4284  
Travis Burgin (USO): 703.740.4982  
Thalia Assurasus (ThanksUSA): 202.744.6534  
Kirsten Fedewa (Anthony Kearns): 202.365.6936

#### TENOR ANTHONY KEARNS LAUNCHES HOLIDAY SEASON AT NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY FOR USO AND THANKSUSA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Embassy of New Zealand launched the holiday season with a spectacular, one-of-a-kind charity benefit on Sun., Dec. 5, featuring world-renowned tenor Anthony Kearns, accompanied by superb pianist, Dr. Linda Monson of George Mason University. The ground-breaking, invitation-only event was in support of the USO's \$100 million initiative for wounded warriors and their families, "Operation Enduring Care" – and ThanksUSA benefiting military spouses and children through need-based scholarships.

"We welcomed the opportunity to honor those in uniform, and their families, at the embassy, during the holiday season," said New Zealand Ambassador Rt. Hon. Mike Moore.

"The USO and ThanksUSA do excellent work in support of America's men and women in the armed forces around the world, and New Zealand recognizes their considerable efforts."

"And with Tenor Anthony Kearns as our special guest," he said, "it added an extra dimension that meant the night was a truly rewarding and unique experience for all."

Acknowledging that the charity was sold-out in a matter of weeks, Ambassador Moore said the embassy worked hard to organize such a successful event because of belief in the cause, and that he looked forward to future collaborations.

High-profile guests at the event included Cabinet Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Margaret Heckler, active duty members of the armed services, Washington-based diplomatic corps, and national media representatives.

Mr. Kearns, who took the American television audience by storm in 1999 as the youngest member of the wildly popular musical group, The Irish Tenors, took a brief foray off the concert trail to perform at the embassy benefit.



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“I’m tremendously honored to have performed at this remarkable event, which celebrated the spirit of the season for the USO and ThanksUSA on behalf of service members and their families,” said Kearns.

Mr. Kearns, who sang from a wide-ranging repertoire that included opera, folk music and international favorites, dedicated “Ave Maria” to the 29 miners killed tragically in New Zealand. He ended the evening with a rousing “God Bless America” for the troops.

“It was an honor to be apart of this wonderful event for a worthy cause,” said Katie Whitlow, USO representative. “The New Zealand Embassy contribution in support of Operation Enduring Care will continue to make a difference in the lives of wounded warriors and their families.”

"Anthony Kearns' voice is truly a gift and his lending it to the cause of education for military families is a generous gift too. With his support, and that of the Embassy of New Zealand, which so generously hosted this night to remember, we are able to say thanks to our military for their selfless service with additional scholarships this holiday season," said Michele Stork, executive director of ThanksUSA's military family scholarship charity.

Sunday’s event was generously supported by the Beer Institute, the Doyle Collection, Kirsten Fedewa & Assoc., L.L.C., and others. The USO and ThanksUSA are 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organizations.



**Wounded Warriors**



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NOTE: Members of the media who wish to be added to the New Zealand Embassy’s events invite list should contact Michelle Parish, Public Affairs (Embassy of New Zealand) at 202.328.4876 or [michelle.parish@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:michelle.parish@mfat.govt.nz)

To schedule a media interview with Mr. Kearns, please contact Kirsten Fedewa @ 202.365.6936 or [Kirsten@fedewaconsulting.com](mailto:Kirsten@fedewaconsulting.com)