

Ms Yvonne Kenny AM

The degree of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*) was conferred upon Yvonne Kenny by the Chancellor Emeritus Professor Dame Leonie Kramer AC at a ceremony held on 24 June 1999.

At a dinner held in MacLaurin Hall after the graduation ceremony, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Donald MacDonald, and Artistic Director of the Australian Bandenburg Orchestra, Paul Dyer, each paid tributes to Ms Kenny.



Yvonne Kenny and Chancellor Emeritus Professor Dame Leonie Kramer AC, *photo*, Karen Mork, 'The University of Sydney News', 29 July 1999, University of Sydney Archives.

Citation

Chancellor

I have the honour to present Miss Yvonne Kenny AM for the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*).

Yvonne Kenny graduated from the University of Sydney in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree. She planned to become a biochemist.

While studying for her degree, she took singing lessons at the Conservatorium of Music, and thus took the first step towards what became a remarkable musical career. When she was twenty-two, she was awarded a scholarship to study at the La Scala Opera School in Milan, and, in 1975, she won the Kathleen Ferrier Prize in London. She made her London debut that year, first at the Queen Elizabeth Hall singing Donizetti's *Rosamunda* and then at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Since then she has sung in the leading European opera houses, the Vienna Staatsoper, La Scala, the Paris Opera, and La Fenice in Venice, as well as in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Zurich and Glyndebourne. Her roles have ranged from the pert little page Oscar in the *Masked Ball* to the world-weary Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*; from the Biblical heroine Deborah to Massenet's wayward Manon.

Yvonne Kenny has become one of the most outstanding international artists of our time. Her poise and presence have helped to create impressively rich characters, particularly in the operas of Handel and Mozart. These performances are powerful and arresting, yet moving and expressive.

To listen to some of her favourite songs - by Faure, Franck and Ravel - is to enter into an enchanted world. Even the most intricate music is elucidated by her sensitivity to subtle changes of mood and the delicacy of her responses. Her expressive voice and deep understanding bring alive the individual qualities of the composers whose work she performs.

Miss Kenny has consistently produced performances which are both musically beautiful and dramatic, notably in recent productions by the Australian Opera, a vividly individualized Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and a memorably seductive Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar*.

Her rich sound and exquisite shades of vocal colour have been recorded in an extensive discography and many video productions. She appeals to a wide audience, as some 50 best-selling recordings indicate. She was the voice of Dame Nellie Melba in a TV mini-series and her Handel Arias have made her one of Australia's best-known classical singers.

She is a trustee of the Australian Music Foundation in London and has a strong interest in Australian music and in the training of young artists, some of whom she recently coached at the University of Sydney's National Voice Centre.

Yvonne Kenny is one of the most distinguished artists of her generation and, in recognition of her services to music, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1989.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting Miss Yvonne Kenny AM for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*) and I invite you to confer the degree upon her.