

**Glen Eira City Choir**

**with**

**Bendigo Chorale**

# **Mozart**

**Sancta Maria**

**Laudate Dominum**

# **Requiem**

**Saturday 30 May 2026 at 2.30pm**

**St Andrew's Anglican Church**

**228 New St, Brighton**

# PROGRAM

*Mozart.*

Sancta Maria from *Litanie Lauretanae*, K109

Laudate Dominum from *Vesperae solennes de Confessore*, K339

Lisa Robinson, soprano solo

*Requiem in D minor*, K. 626

**Conductor:** Elena Varshavskya

**Organist:** Hugh Fullarton

**Soloists:** Lisa Robinson, soprano

Chloe James, mezzo

Nicholas Sheppard, tenor

Christian Smith, bass



**Sopranos:** Judith Aldridge, Helen Bryce, Halina Dymek, Ling Huang, Jennifer Hyams, Sue Polites, Margaret Ricardo, Anne Shepherd, Catherine Shkolnik, Betty Spencer, Steffie Wallace, Amanda Webb, Julia Williams

**Altos:** April Blackwell, Helen Cliffe, Anne Cole, Iris Felstead, Christine Gamble, Caroline Giles, Denise Grocke AO, Alison Groh, Rosemary Harmer, Irene Havryluk-Davies, Kathy Hope, Helen Jenny, Natasha Layton, Valerie McDonald, Carol Middleton, Barbara Overbury, Jane Patrick, Annette Robinson, Meredith Rogers, Hazel Wilson

**Tenors:** Stuart Allen, John Dunham, Alex Hovy, Ross Walker

**Basses:** Sam Bateman, Colin Nicholson, John Norman, Geoff Peters, David Peters, Dougal Richardson, Michael Skillington.

**Life Members:** Jane Elton Brown OAM, John Dunham, Hazel Wilson.



**Sopranos:** Alison Apostolou, Jan Donnelly, Rita Hach, Lorraine Jones, Bev Leeson, Dawn Moncrieff, Juliana Rickard, Janet Thomas, Barb Tippett, Leisbeth van Emmerick

**Altos:** Sandy Birch, Lily Davidson, Valerie Hall

**Tenors:** Chris Ball, Paul Bussey, Brendan Grinter, Fred Kelly, David Wright, OAM

**Basses:** John Clancey, Ian Smith.

**Elena Varshavskya**, conductor, graduated from Moscow State P. I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory with Honors in 2002 majoring in choral conducting. While studying at the conservatory, she was a member of the Moscow Conservatory Chamber Choir and participated in international choral music competitions and festivals, both in Russia and abroad touring Italy, Germany, Austria and Poland. In 2002 Elena was the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Chamber Choir “Lad” which successfully toured Greece, Germany and Finland and received gold and silver awards at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Johannes Brahms Choir Competition, Wernigerode, Germany in 2005. In 2006 she started working in the Russian Radio and Television Big Academic Choir as a singer and an assistant to the Artistic Director. In 2011 Elena became Musical Director of Bendigo Chorale where she directed and conducted many concerts for the choir in Bendigo, Echuca and Melbourne and participated in projects with David Kram (More Than Opera) and Victorian Opera. In 2020 Elena joined the Glen Eira City Choir as Musical Director. Elena has conducted the Glen Eira City Choir for Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Rheinberger *Stabat Mater*, Haydn’s *Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo*, and Karl Jenkins’ *Requiem*. She has introduced new works by Rutter, Langlais, Lauridsen and Gershwin to the choir repertoire. She is also Director of the Choral Studio *Harmony Children’s Choir*.

**Hugh Fullarton** FRCO ARCM is an Australian organist, pianist, conductor, composer, and improviser. He has established a significant reputation for his dynamic performances, compositions, and fluency across diverse musical genres. He studied pipe organ with internationally renowned John O’Donnell at the University of Melbourne, receiving the highest marks in performance in his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and winning a number of prizes. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, one of only a handful of Australians to have been awarded this pre-eminent diploma over the last few decades. Hugh also holds an Associate Diploma in Organ Performance from the Royal College of Music, London. As organist or pianist, he has appeared with King’s College Choir Cambridge, Winchester Cathedral Choir, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, The Consort of Melbourne, The Sydney Chamber Choir, Trinity College Choir at The University of Melbourne, The Australian Boys Choir, and The Australian Choral Symposium, amongst a host of other local ensembles. He has performed as an organ soloist throughout Australia and England, and has had solo recitals broadcast on ABC FM and 3MBS FM.

Lyric soprano **Lisa Anne Robinson** began her formal musical training at the age of 14. Supported by numerous scholarships, she completed her tertiary studies at leading Australian institutions and has since amassed well over 100 prizes, awards, and scholarships. Her major accolades include the Tait Memorial Trust Grant, the Mozarteum Salzburger Festspiele Prize, the Opera Foundation Australia Award, the Australian National Liederfest, the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship, the Herald-Sun Aria, and Australian Singer of the Year.

In 2007, Lisa relocated to the United Kingdom, where she performed leading roles with prominent companies including The Royal Opera House, English Touring Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, Iford Arts, Opera Della Luna, London Festival Opera, and the Gilbert & Sullivan Company. She made her Royal Opera House debut in 2011 as Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* in the Gramophone Award-winning production of *Il Trittico*, conducted by Antonio Pappano and directed by Richard Jones. Since returning to Melbourne, she has focused on recital, oratorio, and concert work. She continues to enjoy collaborations with the Glen Eira City Choir, having first performed with them in Mozart’s *Requiem* in June 2006. A dedicated educator, she leads choral programs, presents masterclasses, adjudicates eisteddfods, and mentors students, many of whom now pursue successful musical careers.

**Chloe James** is an Australian mezzo-soprano based in Melbourne. She is the 2026 recipient of the Jo Horgan and Peter Wetenhall Opera Scholarship and the Valma Allaway Opera Society Scholarship with Melba Opera Trust. An alumna of Opera Scholars Australia, she was the winner of the Alliance Française Prize in their 2024 Art Song Competition. Most recently, she was awarded the Alan McArthur Memorial Award in the 2026 Liederfest. Chloe has performed frequently with Victorian Opera, featuring in their production of *Boojum* (Cora), *English Eccentrics* (various roles), *Parrwang Lifts the Sky* (Mrs Waa), *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* (Scientist 1), *The Pirates of Penzance and Abduction* (ensemble). In 2025, she featured as Raby Carmichael and Jane Shields in the World Premiere of Stefan Cassomeno's *Eva* in the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. Concert appearances include Kodály's *Missa Brevis* (University of Melbourne), Karl Jenkin's *Requiem* (Glen Eira City Choir) and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* (Opera Scholars Australia). Chloe holds a Bachelor of Music (Classical Voice) and a Master of Music (Opera Performance) from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. Her performance credits included *Hansel* (*Hänsel und Gretel*), *Second Lady* (*Die Zauberflöte*), *Miss Todd* (*The Old Maid and the Thief*) and *Cobweb* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

**Nicholas Sheppard** is a singer, actor, and writer from Melbourne, Australia. He graduated from the Melbourne Conservatorium with a Master's degree in Opera in 2022. Performance highlights include *The Marriage of Figaro* (Count Almaviva), *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Pluto), *The Selfish Giant* (The Giant, Wind), *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Abduction*, *The Old Maid and The Thief* (Bob), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Demetrius) and *Little Women* (John Brooke). Nicholas is currently a rising artist with the Australian Contemporary Opera Company, and studies under the vocal tutelage of Christina Henson Hayes. Nicholas has sung in many places around the world, from bush doof music festivals to churches and cathedrals, and the operatic stage. Outside of singing, he is receiving mentorship with Ali McGregor through FLUXUS Opera Lab to develop his own work, and will have a small role in *The Storm Queen*, a full-length feature film that is shooting this year.

Melbourne-born baritone **Christian Smith** holds a Bachelor of Music (Hons.) from the University of Melbourne. A versatile and accomplished vocalist, he was the runner-up in the 2019 Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria competition. Christian has had the privilege of performing in the UK, where he sang with the Christ Church Cathedral Choir and toured with the Queen's College Choir, Oxford. His international experience includes being a soloist at the 2018 London Festival of Contemporary Church Music at St Pancras Church and performing as the bass soloist for *Messiah* in 2019 with the London Mozart Players at the Croydon Minster. In Australia, Christian has been a featured soloist in significant premieres, including Stefan Cassomenos' *Dixit Dominus* with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic and his opera *Eva* at the 2025 Port Fairy Spring Music Festival, *Requiem for the End of Time* with Plexus at the Melbourne Recital Centre in 2019 and the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival in 2023. He also premiered Cassomenos' opera *Eva* at the 2025 Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. Beyond the stage, Christian is a passionate mathematics teacher at Melbourne Girls Grammar School in South Yarra, where he has been inspiring students since 2019. An avid squash player, he balances a love for sport with a dedication to the arts.

*Glen Eira City Choir acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today.  
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.*

## ABOUT MOZART AND HIS REQUIEM

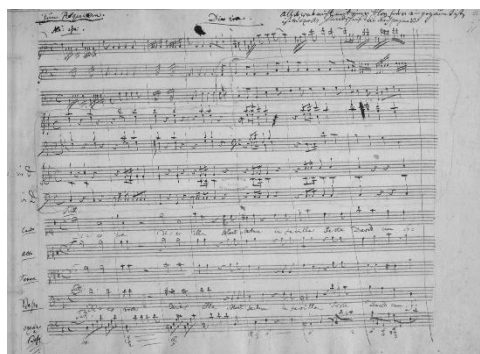


**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was born on 27 January 1756, making this year the 270th anniversary of his birth. He died on December 5, 1791, at the age of 35, having left his final major work, the *Requiem*, unfinished. Despite its age of 235 years, the *Requiem* is still widely performed and admired around the world. Wolfgang was a child prodigy, renowned for his extraordinary auditory memory and composition skill. At the age of eight, he composed his first symphony, K16, playing the notes on the clavichord while his father Leopold transcribed. Both Wolfgang and his sister, Maria-anna (Nannerl), were regularly taken on tours by their father across Germany, Italy, France and the UK.

From the age of 17, Wolfgang Mozart held a range of significant positions, both in Salzburg and at the Viennese court. In 1782, he married Constanze, and together they had six children, although only two survived past infancy. In 1791, Mozart composed some of his most celebrated works. These included the operas *La clemenza di Tito* and *The Magic Flute*, his final piano concerto (No. 27, K. 595 in B ♭), the Clarinet Concerto K. 622, the last of his string quintets (K. 614 in E ♭), the motet *Ave verum corpus* K. 618, and half of the *Requiem* K. 626.

In September 1791, while in Prague for the premiere of *La clemenza di Tito*, Mozart fell ill. By 20 November, his condition worsened and upon returning to Vienna he became bedridden, experiencing swelling of his face and hands, a rash, pain, and vomiting. He died at home on 5 December 1791, aged 35, and was buried in a common grave at St. Marx Cemetery outside Vienna on 7 December, in accordance with local custom. Though many theories have been proposed regarding the cause of his death, including rheumatic fever and streptococcal infection, it is clear he was not poisoned by Salieri, who often conducted Mozart's works. Mozart's prolific output included 41 symphonies, 18 piano sonatas, 27 piano concertos, 5 violin concertos, and 22 operas or musical dramas, among numerous other compositions.

**The Requiem (1791)** was commissioned by Count Franz von Walsegg-Stuppach, an Austrian nobleman, in memory of his late wife Anna. Mozart worked on the Requiem from October until his death on 5 December 1791, composing as far as the first eight bars of the "Lacrymosa" before passing away. The first partial performance of the Requiem, featuring only the *Introitus* and *Kyrie*, took place on 10 December 1791 at Mozart's memorial service in St. Michael's Church, Vienna. To mark the one-year anniversary of his death, Constanze, Mozart's widow,



commissioned Franz Xaver Süssmayr, Mozart's student, to complete the remainder of the work. Süssmayr composed the *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei* – likely with reference to Mozart's sketches – and orchestrated the later sections. Notably, the final section, *Cum Sancto Spiritu* is an exact replica of the music of the opening *Kyrie* as written by Mozart. The first complete performance of the *Requiem* took place on 2 January 1793, as a benefit concert for Constanze. Later, the work was revised and first published in print in 1800 – nine years after Mozart's death.

Denise Grocke, AO, Concert Manager, Glen Eira City Choir

# **GLEN EIRA CITY CHOIR INC. 1946-2026**

## ***EIGHTY YEARS OF HARMONIC HISTORY***

Glen Eira City Choir, a non-auditioning community choir, began life in 1946 as the City of Caulfield Philharmonic Society under the baton of David Plummer. He was a very energetic man who was ambitious for his new choir, and while his aim of accruing one hundred singers was never quite realised, in his twenty-nine years at the helm he moulded his choristers into a well-respected and very active part of the Melbourne musical landscape.

Sixty-nine choristers performed in the first concert on 21 October 1946 and numbers increased during David Plummer's era to just over eighty. They regularly performed in the Four Choirs Festival in the Melbourne Town Hall with other major choirs and, as grateful recipients of annual grants from the Caulfield City Council, played an active role in civic ceremonies and community events such as the yearly Carols by Candlelight in Caulfield Park. In its early decades, the choir took part in many historical celebrations, such as the Queen's Coronation festivities and the Opening Ceremony of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. The choristers also regularly competed in Eisteddfods and were asked by local churches and community groups to perform at fundraising concerts.

In 1954, the name was changed to Caulfield City Choir. The feeling was that the original title was not only quite a mouthful (described as 'cumbersome for oral and printed use' and 'a waste of time and space') but also created an impression of 'highbrow-ness' which put off many a potential audience member. As with all community choirs, remaining solvent was a constant concern and finding the balance in repertoire that would both satisfy choristers and attract audiences was a priority. The choir's concerts took on a regular pattern – the early concert, around May, was a serious classical choral work often performed in conjunction with another choir; the August/September concert had a lighter, more popular vibe; and the Christmas concert speaks for itself. This pattern has survived, for the most part, to this day. And the name of the choir changed again in 1996 to Glen Eira City Choir, reflecting the change in the local council's title and acknowledging the continued support of that council.

After David Plummer resigned in 1975, the choir churned through seven conductors in the next twenty years, the most stable time being Douglas Heywood's nine-year tenure between 1983 and 1991. Jane Elton Brown's nineteen years at the helm from 2001-2019 was another significantly settled period in the choir's history. Jane's motto was 'Striving for Perfection.' She was a disciplined task-master, and her phenomenal experience in conducting choirs, at Methodist Ladies' College and with community choirs such as Star Chorale, was of huge benefit to the Glen Eira City Choir.

Each conductor has brought with them their own musical contacts, and this is reflected in the supporting artists featured in choir concert programmes. In David Plummer's day (1946-75) there were regular collaborations with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society and RAAF Band; Douglas Heywood (1983-91) teamed the choir up with the Camberwell Chorale and the Camberwell Camerata Orchestra, both of which he was conductor, and his son Thomas performed piano and violin solos in choir concerts from the age of ten, then later often accompanied from the organ loft; John Ferguson (1994-5), as Director of music at Scotch College, introduced the Scotch Connection Wind Quintet (of which he was a member, playing French Horn), a Jazz ensemble from Scotch, and the Glen Pro-Musica Chamber Orchestra, which he also conducted; Elena Varshavskaya (2020-) has enabled us to collaborate with the Bendigo Chorale and Choral Studio *Harmony* Children's Choir, as well as her talented son, Erik, playing violin and singing solos.

The choir has also been blessed with a succession of wonderful accompanists throughout its eighty years. Joan Shewan accompanied concerts for nearly thirty years, from the 1980's through to the 2010's and acted as assistant conductor when required. Sue Goessling followed Joan for the next five years and we are now enjoying Berta Brozgul's exquisite playing at our practice sessions. Berta has accompanied us since 2019.

COVID-19 took its toll on the choir, as it did with everything else. Unable to physically meet during lockdown periods, many choristers joined a monthly Zoom meeting where they had the chance to keep up contacts and get to know their new conductor, Elena Varshavskaya, who had the misfortune of being appointed to the role only a few weeks before life as we knew it took a serious battering. At the end of 2021, a much-depleted choir of around a dozen singers gave a small Christmas concert to a handful of audience members. In June 2022, twenty-three choristers from Glen Eira City Choir joined with thirty from the Bendigo Chorale for a performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria in D Major* and some works by Rutter, Faure, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and Gjeilo, with snippets from Handel's *Messiah*.

Currently, once a year, we join with the Bendigo Chorale to sing a large serious work, giving one concert in Bendigo and one in Melbourne. Since COVID, we have performed the abovementioned Vivaldi, Haydn's *Missa Brevis*, Rheinberger's *Stabat Mater*, Karl Jenkins' *Requiem*, and this year's offering, Mozart's *Requiem*. Lighter repertoire over the decades has included songs from musicals, folk songs, jazz and blues, music from the British Isles and America, Gilbert and Sullivan, and popular songs from various eras.

We are now a healthy and happy choir of over fifty voices, very much enjoying Elena Varshavskaya's incredible talent, patience and her delightful sense of humour, and looking forward to more decades of happy music-making.

Rosemary Harmer, Honorary Secretary, Glen Eira City Choir

## CHOIR FUNDING

Glen Eira City Choir is a voluntary, non-profit organisation run by a committee of management elected each year. We do not receive subsidies from government and are reliant on our Choir members paying fees towards weekly rehearsal costs (conductor, accompanist, venue hire and music) and concert operating costs (conductor, accompanists, soloists and instrumentalists). Additional costs associated with concerts are venue hire, copyright fees and printing. We wish to keep the cost of tickets for our loyal audience as low as possible and to enable as many people as possible to enjoy beautiful music, hence we rely on sponsorship, donations and bequests to supplement our funds. Any financial assistance you are able to give will be gratefully received. Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Please donate by bank transfer to:

Glen Eira City Choir Inc.      BSB 633 000      Account: 216593251

Include [your name] in the description

Email the choir: [admin@gleneiracitychoir.org.au](mailto:admin@gleneiracitychoir.org.au) with your name, date of deposit and amount deposited. A receipt will be emailed to you.

For donations over \$100, we will contact you regarding an acknowledgement in future programs.





## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our next concert will be the **Christmas Concert** with the Choral Studio *Harmony* Children's Choir:  
**Saturday 5 December 2026 at 2:30pm**  
at **St Andrew's Brighton**



## JOIN THE CHOIR

Rehearsals are held on Mondays 7:45-9:30pm  
at St Andrew's Church, 228 New St, Brighton.

Enquiries: [admin@gleneiracitychoir.org.au](mailto:admin@gleneiracitychoir.org.au)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Whelan Blooms
- Elena Varshavskaya (Conductor)
- Berta Brozgul (Rehearsal Accompanist)
- Glen Eira City Council
- St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton
- Golden Days Radio
- Buxton Real Estate
- Marshall White Real Estate

## GLEN EIRA CITY CHOIR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President:	Penny Paton
Vice-President:	Geoff Peters
Secretary:	Rosemary Harmer
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