

A Message from CCS President, Alison White

Welcome to our inaugural Albert Hall Festival. This has been a very special weekend for the Canberra Choral Society and friends as we have celebrated the history of this lovely hall. Last night we kicked off with a fabulous Soirée of 1930's music and dancing accompanied by the renowned Hall Village Brass Band. Today we are offering a very special tribute program in honour of the great Dame Nellie Melba.

We are delighted to welcome the fabulous soloist Rachael Thoms, our brilliant accompanist Anthony Smith, flautist David Shaw and treble soloist Gabriel Cole for this performance of opera delights, choruses from much loved oratorios and favourite hymns, under the direction of our inspiring Musical Director, Tobias Cole.

The CCS committee have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to organise this weekend and I would like to thank them for their enthusiasm and dedication. I would also like to thank those friends and family members who have volunteered their time to help with the organisation, and of course our sponsors for their generous support.

We hope that you will enjoy this concert and hope to see you again on 15/16 September when we will be presenting The Best Choral Music Ever Written by A North American. Our end-of-year concert at Llewellyn Hall will be Haydn's wonderful oratorio The Creation on 1 December. See the back page for details on how to take part as a guest chorister.

Alison White

Canberra Choral Society (CCS)

2012 is the 60th birthday of the Canberra Choral Society. CCS aims to facilitate the performance of choral music to the highest professional standard, to foster a love of music generally and to encourage young musicians. In 2013 CCS will establish a Youth Choir for singers aged 16-25 years to further ensure the future of choral singing in Canberra.

Concert in Tribute to Dame Nellie Melba

Funeral: Part 1	Hymn: Jesus, lover of my soul – Joseph Parry
Early Years in Melbourne	Can't you dance the polka? – Trad. Ave Maria – JS Bach / Gounod Ah, fors'è lui (<i>La Traviata</i>) – Verdi
Marriage and the Opera Bug	Bridal Chorus (<i>Lohengrin</i>) – Wagner Anvil Chorus (<i>Il Trovatore</i>) – Verdi Soldier's Chorus (<i>Faust</i>) – Gounod
Professional Work for the Lady Amateur	Achieved is the Glorious Work (<i>The Creation</i>) – Haydn I know that my redeemer liveth (<i>Messiah</i>) – Handel Since by man came death (<i>Messiah</i>) – Handel
European Debut	Caro nome (<i>Rigoletto</i>) – Verdi
Interval	
Taking Europe	Je veux vivre (<i>Romeo et Juliette</i>) – Gounod
Bel Canto vs Dramatic	Easter Hymn (<i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i>) – Mascagni Bell Chorus (<i>Pagliacci</i>) – Leoncavallo Si, mi chiamano Mimi (<i>La Bohème</i>) – Puccini Pilgrim's Chorus (<i>Tannhäuser</i>) – Wagner
Concert Tour of Australia	Home, sweet home – Henry Bishop Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon – Trad. Lo, hear the gentle lark – Henry Bishop
Canberra and Opera Tours	God Save the King Humming Chorus (<i>Madama Butterfly</i>) – Puccini Ave Maria (<i>Otello</i>) – Verdi
Funeral: Part 2	O for the wings of a dove – Mendelssohn Hymn: Rock of Ages – Richard Redhead O for the wings of a dove (1923 recording)

Tobias Cole (CCS Musical Director)

Rachael Thoms (Melba)

Anthony Smith (Accompanist)

David Shaw (flute)

Gabriel Cole (treble)

CCS Chorus

A message from CCS Musical Director, Tobias Cole

Welcome to Canberra Choral Society's first Albert Hall Festival, a celebration of this magnificent, recently restored hall – Canberra's oldest performance venue.

After dancing the night away on Saturday, how appropriate it is that our program reliving the life and heroic achievements of Dame Nellie Melba starts with 'Can't you dance the polka?'

I am thrilled that Rachael Thoms is singing Nellie Melba for us. She is a committed singer with musicianship and drive similar to Nellie's. Her performance is sponsored by one of our choir members in memory of her beloved grandmother Ethel Muller, a soprano who sang in Melba's final Australian tour in 1928.

My thanks also to our associate artists – flautist David Shaw, treble (and my son) Gabriel Cole and pianist Anthony Smith. Anthony is a vital part of CCS and I value his continued support.

A special thanks to Melbourne author Ann Blainey for her wonderful biography I Am Melba (published by Black Inc.). This book was the major inspiration for my program design.

Tobias Cole

Message from Ann Blainey, author of *I Am Melba*

What a lovely idea for the Canberra Choral Society and Tobias Cole to stage a concert in honour of Dame Nellie Melba. If Melba were still here with us, I feel sure she would be utterly delighted.

It was also most kind of Tobias Cole to attribute his inspiration for the concert to I Am Melba. I do thank him.

I will be thinking of you all and be there in spirit.

Ann Blainey

Dame Nellie Melba (1861 – 1931)

Born Helen Mitchell, Dame Nellie was Australia's first international megastar. Her takings from a 1902 Sydney concert set a world record. European royalty loved her, and she was sought out by the Russian Tsar, the Austrian Emperor, the German Kaiser and the King of Sweden, as well as Queen Victoria. If Melba couldn't come to them, then Royalty would go to her – no fewer than seven kings and queens attended one of her gala performances at Covent Garden.

One of the most poetic descriptions of Melba's voice comes from Scottish soprano Mary Garden: *'the note came floating over the auditorium... it left Melba's throat, it left Melba's body, it left everything, and came over like a star, and passed us in our box, and went out into the infinite. I have never heard anything like it in my life, not from any other singer, ever. My God, how beautiful it was.'*

Melba sang the National Anthem at the opening of Parliament House in 1927. The Government arranged for a simultaneous broadcast across all eastern States (only the second time this had been done in Australia), and sales of the new crystal radio sets spiked as the public grabbed the chance to hear Melba sing. Letters to the editor called for public listening stations to be set up around the nation so that all could hear her before she retired.

After a long career, Melba held a legendary series of farewell appearances lasting several years that gave us the phrase *'doing a Melba'*. Many later stars have copied the pattern, but none have entered the language!

Melba was also a savvy businesswoman and quick to seize the potential of new technologies. She released over one hundred records, insisting that her records have a distinctive label and be priced one shilling higher than anybody else's. Her popularity helped to establish the gramophone. What would she have done with iTunes?

Notes on the Program

Funeral: Part 1

Melba's funeral took place in the church her father had built, Scot's Church in Melbourne, on 26 February 1931. The hymn *Jesus, lover of my soul* opened the service.

Early Years in Melbourne

In 1869 8-year-old Helen Mitchell sang *Can't you dance the polka?* at the opening of the Richmond Town Hall. The music critic of *The Australasian* described her as 'the gem of the evening' and commented prophetically that 'She is indeed a musical prodigy, and she will make crowded houses when she is announced again'.

Under her married name – Mrs Nellie Armstrong – she sang the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria* at a dinner of the Royal General Theatrical Fund in 1886. Thirty-five years later, the *Examiner* reported that 'this beautiful morceau was ... Melba's "swan song", rendered to a chosen few during her last illness'.

In Sydney in 1911, so many people came early to buy tickets to an evening performance of *La Traviata* that the crowds almost blocked the traffic. The doors had to be opened at 2 o'clock, and 800 people were let in before the doors were barricaded, with the lucky patrons whiling away the hours 'thrashing out musical comedies'. It was all worthwhile: "'Ah, fors' é lui" ... was, of course, a triumph. ... the very perfection of control was attained ..., and the elaborate cadenza ... proved to be the forerunner of a series of wonderful embroideries vocalised with the most artistic grace. Where else on earth, one found himself asking, could the "Sempre Libera" have been sung with such absolute genius of technique as at that moment?'

Marriage and the Opera Bug

The **Bridal Chorus** ('*Treulich geführt*') comes from Wagner's 1850 opera *Lohengrin*. It is sung by the women of the wedding party as they accompany the heroine Elsa to the bridal

chamber after her wedding to a mysterious knight, who has married her on condition that she never ask his name or where he came from.

The **Anvil Chorus** (*'Vedi! Le fosche notturne'*) comes from Verdi's 1853 opera *Il Trovatore*. It depicts Spanish gypsies striking their anvils at dawn and singing the praises of hard work, good wine, and their gypsy women. The famous chorus lines are *'Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? / La zingarella'* – *'Who turns the gypsy's day from gloom to brightest sunshine? / His lovely gypsy maid!'*

The **Soldier's Chorus** (*'Déposons les armes / Gloire immortelle de nos aïeux'*) comes from Gounod's 1859 opera *Faust*. Melba met Gounod when she was studying in Paris, and sang the role of Marguerite many times to great acclaim.

Professional Work for the Lady Amateur

Haydn was inspired to write his oratorio *The Creation* after seeing *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* at the 1791 Handel festival at Westminster Abbey. The chorus *Achieved is the Glorious Work* announces the end of the process of creation after the sixth day.

Melba performed at a Handel Festival Concert at Crystal Palace in 1894, vowing never to sing in that *'cavernous hall'* again. She sang in the Christmas performances of *Messiah* with the Sydney Philharmonic Society in 1884, but the critics felt that *'she was obviously unacquainted with the traditions and methods of oratorio.'* Her performance score (part of the Melba collection) is held by the National Library of Australia.

European Debut

In 1887 Melba made her debut at Brussels as Gilda in *Rigoletto*. The opera was a perfect vehicle for her legendary vocalism – ten years after her death, the Sydney Morning Herald commented *'To this day the connoisseurs talk about the beauty of Melba's long shake at her exit after "Caro nome"'*.

Notes on the Program (cont)

Taking Europe by Storm

Melba starred in the 1893 Royal Command Performance of Gounod's opera *Romeo et Juliette* performed in honour of the marriage of the Duke of York (later King George V). The following year George Bernard Shaw, then a musical critic, wrote of Melba's Juliette '*You never realise how wide the gap between the ordinary singer who simply avoids the fault of singing obviously out of tune and the singer who sings really and truly in tune, except when Melba is singing*'.

Bel Canto vs Dramatic

The **Easter Hymn** comes from Pietro Mascagni's 1890 opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*. It combines a Latin hymn ('*Regina Coeli*') being sung by a church choir with an Italian hymn ('*Inneggiamo, il Signor non é morto*') being sung by the villagers outside.

The **Bell Chorus** ('*Din, don, suona vespero*') comes from Ruggero Leoncavallo's 1892 opera *Pagliacci*, and depicts the church bells ringing for vespers. Melba played the lead, Nedda, in London in 1893 and New York in 1894.

Melba also starred as Mimi in many premieres of Puccini's 1896 opera *La Bohème*, including the Royal Opera House (1899), the Metropolitan Opera (1900) and the Opéra de Monte-Carlo (1902). In 1923 she sang Mimi in a wireless broadcast from Covent Garden, receiving eight curtain call at the end of the first act, and similar ovations after the remaining acts.

The **Pilgrim's Chorus** comes from Wagner's 1845 opera *Tannhäuser*, which centres on the struggle between sacred and profane love.

Concert Tour of Australia

Home, sweet home became an iconic song for Melba which audiences often requested at the end of a concert. She frequently accompanied herself on the piano, and in one

memorable concert after performing *Faust*, 'sitting down to the piano in the sack cloth robe of Marguerite's prison garb the diva sang tenderly, freshly, and simply the old ballad (while) the choristers and stage hands fringed the sides of the vast stage to listen'.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon, written by Robert Burns and set by him to a traditional Scottish tune, was another favourite Melba encore.

Melba often performed *Lo, hear the gentle lark* with flute obbligato. John Lemmone, an internationally renowned Australian flautist who often travelled with her, became the concert promoter for some of her tours and was a lifelong friend and counsellor who was with her to the last.

Canberra and Opera Tours

In 1927 Melba sang the national anthem – *God Save the King* – at the official opening of Parliament House in Canberra. 'It was a stirring moment when the vast assemblage, swept by the significance of the occasion and the spirit of it, lifted the National Anthem above the commonplace, and invested it with its full meaning.'

The **Humming Chorus** ('*Coro a bocca chiusa*') comes from Puccini's 1904 opera *Madama Butterfly* and depicts Butterfly's overnight vigil as she waits for Pinkerton after his ship returns.

The opening of Act 4 of Verdi's 1887 opera *Otello* was one of Melba's signature concert pieces. In 1909 her 'pure, simple monotone passage in the opening of the "*Ave Maria*"... was the very perfection of vocalisation, and left one marvelling at the girlish freshness of an amazing voice upon which the passage of years seems to have left no trace'.

Funeral: Part 2

The final music at Melba's funeral was *Oh for the wings of a dove* by Mendelssohn, and the hymn *Rock of Ages*. Her recording of the Mendelssohn was said to have been her favourite out of all her recordings. She had also sung it at the baptism of her granddaughter Pamela Armstrong in 1918.

Melba's Recordings

Melba's first recordings were made around 1895. Melba was less than impressed. *"Never again," I said to myself as I listened to the scratching, screeching result. "Don't tell me I sing like that, or I shall go away and live on a desert island."*

A 2003 Gramophone reviewer commented *'I simply find the sound quite extraordinarily moving... the purity of its quality and the ease of production are infinitely special. The credibility-gap I used to experience, in timbre, personality and even carrying-power, disappears almost instantly and the recognition is almost as instantly an affectionate one.'*

Text for Singalongs

It wouldn't be a Tobias Cole CCS concert without a singalong! Please join us in these two beautiful hymns, and *God Save the King*.

Jesus, Lover of my Soul

Text by Charles Wesley (1707-1788); Music by Dr Joseph Parry (1841-1903)

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, oh, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Rock of Ages

Text by Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778)

Music by Richard Redhead (1820-1901)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labours of my hands
can fulfil thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears for ever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
when my eyelids close in death,
when I soar through tracts unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

God Save the King

Traditional – 17th Century

God save our gracious King, long live our noble King,
God save the King.

Send him victorious, happy and glorious, long to reign over us;
God save the King!

Thy choicest gifts in store on him be pleased to pour;
Long may he reign;

May he defend our laws, and ever give us cause; with heart and
voice to sing:

God save the King!

Melba's Advice to Canberra

Our research uncovered these words of advice for Canberra, penned by Dame Nellie in 1927:

Canberra spells Romance. Not the romance of the past, which comes from dusty buildings and faded memories, but the more vigorous romance of youth — the prospect of a distant territory unexplored. But before that romance can be turned into reality, before the city of which I dream can come down from the clouds, there are many stern facts to be faced, many pitfalls to be avoided. May I, very humbly, anticipate a few of the discouragements which we Australians may, sooner or later, encounter? Firstly, we must not expect Canberra to be a success at once. We must be prepared to be informed that it is a white elephant, a useless expense, in fact a failure. And I would ask good Australians, when they hear such criticism, to remember the beginnings of another great capital — Washington.

Washington's Experience

When Washington became the administrative capital of America, it 'held fire' for years. Americans sneered at this up-start town, wayback in the wilds (as it then seemed). They said that nobody would ever live there, that nothing would ever divert the stream of trade and population to it. Yet, what is the position of Washington today? It is the centre of all that is best in culture in the United States. And commerce has followed culture. Washington is a name to conjure with...

A Social Genesis

... But in our eagerness to help, we must not be led into making mistakes of haste. Here is virgin territory. Let us see that we fill it worthily. Let us, first of all, employ architects who are artists as well as artisans, men with an ideal. We cannot all build palaces, but we can all build in good taste. And if we wish to cultivate good taste it is essential that we should learn from others. We are a new country,

and new countries are proud. But it is a mistaken pride that refuses to profit by other countries' experience.

Some Home Suggestions

I can think of so many little suggestions by which Canberra may be made beautiful. I should like to see houses springing up, roofed with those gay green tiles which are used with such happy effect in California. I should like to see corrugated iron banished for ever from Australia. I should like to see the use of old materials, of seasoned timber, and weathered brick. And as far as the houses themselves were concerned, I would welcome that complete simplicity which is so much more difficult to obtain than the excessive ornamentation of many Australian houses. We have the architects, we have the money — why cannot we have the houses, too? I believe that we shall have them.

Our Big Chance

I am no architect, no townplanner. I do not presume to make suggestions concerning railway systems, or the distribution of trade. These things I leave to the experts. I am only a woman, with a certain sense of beauty, and perhaps a little more knowledge of the great world than most of my countrywomen have been able to gain. But at least, I can say this — that we have here a tremendous opportunity — not only a material opportunity, but an opportunity of spirit. Here is a city which may come, which must come, to typify an ideal. That ideal is the unity of Australia. We have our differences, we have our rivalries. The citizen of Melbourne will always think himself a finer fellow than the citizen of Sydney, and vice versa. It is quite right that they should do so. But Canberra stands above such differences. And I believe a time will come when Canberra will be acknowledged by Australians to be the fairest city of the southern hemisphere, for it will typify an ideal which is greater than us all.

The Register, 7 July 1927

What would Melba think of our city as we approach
Canberra's Centenary?

Tobias Cole, CCS Musical Director

This concert will take us back to when an ambitious, tenacious young lady made Europe and North America aware of Australia, before Australia really became aware of itself. The beautifully renovated Albert Hall is the perfect setting, reminding us of the glorious architecture of the end of Melba's career, and of her role in the history of Canberra.



Tobias Cole has gained a reputation as a highly sought after choral trainer and innovative concert programmer. As CCS Musical Director, his inspiring long-term vision includes presenting one Handel oratorio in Canberra each year. He is well qualified for the task, with a Helpmann Award nomination in Handel's *Julius Caesar* (Opera Australia, 2007) and a Green Room Award in the title role of Handel's *Xerxes* (Victorian Opera, 2009). CCS has now presented two Handel oratorios under Tobias' leadership: *Messiah* (2011) and *Saul* (2012), with *Theodora* to come in 2013.

Tobias is also one of Australia's most successful countertenors, travelling the country as a soloist in opera, oratorio and theatre. He has just returned from reprising the role of Oberon in Opera Australia's famous Baz Luhrmann production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

'...strong and scary, a Fairy King who defies the British Empire with a flick of his fingers ...' (ArtsHub); '... utterly hypnotic... the perfect Fairy King' (xsentertainme.wordpress.com).

Coming performances include Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* for the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra in September – part of the 2012 Brisbane Festival.

Rachael Thoms, Lyric Soprano

Melba's strong, independent, ambitious streak is something I can certainly relate to, and there are many personal aspects of Nellie's life that resonate with me. As a single mother determinedly pursuing excellence in music I know something of her journey. She is a truly inspiring figure.



Melba was the first Australian to appear on the cover of Time magazine, she has a marble bust on the grand staircase of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, she appears on our 100 dollar note and has a music institution and a music hall named in her honour. She was a dedicated teacher and charity worker. But the thing that elevates her to total legend status in my mind is food! We have Peach Melba, Melba sauce, Melba Toast, and Melba Garniture. If I can get just one dish named in my honour I know I will have made it!!!

Rachael Thoms is one of a new breed of truly versatile singers. Accomplished in both jazz and classical performance, she is the only graduate of the ANU School of Music to have completed a Jazz BMus Performance degree with First Class Honours in Classical Performance. Rachael was the recipient of the 2011 Canberra International Music Festival Young Performer Award and a top 100 finalist in ABC's *Operatunity Oz*.

Her broadcast credits include ABC Classic FM Sunday Live, Artsound FM, and ABC 666. She has appeared as soloist in Mozart's *Mass in C Major 'Coronation Mass'*, Bach's *Wachet Auf*, and Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor* among many others.

In 2011 Rachael released her debut jazz recording, *The Great Unknown*, with improvising pianist and composer Luke Sweeting.

Anthony Smith (accompanist)



Anthony Smith is one of Canberra's leading accompanists. He has been repetiteur for the CCS since 2005, and his knowledge, skills, and insightful feedback make him an invaluable part of our weekly rehearsals. It is an absolute pleasure to have Anthony back up on the concert stage where our audience can appreciate his wonderful accompanist skills.

Anthony's 2011 performance highlights include recitals at the Australian Flute Festival with international artists Molly Barth and Alexa Still. He is also a musicologist, composer and arranger.

David Shaw (flute)

David Shaw is a 3rd year classical flautist studying at the ANU. He performed as part of the 2012 Canberra International Music Festival with the ANU School of Music orchestra and has performed at Albert Hall with the newly formed Canberra Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Gabriel Cole (treble)



Gabriel Cole is a Year 5 student at Turner School, and son of CCS Musical Director Tobias Cole. He has already performed at the Albert Hall, capturing the hearts of the audience with his hauntingly beautiful solo in *The Sealed Angel* by Rodion Shchedrin, part of the 2012 Canberra International Music Festival.

CCS Chorus

Sopranos

Kathie Barnes
Maureen Boyle
Julie Carmody
Kelly Corner
Alison Cozadinos
Helen Cosgrove
Rachael Eddowes
Margaret Evans
Brenda Gill
Karen Halliday
Deborah Hayes
June Howell
Margaret Hunt
Jenny Landsberg
Julie Lee
Penny Lloyd-Jones
Colette Lucas
Christine Mahe
Nathalie O'Toole
Erika Parkinson
Michelle Priest
Irene Reid
Sandra Shumack

Margot Skinner
Doris Stokes
Jeanette Weeden
Alison White

Altos

Barbara Austin
Susan Cowan
Judy Evans
Barbara Inglis
Trish Levick
Margaret McElhinny
Atja Maier
Lorraine Newman
Beverley Payne
Lyn Rainforest
Yvonne Scales
Lydia Stanhope
Lyn Stevens
Kaye Sweeting
Lynne Webb
Anna Weidemann
Sally Wodzinski

Tenors

Arko Chakrabarty
Cody Christopher
Michael Gill
Marcus Hurley
Brenton Lovett
Peter May
Peter Morris
Simon Tiller

Basses

Murray Basnett
Jarrah Bloomfield
Phil Bloomfield
Gary Faehse
Ian Gilkes
Rowan Grigg
John Inglis
Chris Klein
Geoff Millar
Brian O'Connor
Alex O'Sullivan
Michael Pidcock
Trevor Shumack

Supporting the Canberra Choral Society

A great concert creates a great pile of expenses – something that Melba (who created her own international opera company in partnership with JC Williamson) well knew!

At the CCS we are not in quite the same league as Dame Nellie, so while ticket sales are our major revenue stream they only cover part of our costs. To maintain our high standards we need your support!

All financial contributions are welcome, no matter how big or small. We are very happy to discuss tailoring your donation to your interests – eg supporting a particular soloist or instrumentalist, or assisting with the costs of program printing, purchasing music or gifts for the soloists, venue hire and so on.

Please contact us via our website canberrachoralsociety.org to discuss making a contribution.

Acknowledgements

CCS thanks *ABC Radio, ArtSound FM, the Canberra Times, Canberra Weekly, the Chronicle, City News*, and the online events diaries run by *ABC Big Diary, DailyCAPITAL* and *Limelight Magazine* for helping us to promote the Albert Hall Festival. We encourage music lovers to support these media outlets in their coverage of local Canberra arts.

Rachael Thoms has been generously sponsored in memory of Ethel Muller, a beloved grandmother and a member of the chorus on Melba's final concert tour of Australia in 1928.

Our lovely furniture was kindly provided by *The Silk Road Gallery* in Kingston.

Melba's 1923 recording of *O for the wings of a dove* is played with the kind permission of the National Film and Sound Archive.

We also acknowledge the ongoing support of the ACT Government, Capital Wines, CMAX Communications and Duratone Hi-Fi. Our concert is performed under the auspices of the Australian National Choral Association.

Sing with the Canberra Choral Society!

Did you know that Adelaide organised an open-air tribute concert to Dame Nellie shortly after her funeral, with a volunteer massed choir of nearly 3,000 voices, an orchestra of 250 pieces, nearly as many bandmen, and an audience of 50,000?!

In October we'll be calling for singers to join our own Massed Chorus, which this year will perform Haydn's *The Creation* on 1 December. There is no need to audition, so grab your chance to experience the thrill of performing a great oratorio in Llewellyn Hall under the direction of Graham Abbott – a highly regarded choral conductor who is well known to lovers of classical music as the presenter of *Keys to Music* on ABC Classic FM. This will be an unforgettable experience!

We don't have the draw power of Melba (and we won't be in the open air), but we can fit up to 200 singers on the stage. Guest choristers will be offered a place on a first come, first served basis, so we encourage you to get in early. Last year demand to sing in our *Messiah* was so high that we had to turn many people away. Don't miss out!

We also welcome enquiries from singers who wish to join us on a permanent basis. Speak to one of us after the concert or contact us through our website – canberrachoralsociety.org.

*Program written and compiled by
Kelly Corner, Canberra Choral Society, July 2012.*