

MARCH 2026, Volume 20, Number 1
Viva Vivaldi - ticket bookings now open

Noosa Chorale PRESENTS

VIVA VIVALDI

Kim Kirkman conducts choir, orchestra and renowned soloists performing Vivaldi's Gloria and other works by the composer.

Friday 22 May, 7pm | Saturday 23 May, 2pm

Tickets: \$49 adults, \$40 students

Bookings: The J Noosa
07 5329 6560 | www.thej.com.au

thej

Viva Vivaldi

64 Noosa Chorale singers

3 outstanding soloists

12 orchestral musicians

Conducted by Kim Kirkman

Friday 22 May at 7pm, with interval

Saturday 23 May at 2pm, with interval

The J Theatre, Noosa Junction

www.thej.com.au; 07 5329 6560

Tickets: \$49 (Students \$40)

[Click here to book tickets](#)

Vivaldi, the Red Priest

by Cal Webb

On the day that Antonio Vivaldi was born in 1678, an earthquake shook Venice. But the musical literati of Europe at the time could have had no inkling that this seismic event coincided with the birth of a musical genius. Vivaldi's father, Giovanni Battista Vivaldi, having left behind his job as a barber to take up playing violin professionally, probably taught young Antonio to play violin and took the brilliant young violinist with him on gigs playing around Venice.

(At right, this anonymous portrait from around 1723 is generally assumed to be of Vivaldi. As was customary at the time, he is wearing a powdered wig.)



At 15 years old, Antonio began his studies to become a priest, becoming ordained 10 years later. His curly red hair assured him the nickname *il Prete Rosso*, "The Red Priest", even though he quickly gave up celebrating mass because of the poor health that dogged him all his life. It is most likely that he suffered from debilitating asthma that left him breathless and weak, but didn't prevent him from achieving virtuosic mastery of the violin.

(At left, actor Steven Cree playing the title role in the 2009 film "The Red Priest", directed by Liana Marabini. Unfortunately, the film received very unfavourable reviews.)

His brilliance as a violinist helped secure his appointment around 1703 as *maestro di violino* (violin master), and subsequently as choirmaster, at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, a home for female orphans whose musical education flourished under his tutelage. The most talented among them stayed and became members of the Ospedale's renowned orchestra and choir. Vivaldi continued his work at the Ospedale for the next thirty years.

At right, this engraving by Francois Morellon de la Cave, was published in the 1725 edition of Vivaldi's Op.8, 1725)



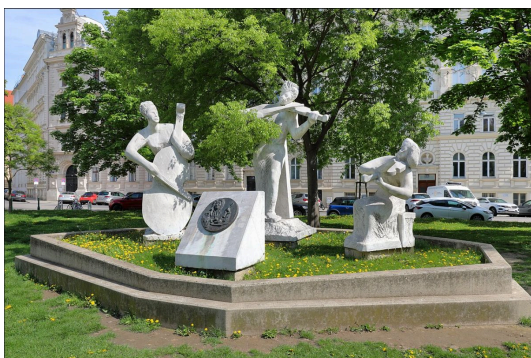
He was extraordinarily prolific as a composer. Amongst the 500 concertos and at least 49 operas that he composed, perhaps the most famous of his works are the four pieces comprising *Le Quattro Stagione* (The Four Seasons), written between 1716 and 1720. It was at the Ospedale that he composed most of his choral works, including the magnificent *Gloria in D major* (RV589).

Some depictions of Vivaldi have portrayed him as a scandalous figure, a debauched cleric who used his music to seduce young women seeking entry into the musical world. Even if this were so, it would not have been unusual at the time for an ordained priest to have families and mistresses – indeed even the Popes of the time were known to have illegitimate children. But there is no concrete evidence that Vivaldi was a scurrilous promiscuous rogue. Indeed, he was known to be deeply religious, and somewhat pious, although also rather vain and boastful of his musical talent.

Unfortunately, his musical reputation in his later years had started spiralling downwards as fashions changed. By the time of his death in Vienna in 1741, both his reputation and his income had hit almost rock-bottom. He was given a simple funeral and buried in a pauper's grave, his name being recorded at the time as a secular priest rather than a musician or composer. His grave was lost when the Vienna Technical University was built over the graveyard.

During the remainder of the eighteenth century, Vivaldi remained almost forgotten about until, in the early 1800s, a group of German musicologists uncovered evidence of the enormous influence he had had on the compositional work of Johann Sebastian Bach during Bach's formative years.

The subsequent discovery of large collections of forgotten Vivaldi works, followed by further finds of his vast unknown choral repertoire, signalled a resurgence of interest in his work. His most famous choral work, the "Gloria", was performed in Italy for the first time in over two centuries in 1937.



Vivaldi was lifted from obscurity in the twentieth century and is now acknowledged as one of the greatest composers of all time, the superman of the Baroque.

(At left, the monument to Antonio Vivaldi, located on the Rooseveltplatz in Vienna. This group of sculptures is carved in white Carrara marble: three women playing double bass and two violins, with the relief of Vivaldi in front of them.)

Noosa Chorale, under the baton of maestro Kim Kirkman, will present a selection of Vivaldi's choral compositions including the exquisite Gloria in D major, with three outstanding soloists and an orchestral ensemble who will also perform several Vivaldi instrumental pieces. "Viva Vivaldi" on 22 and 23 May at The J Theatre promises to be an unmissable experience in the musical calendar this year.

Bookings are now open – [Click here to book](#)



Choir rehearsals in lively swing

The picture at left definitely doesn't look like a choir rehearsal in full swing. Indeed not! This is Noosa Chorale accompanist Janet Brewer and husband Warren on the Woodgate part of their well-deserved holiday.

During Janet's break, pianist and erstwhile Chorale tenor Olena Kruta, seen below at the keyboard, is accompanying the choir's rehearsals which are powering through the Vivaldi works at a cracking pace under the masterful guidance of Kim Kirkman.



Leonard Cohen heads south

Noosa Chorale bass singer Jonathan Anstock heads south in March to take his acclaimed show "Leonard Cohen: His Life, Ladies and Lovers" to the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

Jonathan has played his cabaret-styled show up and down the Queensland coast to rave reviews over the last few years.

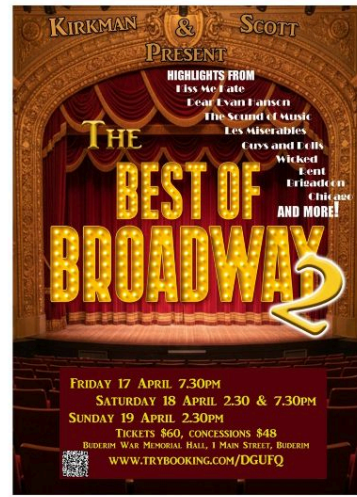
We wish him well as he wows Festival audiences with his brilliant reincarnation of the great Leonard Cohen.



Notice of AGM

Noosa Chorale Incorporated will hold its Annual General Meeting on Monday 16th March 2026 commencing at 8.30pm at the J Theatre, 60 Noosa Drive, Noosa Heads.

Other local music events coming up



[Check out our concert programme](#) [Book concert tickets at The J Theatre](#)
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