

THE STAR CHORALE

*Opera
Spectacular!*



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Opera Spectacular!

Jane Elton Brown OAM *Music Director*

Antoinette Halloran *Soprano*

Roy Best *Tenor*

Sue Goessling *Piano*

Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University, Clayton
Sunday 17 July 2016

The Star Chorale
www.starchorale.org

Program

PART ONE

I

Chorus of Enchanted Islanders *Alcina* Handel

Voyagers' Chorus *Idomeneo* Mozart

Villagers' Chorus *Guillaume Tell* Rossini

Chorus of Wedding Guests *Lucia di Lammermoor* Donizetti

II

Tenor: Che Gelida Manina *La Bohème* Puccini

Tenor: Donna Non Vidi Mai *Manon Lescaut* Puccini

III

Polovtsian Dances (excerpt) *Prince Igor* Borodin

Chorus of Peasant Girls *Eugene Onegin* Tchaikovsky

Waltz Scene *Eugene Onegin* Tchaikovsky

IV

Soprano: Vissi D'arte *Tosca* Puccini

Soprano: O Mio Babbino Caro *Gianni Schicchi* Puccini

INTERVAL (20 mins)

PART TWO

V

Spinning Chorus *Der fliegende Holländer* Wagner

Pilgrims' Chorus *Tannhäuser* Wagner

Bridal Chorus *Lohengrin* Wagner

VI

Tenor: Granada Popular song Lara

Tenor & Soprano: O Soave Fanciulla *La Bohème* Puccini

VII

Soldiers' Chorus *Il trovatore* Verdi

Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves *Nabucco* Verdi

Anvil Chorus *Il trovatore* Verdi

VIII

Soprano: Vilja *Die lustige Witwe* Lehár

Soprano & Tenor: Merry Widow Waltz *Die lustige Witwe* Lehár

Finale

Chorus, Soprano and Tenor: Brindisi *La Traviata* Verdi

Notes on the Program Items

Part One

CHORUS OF ENCHANTED ISLANDERS (CHOIR)

From the opera *Alcina* by Georg Friedrich Handel, composed in the 1730s. The opera tells the tale of the hero Ruggiero, who has been captured by the enchantress Alcina on a distant island. Ruggiero's lover Bradamante arrives on the island determined to rescue him. Lyrics are in Italian.

This chorus is sung by the natives of this magical place, celebrating the perfection of their island: *Questo il cielo di contenti, questo il centro del goder* – “This is the sky of happiness, this is the centre of joy”.

VOYAGERS' CHORUS (CHOIR AND SOPRANO)

From *Idomeneo*, an opera composed by Mozart in the 1780s. It is set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. The lyrics are in Italian.

Idomeneo is the King of Crete, who after being saved from a shipwreck swears a vow to sacrifice the first creature he encounters. When this turns out to be his own son, he is plunged into despair. Needless to say, all works out in the end!

This chorus is sung by the sailors about to embark on the fatal voyage. *Placido è il mar, andiamo! Tutto ci rassicura* – “The sea is calm, let's go! Everything reassures us.”

VILLAGERS' CHORUS (CHOIR)

From the opera *Guillaume Tell* (“William Tell”), composed in the 1820s by Rossini, telling the story of the famous Swiss hero. The lyrics are in French.

This chorus is sung at the opening of the opera by the peasants in a Swiss village, who are busily preparing homes for three newly-wedded couples. *Quel jour serein le ciel présage* – “What a serene day the sky foretells.”

CHORUS OF WEDDING GUESTS (CHOIR)

From *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Donizetti, written in 1835 based on Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Though the story is a grim one involving betrayal and madness, in this scene the guests at Lucia's wedding cheerfully celebrate the nuptials unaware of the drama to come. The lyrics are in Italian.

Per te d'immenso giubilo, tutto s'avviva in torno, per te veggiam rinascere della speranza il giorno – "Great joy to you, everything is renewed, for you we see reborn the day of hope".

CHE GELIDA MANINA (TENOR)

From *La Bohème* by Puccini, written in the 1890s, which deals with the lives of a group of bohemian friends in Paris, and the tragic love between the poet Rodolfo and the seamstress Mimì.

Here, at their first meeting Rodolfo takes Mimì's hand and exclaims at how cold it is: *Che gelida manina* – "What a cold little hand!"

DONNA NON VIDI MAI (TENOR)

From the opera *Manon Lescaut* by Puccini, written between 1890 and 1893. The story is of the love affair between the aristocratic student Chevalier des Grieux and the beauty Manon Lescaut.

Here, des Grieux sees Manon for the first time, and sings *Donna Non Vidi Mai* – "I have never seen such a woman as this".

POLOVTSIAN DANCES (CHOIR)

From *Prince Igor* by Alexander Borodin, composed between 1869 and 1887. It is based on tales of Prince Igor Svyatoslavich the Brave, a twelfth century Russian hero. Here sung in English, the original lyrics are in Russian.

At the close of the second act, Prince Igor has been made captive by his enemy Khan Konchak. The Khan tells Igor that he is an honoured guest, and his people dance and sing to impress their captive.

CHORUS OF PEASANT GIRLS (CHOIR SOPRANOS AND ALTOS)

From the opera *Eugene Onegin* by Tchaikovsky, written in the 1870s. Here sung in English, the original lyrics are in Russian.

This chorus features young peasant girls teasing a boy who comes to see them play. *Dear companions, come this way, join us in the games we play. Choose a happy melody suited to our revelry.*

WALTZ SCENE (CHOIR)

Also from Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*, which tells the tragic story of a young, spoiled nobleman whose life goes astray when he initially rejects the love of a quiet young woman Tatyana. Here sung in English, the original lyrics are in Russian.

In this scene a party is being held at a country estate to celebrate Tatyana's name-day. The guests celebrate their enjoyment of the occasion, and the women gossip about Tatyana's marriage prospects.

VISSI D'ARTE (SOPRANO)

From *Tosca* by Puccini, written in the 1890s. The opera, set in Naples, focuses on the beautiful singer Tosca. Her lover Cavaradossi, a painter, is arrested for his republican sympathies by the chief of police, Baron Scarpia. Scarpia tries to force Tosca to yield to his amorous advances in exchange for freeing Cavaradossi. She sings this aria *Vissi D'Arte* ("I lived for art") as a prayer for God's assistance in this dilemma.

O MIO BABBINO CARO (SOPRANO)

From the short comic opera *Gianni Schicchi* by Puccini, composed between 1917 and 1918. It deals with the manoeuvrings around a rich man's will. All of the money has been left to a monastery rather than to his relatives. In this aria, Lauretta pleads with her father ("Oh my dear father") to find a way to overturn the will so she can marry her lover Rinuccio, who will otherwise be left destitute.

INTERVAL

Part Two

SPINNING CHORUS (CHOIR SOPRANOS AND ALTOS)

From the opera *Der fliegende Holländer* (in English: *The Flying Dutchman*) composed by Wagner in the 1840s, based on the legend of a ship cursed to sail the seas forever without rest. Only if the captain can find a wife who will be true to him will the curse be lifted. The lyrics are in German.

This chorus is sung by a group of peasant girls as they spin their yarn. *Summ' und brumm' du gutes Rädchen, munter, munter dreh' dich um!* – “Hum and thrum, you good spinning wheel, merrily, merrily, turning round.”

PILGRIMS' CHORUS (CHOIR TENORS AND BASSES)

From the opera *Tannhäuser* by Wagner, composed in the 1840s, which deals with the loves and travels of the minstrel-knight Tannhäuser. The lyrics are in German.

In this chorus, a group of pilgrims returning from Jerusalem pass by the knight on their way home, and their pious song helps free him from an evil enchantment. *Beglückt darf'num dich o Heimat, ich schau'n und grüssen froh lieblichen Auen* – “Delightful is our homeland, I rejoice to see your lovely fields”.

BRIDAL CHORUS (CHOIR AND SMALL CHOIR)

This is the basis of the ever-popular “Here comes the bride” played at many modern weddings. It is from Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, based on a mediaeval story about a Grail Knight, sent to defend Elsa, Duchess of Brabant on condition that she never ask his name. Nevertheless, she falls in love with the mysterious knight and this chorus is sung at their wedding.

Treulich geführt ziehet dahin, wo euch der Segen der Liebe bewahr! – “Faithfully guided, draw near to where the blessing of love shall preserve you!”

GRANADA (TENOR)

This is a popular song written in 1932 by the Mexican composer Agustín Lara, about the Spanish city of Granada.

O SOAVE FANCIULLA (DUET: SOPRANO AND TENOR)

From *La Bohème* by Puccini, written in the 1890s, which deals with the lives of a group of bohemian friends in Paris, and the tragic love between the poet Rodolfo and the seamstress Mimì.

Rodolfo starts off this love duet at the end of Act One by singing *O soave fanciulla* to Mimì – “Oh lovely girl!”

SOLDIERS' CHORUS (CHOIR TENORS AND BASSES)

The opera *Il trovatore* (“the troubador”), composed by Verdi in the 1850s, tells a tale of mediaeval love. The Princess Leonora falls in love with a mystery knight who then comes courting her disguised as a troubador. Lyrics are in Italian.

In this chorus, a troop of soldiers is heading into battle, hoping to return with loot and honour. *Squilli echeggi la tromba guerriera chiami all'armi, alla pugna all'assalto* – “The blasts of the trumpet call us to arms, to the battle’s onslaught”.

CHORUS OF THE HEBREW SLAVES (CHOIR)

From *Nabucco* by Verdi, composed in 1841. The opera tells the story of the Hebrew people in their enslavement in Babylon. Nabucco (in English “Nebuchadnezzar”) is the King of Babylon. Lyrics are in Italian.

In this chorus, the slaves sadly sing of their lost homeland. *Va pensiero sull'ali dorate; va ti posa sui clivi sui colli* – “Go golden thoughts, go settle on the slopes of the hills”.

So popular did this chorus become, and so associated with Verdi, that the crowd at the composer’s memorial service spontaneously began to sing it together.

ANVIL CHORUS (CHOIR)

Also from *Il trovatore* by Verdi, this chorus features a group of gypsies arriving in the early dawn and beginning work at their anvils, singing as they work. Lyrics are in Italian.

Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? La zingarella! – “Who cheers the gypsy’s days? The gypsy girl!”

VILJA (SOPRANO)

From the comic operetta *Die lustige Witwe* (“The Merry Widow”) composed by Franz Lehár in the early 1900s, which deals with a rich widow and her countrymen’s attempts to find her a husband so that her money will stay in the principality. Lyrics are in German.

In this aria, the widow Hanna entertains a party by singing an old song about a maiden living in the woods.

THE MERRY WIDOW WALTZ (DUET: SOPRANO AND TENOR)

Also from *Die lustige Witwe* (“The Merry Widow”) by Franz Lehár. In this duet, Danilo, a suitor for the hand of the widow Hanna, tries to get her to dance a waltz with him. At first she resists but then is persuaded and falls into his arms.

BRINDISI (CHOIR, SOPRANO AND TENOR)

From *La traviata* (“The Fallen Woman”) by Verdi, composed in the 1850s. The opera deals with the doomed love of a bourgeois young man, Alfredo, for the famed courtesan Violetta. Lyrics are in Italian.

In this piece from the first act, Alfredo sings a drinking song with Violetta as the other party guests join in. *Libiamo ne’ lieti calici* – “Let us drink from the joyful cup!”

Jane Elton Brown OAM *Music Director*

Jane Elton Brown graduated from Melbourne University, B.Mus., Dip.Ed., receiving the Dwight Prize in Education. She subsequently gained the degree of Master of Music (Melb) with first class honours.

In 1971, Jane was appointed Director of Music at MLC and held that position for 29 years until her retirement from MLC in 1999. At MLC, her Music Directorship saw the planning and building of a magnificent new Music School, which she opened in March 1995. In May 2001, the central area of the MLC Music School was named the Jane Elton Brown Performance Staircase.



In 1981, Jane conducted the MLC Chorale on a concert tour in England, and in 1988 her Chorale was selected to perform at the Conference of the International Society for Music Education. The public profile of her work provides variety through commercial recordings, CDs, radio broadcasts, television appearances and live performances. The live performances included directing the MLC Choir in concerts with John Farnham in the Melbourne Concert Hall in 1991 and with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa in 1993 at Werribee Park.

Jane is the on-going founder/conductor of the MLC Male Voice Choir and conductor/director of the MLC Old Collegians' Choir. The two Choirs have now been brought together under the name of The Star Chorale. Jane has conducted this ensemble in successful performances of such works as Fauré's *Requiem*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, John Rutter's *Gloria* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. In 2015, she led a 180-person choir and 80-piece orchestra in a performance of the dramatic *Requiem* by Giuseppe Verdi at the Melbourne Town Hall before a near-capacity audience.

In 2001, Jane was appointed conductor of the Glen Eira City Choir, with which she conducted successful performances of these and other works.

Later, Jane was Music Director at the MacRobertson Girls' High School, and a music performance tour to England and Scotland was a highlight of her time there.

An experienced examiner in music, speaker/presenter at conferences and seminars, and adjudicator at eisteddfods, Jane was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to music in 2011.

Antoinette Halloran *Soprano*

Antoinette Halloran is one of Australia's most accomplished and best-loved sopranos. She performs regularly with all the major Australasian opera companies and symphony orchestras and appears frequently on national television and radio.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and recipient of an Honours Degree in Music from the University of Melbourne, Antoinette has appeared in many productions ranging from opera to musical theatre and cabaret.

Leading appearances for Opera Australia have included the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rusalka*, Mimì in *La bohème*, Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Green Room Award), Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*; for New Zealand Opera – Mimi and Cio-Cio-San; for Victorian Opera – Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte* and Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*; for Opera Queensland – the title role in *The Merry Widow*; for State Opera of South Australia – Micaela in *Carmen*.

Antoinette also featured as a guest judge and panelist on the ABC television series *Operatunity Oz*, and appeared regularly on the hit show *Spicks and Specks* and was a presenter for ABC's *Art Nation* – covering stories on opera and music theatre.

Concert appearances have included Mozart's *Requiem* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, *Carmina Burana* with the Melbourne Chorale, *El Niño* with Sydney Philharmonia and Haydn's *Creation* and Fauré's *Requiem* with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic. Antoinette has also been a regular visitor to Japan, China and Indonesia where she is much in demand as a guest artist.

She has sung in concert with Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet for the Sydney Festival and been engaged as soprano soloist with the Adelaide, Queensland, Tasmanian, Canberra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. She recorded *Puccini Romance* for ABC Classics with tenor Rosario La Spina and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

In 2015, Antoinette Halloran sang the title role in *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Australia and Mrs Lovett in a new production of *Sweeney Todd* for Victorian Opera. She also appeared as soloist with the Sydney, Adelaide



and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. 2016 sees her debut as Fata Morgana in *The Love for Three Oranges* with Opera Australia; she also sings Mrs Lovett in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for New Zealand Opera and leads a world-premiere cast in *Banquet of Secrets* for Victorian Opera.

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Roy Best *Tenor*



Roy Best is hailed as one of Australia's most loved and dynamic tenors. He established his singing career in spectacular fashion after successfully competing in ABC television's *Operatunity Oz*. He performed the role of the Duke in Opera Australia's *Rigoletto* at the Sydney Opera House and was rewarded with a standing ovation from a packed house and a television audience of over one million viewers.

Principal in Opera: *Camille - Merry Widow*: Turiddu – *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Green Room nom.): Count Almaviva - *Barber of Seville*: Elvino - *La Sonnambula*: Alfredo – *La Traviata*:

Arturo – *I Puritani*: Nemorino – *Elixir of Love* (G. R. nom.): Rodolfo – *La Boheme*: Duca – *Rigoletto*: Brueys (+others) – *Nelson*. Music Theatre: Stephen Donovan - *Morgan's Run*: *Dead Man Walking*. Oratorio: Mozart *Requiem*: Mozart *C Minor Mass*: Dvořák *Stabat Mater*: Dvořák *Requiem*: Mendelssohn *Elijah*: Rossini *Stabat Mater*: Schubert *Mass in E-flat* and Steiner's *Crucifixion*. Roy has performed and recorded with many of Australia's finest world-class orchestras.

Discography: "Heart's Delight" with TQO (QSO) conducted by Andrew Greene, the "Operatunity Oz" CD & *Morgan's Run*, the Musical. Plus appearing in 12 or more compilation discs from the ABC as well as numerous other recordings.

Sue Goessling *Piano*

Sue Goessling has enjoyed an impressive career as a pianist and accompanist for a wide range of concert work, and as a rehearsal repetiteur for opera productions, choral work and music theatre.

Her early professional engagements were with the Victorian Boys Choir, with which she toured throughout Victoria and interstate; and with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, for whom she acted as rehearsal pianist for such works as Handel's *Messiah*, the Verdi *Requiem*, the Fauré *Requiem* and Brahms *Requiem*. She featured as orchestral pianist in many performances for the Society.



Since then, she has been privileged to work as a pianist in many productions, including being engaged as the official accompanist for Opera Australia's Victorian Schools Touring Company. With an initial engagement in 1985 and 1986, since 2005 she has been piano accompanist in this role each year until the present. Productions have included *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Cinderella* and many others with a new opera this year 'El Kid' featuring the music of Bizet's famous opera *Carmen*.

Sue has been rehearsal repetiteur for the Star Chorale for the last several years, and will perform as accompanist at today's concert.

The Star Chorale

Choristers:

Sopranos:

Alison Boughen, Rosemary Breen, Barbara Brook, Agnes Chee, Heather Clarke, Joy Darbyshire, Helena Dunn, Hannah Goller, Roswitha Horgan, Merle Lamb, Ester Litvak, Eteri Litvak, Barbara McLaughlin, Megan McLaughlin, Joan McMeeken, Julie Melbourne, Lyn Miller, Celia Nicholson, Jackie O'Neal, Lisbeth Phillips, Nancy Pizzi, Maren Rawlings, Louise Standfield, Jasmine Teng, Jillian Thorpe.

Altos:

Joan Abbott, Fiona Beale, Peta Bigum, Kim Cahill, Helen Cracknell, Margaret de Paiva, Judy Downie, Heather Evans, Heather-Anne Field, Robyn Fraser, Heather Gridley, Angela Harris, Pam Hjorth, Elaine Hobbs, Julie Huf, Suzanne Hume, Trish Johnson, Faye Lambert, Roseanne Loh, Janet Matthew, Ann Matthews, Fiona Matthews, Jo Metcalf, Clare Morton, Liz Porter, Judy Prowse, Jennifer Richardson, Margaret Sherburn, Samantha Szeredi, Dianne Vale, Nell White, Sue Whyte, Juliette Zeelander.

Tenors:

Raymond Abbott, Abe Ata, Alan Bailey, David Bevan, Chris Davie, Peter Field, Rod Findlay, Helen Funston, Cameron Macintosh, John McCallum, Ross Walker.

Basses:

Richard Burn, Jeff Castles, Lindsay Cracknell, Simon Eggleston, David Grigg, Robert Jackson, Colin MacDonald, Doug McLaughlin, Adrian Mill, Tony Parsons, Jeff Richardson, Peter Saville, Lindsay Stodden, Chris White.

About the Choir

The Star Chorale is a Melbourne-based community choir dedicated to continuing and enhancing a tradition of excellence in the performance of choral music. The choir comprises, but is not limited to, former students, staff members and families of students or friends of MLC (Methodist Ladies' College in Kew, Victoria). Since the choir's first performance in November 2000 it has been delighting its audiences with a number

of important choral works. For more details, please visit our website at starchorale.org.

The Star Chorale welcomes new members. We do not hold auditions, but the ability to hold a tune is essential, and the ability to read music is highly desirable. Each year we perform a major work in June or July, and a Christmas Concert in December. Rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings at MLC.

If you would like to join the Choir, please visit starchorale.org/membership.



Star Chorale

The choir's next performance will be at our Christmas Concert later this year. We will sing some popular choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, including the wonderful *Hallelujah Chorus*, together with several Christmas carols, with audience participation!

In 2017, we are planning to perform the beautiful *German Requiem* by Brahms at a major venue, with full orchestra. We are looking to recruit a large choir to do justice to this lovely music, so if you love to sing, please consider joining us. Early rehearsals will commence in September of this year.

Please visit our website starchorale.org for details of these events and our planned program for 2017. Or email secretary@starchorale.org to subscribe to our mailing list.

Acknowledgements

The choir extends its grateful thanks to:

- our Music Director Jane Elton Brown OAM.
- pianist Sue Goessling.
- soloists Roy Best and Antoinette Halloran.
- Romola Tyrrell of Patrick Togher Artists' Management.
- Methodist Ladies' College.
- the MLC Old Collegians' Club.
- the staff of Robert Blackwood Hall.
- Marshall White & Co for publicity boards, and those who kindly agreed for boards to be erected on their property.
- the Star Chorale Committee: Dr. Maren Rawlings (President), Prof. Joan McMeeken AM (Vice President), Robyn Fraser (Secretary), Chris White (Treasurer), Jane Elton Brown OAM, Alan Bailey, Dr Jeff Castles, Helen Funston, David Grigg, Angela Harris, Suzanne Locadou-Wells, Samantha Szeredi, Jennifer Stengards, Dianne Vale; with the assistance of Judy Downie.
- the many choir members who make a special contribution to our enjoyment, well-being and presentation.
- all the volunteers assisting at the concert.

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Fireworks photo by Jacob Zammit Xuereb on Flickr

Presented by the Star Chorale

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