CANTORIS

A Night at the Opera

Cantoris presents a celebration of classic opera choruses from Verdi, Wagner, Purcell, Orff, Mozart, Bizet and more.

Soloists | Barbara Paterson, William McElwee

Music Director | Ingrid Schoenfeld

Saturday 10 May 2025, 7.30PM | St Peter's on Willis

FOREWORD

Welcome - it’s wonderful to have you here tonight!

It’s a huge privilege to be appointed the new musical director of Cantoris, and eight weeks in, I’m having a great time. The choir has been so warm and welcoming, and we’ve had a blast preparing for this rich and engaging concert.

Tonight, get ready for an absolute treasure trove of opera choruses! Whether illustrating the mood of bystanders, setting the scene of a particular place and time, or even acting as a societal commentary on the unfolding drama, opera choruses are a rich and exciting route into the world of opera. Also, they have all the greatest tunes!

I hope you have as much fun listening as we are about to have performing. Again, thank you so much for being here, and please enjoy the concert.

Ingrid Schoenfeld
Music Director

PROGRAMME

1. Bell Chorus ~ Pagliacci, Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919)

What better way to open the concert than with the beckoning call of “Come on! Come on!” that opens the Bell Chorus? We are invited into an evening alive with young love and possibility as church bells ring to announce Vespers.

English translation:

Come on, let's go! The church bells ring, let’s go!
Ding dong, hear the evening bells, be quick, come along.
Away to church now, girls and boys!
Ding dong, on the distant hills the sun lingers bright.
But mothers warn every girl: “Beware those boys at night!”
Ding dong, all the air is filled with love and with light!
Young lovers, just remember this:
You’re always in sight!
But mothers warn every girl: “Beware in the night!”
But mothers warn every girl: “Beware in the light!”
Ding dong, O hear the evening bells,
The air around is filled with love and light!
Ding dong, hear the evening bells,
Be quick, come along, ding dong.

2. Anvil Chorus ~ Il Trovatore, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Next, the clank of working mens’ anvils ring out as Verdi’s Anvil Chorus celebrates the joys of wine and beautiful women.

English translation:

Come on, let's go! The church bells ring, let’s go!
See how the night mist is lifting its veil and the great vault of heaven above is shining:
Seems like a widow whose mourning is done, casting off all the black of her sorrow and pining.
To work then! Ready your hammers!
Who cheers the gypsy’s days and raises up his spirits?
Who? Who cheers the gypsy’s days?
You know the answer? A pretty woman!
Fill up our glasses!
Our arms are strong and hearts are brave again when wine is flowing.
Look how t
Who cheers the gypsy’s days and raises up his spirits?
Who? Who cheers the gypsy’s days?
A pretty woman!

PROGRAMME

3. Chorus of Enchanted Islanders ~ Alcina, Handel (1685-1759)

In Handel's Alcina, an enchantress turns her lovers into trees, rocks, and other inanimate objects. However, their first sight of her island domain fills them with wonder, and Handel's energetic writing captures their delighted reaction.

English translation:

Come on, let's go! The church bells ring, let's go!
Here the heaven of all pleasure,
Here the fount of joy and bliss;
Earthly contentment without measure,
Never such delight as this.
Here the heaven of all pleasure,
Here the fount of joy and bliss.

4. Humming Chorus ~ Madama Butterfly, Puccini (1858-1924)

Puccini's Humming Chorus is unique as it has no text, only a sublime melody. It paints a moment of domestic idyll in an otherwise tragic opera, as the heroine and her young son sleep peacefully.

5. Habanera ~ Carmen, Georges Bizet (1838-75)

No night at the opera would be complete without selections from Bizet's incomparable Carmen, including the famously seductive Habanera and the bravado-filled Toreador Song, brought to life by our two incredible soloists, Barbara Paterson and William McElwee.

English translation:

Carmen:
Love's a bird that will not obey,
A bird too wild for you to tame;
If her pleasure's to stay away,
No use for you to call her name!
If you threaten her, she'll not stay;
So try to charm her from her tree.
If you chase me I'll fly away,
But if you charm me, then we'll see!
Ah love, sweet love!

Chorus:
Love's a bird that will not obey,
A bird too wild for you to tame.
If her pleasure's to stay away,
No use for you to call her name!

Continue...

PROGRAMME

...Habanera ~ continued

English translation:

Carmen:
Love knows no rules and has no home,
A gypsy wandering as free as air.
And if my fancy starts to roam,
Then I'm warning you, young man,
take care!
And if I want you, then ah! Beware!

Chorus:
Love knows no rules, and has no home,
A gypsy wandering as free as air.
And if my fancy starts to roam,
Then I'm warning you, young man,
take care!

Carmen:
When you think love is in your hand,
She spreads her wings and flies away.
No use trying to understand,
Just let the bird return some day.
If she's there out of reach, just wait:
She'll come and nestle in your lap;
Try to catch her, you'll be too late,
But try to run, and you'll be in her trap!
Ah love, sweet love!

Chorus:
If she's there out of reach, just wait:
She'll come and nestle in your lap;
Try to catch her, and you'll be too late,
But try to run, and you're in her trap!

Carmen:
Love knows no rules and has no home,
A gypsy wandering as free as air.
And if my fancy starts to roam,
Then I'm warning you young man,
take care!
And if I want you, then ah! Beware!

6. March of the Toreadors ~ Carmen, Georges Bizet (1838-75)

English translation:

Escamillo:
Your toast, I can requite it,
Señores, Señores, because with soldiers,
Yes, toreros can reach an understanding;
Because they fight for pleasure!
The bullring is full, it is a festival day!
The bullring is full from top to bottom;
The crowd, losing its head,
The crowd cries out in a great roar!

Calling out names, shouts and noises
rise to a frenzy,
For this is the celebration of courage!
It is the celebration of the brave at heart!
Let's go! On guard! Let's go! Let's go! Ah!

Continue...

PROGRAMME

...March of the Toreadors ~ continued

English translation:

Chorus:
Toreador, on guard! Toreador! Toreador!
And contemplate well, yes, contemplate as you fight
That a dark eye is watching you,
And that love is waiting for you,
Toreador, love is waiting for you!

Escamillo:
All at once, we are silent... Oh, what is happening?
No more shouts, this is it!
The bull is rushing while jumping out of its fence!
He is rushing in! He's entering, hitting!
A horse is falling, dragging down a picador.
"Ah! Bravo! Toro!" the crowd is calling,
The bull goes on... he comes... he comes, hitting once more!
While shaking his banderillas, full of rage, he runs!...
The ring is full of blood!
We flee... we pass the gates!
It's your turn now!
Let's go! On guard! Let's go! Let's go! Ah!

Chorus:
Toreador, on guard! Toreador! Toreador!...

7. Heil sei euch Geweihten ~ The Magic Flute, Mozart (1756-1791)

Celebrating the triumph of good over evil at the end of Mozart's Magic Flute, Heil Sei Euch Geweihten opens with a huge, spacious chords, followed by exuberant allegro melodies.

English translation:

Hail to you on your consecration!
You have penetrated the night,
Thanks be given to you, Osiris, thanks to you, Isis!
Strength has triumphed, rewarding beauty and wisdom with an everlasting crown!

~ Intermission ~

PROGRAMME

8. Quel est l'audacieux ~ Orphée et Eurydice, Gluck (1714-1787)

Rarely does a choir get the opportunity to act as a cohort of demons, but Gluck's spectacular chorus allows Cantoris to do just that! As Orpheus descends into the underworld in pursuit of his love Eurydice, he must confront the resident demons, who repel his gorgeously sung pleas with shouted "No!"'s, boast of the howling and roaring of their three-headed dog, and threaten this presumptuous mortal who dares approach them.

English translation:

Chorus:
Who is this audacious man who in these dark places dares to tread
And before death does not tremble?
Let fear and terror seize his heart at the dreadful howl of Cerberus foaming and roaring!

Orpheus:
Let yourselves be touched by my tears, ghosts...

Chorus:
No!

Orpheus:
...phantoms...

Chorus::
No!

Orpheus:
...terrible shades!

Chorus:
No!

Orpheus:
Be, be sensitive to the excess of my misfortunes!

Chorus:
No! No! No!

Orpheus:
Let yourselves be touched by my tears...

Chorus:
Who brings you to these places, presumptuous mortal?
It is the dreadful abode of devouring remorse and groans and torments.

PROGRAMME

9. Voyagers' Chorus ~ Idomeneo, Mozart (1756-1791)

In contrast, Mozart’s Voyagers’ Chorus prays for calm seas, combining Mozart’s deft gifts for word-painting (you can hear the gentle rocking of the waves!) with perfectly-formed melodies that culminate in a breathtaking soprano solo.

English translation:

Chorus:
Calm are the winds and waters,
Blessings attend our journey.
The fates foretell good fortune;
Quick, quick, make haste, set sail!

Electra:
May gentle breezes softly caress you;
No bitter tempest ever distress you;
Winds kindly wafting follow and bless you,
Spread among you far and wide the sweet breath of love.

Chorus:
Calm are the winds and waters.

10. How strange their ends ~ Theodora, Handel (1685-1759)

In Handel’s oratorio Theodora, the Christian Theodora and her converted Roman lover, Didymus, face martyrdom. This scene, sung by the chorus of heathens, comments on how strange it is that Theodora and Didymus are both insisting that they be martyred in the place of the other. Handel opens the vocal line with the striking interval of a descending seventh to illustrate the “strangeness”, and sets subsequent lines in a flurry of semiquavers to portray the crowd’s fervent excitement.

How strange their ends, and yet how glorious!
How strange their ends, and yet how glorious!
Where each contends to fall victorious!
Where virtue its own innocence denies,
And for the vanquished the glad victor dies!

PROGRAMME

11. Dido's Lament ~ Dido & Aeneas, Purcell (1659-1695)

The only standalone aria to be included in the program, Dido's Lament is legendary for its sheer beauty and emotional directness. As she sings goodbye to her companion Belinda, the inexorable repetition of the ground bass underscores the tragic inevitability of Dido's death.The choir mourns her passing in some of the most exquisite choral writing Purcell ever produced - With Drooping Wings, Ye Cupids Come.

When I am laid, am laid in earth, may my wrongs create
No trouble, no trouble in thy breast.
Remember me, remember me,
But ah! Forget my fate.

With drooping wings ~ Dido & Aeneas, Purcell (1659-1695)

With drooping wings you Cupids come,
To scatter roses on her tomb.
Soft, soft and gentle as her heart;
Keep here, here your watch,
And never part

12. Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves ~ Nabucco, Verdi (1813-1901)

The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves has such a powerful and moving melody that it gained cultural significance even outside the world of opera, and became a symbol of Italian patriotism. Onlookers at Verdi's funeral procession sang the chorus as his casket passed through the streets.

English translation:

Dearest homeland, my thoughts fly
towards thee;
Wings of gold bear them to your
journey's ending,
Where the sweet scented breezes
are blending
In the green hills and vales of our land.

Ah! to stand by the banks of the Jordan
And to see Sion's woeful desolation!
O dear land, once the joy of our nation,
Now forever lost by Fate's cruel hand.

Dearest homeland, my thoughts fly
Golden harps of the prophets and
seers of old,
Why so silently hang on the willows?
Lift your voice, stir our hearts, let the
story be told
Of the times now so long gone and past.

O Jerusalem, blessed city,
When will grief and lamenting be over?
Let our song rise to thee, great Jehovah;
Hear the voice of thy people at last!

PROGRAMME

13. Brindisi ~ La Traviata, Verdi (1813-1901)

The effervescence of Brindisi lightens the mood as the two leads from Verdi's La Traviata confess their love for each other with the help of a drink and the encouragement of the choir.

English translation:

Alfredo:
Let's drink to the pleasures of youth and happiness,
Filled with delight and with rapture.
For life is fleeting, so let us capture
The moments of joy and bliss.
Let's drink to all the trembling hearts,
That love awakes to passion;
There's one who rules in her fashion,
No other heart than this.
Let's drink, for with wine all the joys of love,
More delightful will grow with each kiss.

Chorus:
Ah! Let's drink to love's delight,
Here's to the wine that fires every kiss.

Violetta:
With you I spend my life
In a whirlwind of joy and laughter;
Live for each moment and not for hereafter,
Drink of the cup while you may.
Rejoice in love's sweet happiness,
A flower to keep and cherish;
For soon its blossom will perish,
Its beauty fade away.
Rejoice, hear the voice of love:
"Come to me" it seems to say.

Chorus:
Ah! Rejoice, for tonight we'll make merry with wine;
All around there'll be laughter and singing;
In paradise swiftly the hours go winging,
And thus we shall greet the new day.

Violetta:
Our life was made for pleasure...

Alfredo:
If love brings in no confusion...

Continue...

PROGRAMME

...Brindisi ~ continued

English translation:

Violetta:
Don't talk of mere illusion.

Alfredo:
Fate holds me in its sway.

Violetta and Alfredo:
Ah! Rejoice, for tonight we'll make merry with wine;
All around there'll be laughter and singing;
In paradise swiftly the hours go winging,
And thus we shall greet the new day!

Chorus:
Ah! We'll rejoice and make merry with wine,
All around there'll be laughter and singing,
Rejoice and make merry.
In paradise, thus we shall greet the new day!

14. O Fortuna ~ Carmina Burana, Carl Orff (1895-1982)

We finish with the epic O Fortuna, technically from a cantata rather than an opera, but I trust nobody will begrudge this slight technicality once the spine-tingling opening chords mark the beginning of the choir's wrestle with fate, and crescendo to a glorious finale.

English translation:

O Fortune, like the moon
You are changeable,
Ever waxing, ever waning;
Hateful life first oppresses
And then soothes,
Playing with mental clarity;
Poverty and power,
It melts them like ice.

Fate, monstrous and empty,
You whirling wheel,
You are malevolent,
Devoid of security
And ever fading to nothing,
Shadowed and veiled
You plague me too;
Now through the game
I bring my bare back to your villainy.

Fate, in health and virtue, is against me
Driven on and weighted down,
Always enslaved.
So at this hour without delay
Pluck the vibrating strings;
Since Fate strikes down the strong,
Everyone weep with me!

INGRID SCHOENFELD, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Cantoris welcomed Ingrid Schoenfeld as our new Music Director in early 2025.

With over a decade of teaching experience, and years spent singing with, accompanying, and conducting choirs - Ingrid is a classical pianist, teacher, and conductor with a heartfelt passion for performance, education, and creating impactful, meaningful musical experiences that resonate with everyone.

Hailing from Minneapolis, USA, Ingrid earned her first-class honours degree from the New Zealand School of Music in piano performance under the tutelage of Richard Mapp as well as Dr. Jian Liu, and studied conducting under Kenneth Young. She played in masterclasses for Diedre Irons, Janos Cegledy, Paul Rickard-Ford, Natalia Sheludiakova, and the New Zealand String Quartet, among others. Ingrid also studied harpsichord for three years under prominent early music specialists Dr Erin Helyard and Douglas Mews.

In 2016, Ingrid made her orchestral debut with the Nelson Symphony Orchestra, playing Shostakovich's 2nd piano concerto.

Ingrid has conducted and accompanied multiple choirs around Wellington, including the Northern Chorale, St. James church choir, St. Mary of the Angels Youth Choir, and has been Music Director of the Festival Singers since 2019. Ingrid have sung with the St. Mary of the Angels church choir, the Wellington Cathedral Choir under Michael Stewart, and was a reserve member in the New Zealand Youth Choir.

In addition to conducting, performing regularly in solo, chamber and choral concerts, Ingrid also runs a successful teaching studio..

CANTORIS

Formed in 1970 by a small group of friends, Cantoris was established as a chamber choir in 1971 with a strong focus on Early Music. Over the last 40 plus years, Cantoris has explored a diverse repertoire of choral music and broadened its range to include works of all sizes, from a range of genres and eras. The choir has had particularly notable successes in the seventies and eighties with its performances of baroque music.

In 2014 Cantoris along with 11 other international choirs was invited to sing at Carnegie Hall, New York, in honour of composer Karl Jenkins's 70th birthday celebration, which included the US premiere of "The Bards of Wales". MoRE recently in March 2018, Cantoris was back in New York to sing Cherubini's Requiem at the Lincoln Center.

For more information or to join the choir, go to cantoris.net.nz.

SOLOISTS

Barbara Paterson, Soprano

Barbara Paterson is delighted to return to sing with Cantoris. A New Yorker who has called NZ home since 2004, Barbara is an experienced operatic and concert performer, in addition to being a sought-after specialist in contemporary art and theatre music. In 2025, Barbara looks forward to performances with Stroma. Orchestra Welington, the Royal NZ Air Force Band, to chamber music recitals with the Āmiki Trio (with flautist Karen Batten and Rachel Thomson) and with pianist Gabriela Glapska, and to engagements with local choirs Nota Bene, Resonance and the Kāpiti Chorale. She is currently an Artist Teacher of Classical Voice at Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music. Barbara also has full teaching studios at Wellington East Girls' College and Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, where she is the vocal coach for both schools' award-winning auditioned choirs, and she has conducted Wellington's Capital Choir since 2018. Barbara is a former Emerging Artist and Resident Artist with NZ Opera, and she has a MMus from Westminster Choir College (Princeton NJ USA), a BMus from Te Kōkī NZSM and a BA in German from Te Herenga Waka VUW. Find her online at barbarapatersonmusic.com and @sopranoonabicycle.

William McElwee, Baritone

Singer, conductor, composer, and teacher William McElwee has had a busy and varied musical career both in NZ and the UK. He has appeared recently with NZ Opera (MacBeth - Apparition), Days Bay Opera (Il Pirata - Solitario, Chorus Master), Wellington Comic Opera (Pirates! - Pirate King), Eternity Opera (Marriage of Figaro - Figaro), and appears regularly in concert. He is currently Director of Music at Youth Philharmonic Tauranga and St Mary of the Angels (Wellington), and currently engaged as Music Director of Wellington Comic Opera's season of "The McCardo" and for Bay of Plenty Symphonia's "Rising Stars" Concerto Competition in July. William is very excited to perform with Cantoris again, not only being a scion of a former member, but also having sing with them in the 2000s and studied at the feet of former director Robert Oliver.

HEATHER EASTING, ACCOMPANIST

Cantoris also welcomed Heather Easting as our choir's accompanist in March 2025.

Heather pursues a wide variety of musical interests as a collaborative pianist, organist, conductor, piano teacher, and singer.

Her love of choral music began at age seven as a chorister at Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, where she was later Dean's Organ Scholar, and between 2016-2018 the Sub Organist. During this time, she also served as Director of Music at St James Lower Hutt.

Heather holds a BMus in Musicology with First Class Honours from the New Zealand School of Music (where she also tutored keyboard skills and theory for several years), and a Bachelor of Arts in Latin from Victoria University of Wellington.

While in the UK for two years, Heather was Organ Scholar at Exeter Cathedral and Croydon Minster in London. She was also a Graduate Music Assistant at Whitgift School, South Croydon, an accompanist for Exeter University's Chapel Choir and Choral Society, played for a BBC Radio 3 live broadcast Evensong, and presented solo recitals at the Two Moors Festival in Devon.

Since returning to New Zealand in 2020, Heather has stepped in as Acting Director at St Barnabas Church Roseneath and has worked as an accompanist with choirs all over NZ – including Gisborne Choral Society, Blenheim Choral Society, Wairarapa Singers, Kapiti Chorale, Festival Singers, Local Vocals, Northern Chorale, Inspirare, and New Zealand Choral Federation. She was also a repetiteur for New Zealand Opera, and pianist for Wellington Chamber Orchestra.

She is currently the accompanist for Nota Bene, Queen Margaret College, and Wellington East Girls College.

CANTORIS

Soprano

Anne Amber
Catherine Conland
Christine Taylor
Emily MacKay
Felicity Bunny
Jocelyn Syme
Kathy Froy
Shirleen Oh
Suzanne Manning
Tajinder Kaur
Tatiana Bullmore
Viv Hurnen

Alto

Angela Corrigan
Anne Broome
Anne Carnus
Denise Nassenstein
Gail Milner
Mary MacGibbon
Ruth Sharman
Sue Barnett
Vivienne Coppell

Tenor

Joseph Fecteau
Louise Marsden
Michael David
Minto Fung
Sam Berkahn

Bass

Alasdair MacDonald
Benji Whiskin
CJ Pearce
David Crabbe
Jean-Michel Carnus
Peter Whiskin

2025 CANTORIS CONCERTS

Invitation to Love

Date: September 2025 (date TBC)
Time: 7.30PM
Venue: Wellington (venue TBC)

Christmas Concert

Date: Late November/Early December 2025
Time: 7.30PM
Venue: Wellington (venue TBC)

IMPORTANT NOTE:
Concert dates and venues are subject to change. Please check our website from time to time or follow us on social media for updates.

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CANTORIS

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