

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE0559

## Castles, Amy Eliza

(1880 - 1951)

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**Born** 25 July, 1880, Melbourne Victoria Australia

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**Died** 19 November, 1951, Fitzroy Victoria Australia

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**Occupation** Opera singer

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### Summary

Born into a musical family, soprano Amy Castles made her Melbourne, Victoria, debut at the annual meeting of the Austral Salon in 1899. She studied in Paris with Madame Marchesi and then Jacques Bouhy before appearing with Ada Crossley and Clara Butt at St James's Hall, London in 1901. After completing further study Castles sang at the Queen's Hall concerts in London and gave a command performance before King Edward VII in 1906. Castles then appeared in *Hamlet* at Cologne, Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Faust*. She also took part in the Harrison tours of Great Britain and sang with conductors Hans Richter, (Sir) Henry Wood and Landon Ronald. Following her tour of Australia for J & N Tait, in 1909, Castles performed in the Australian premiere of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* for J C Williamson before returning to Europe. At the outbreak of war Castles returned to Australia where she completed a tour of the capital cities. She made her American debut at Carnegie Hall, New York in 1917 as well as giving concerts for sick and wounded soldiers and opening her Manhattan home to visiting Australians. With the Williamson Grand Opera Company Castles toured Australia in 1919 and again in 1925 on a concert tour managed by her brother George and including her sister Eileen.

## Events

### **1915 - 1915**

After the outbreak of war Castles was obliged to leave Austria and returned to Australia to tour the capital cities

### **1917 - 1917**

Made her American debut at Carnegie Hall, New York

### **1919 - 1919**

Toured Australia with the Williamson Grand Opera Company

### **1925 - 1925**

Returned to Sydney for a concert tour of Australasia which was managed by her brother George and included her sister Eileen

### **1930 - 1931**

Visited Hollywood to take part in a 'talkie'

### **1970 - 1970**

Made her debut at the annual meeting of the Austral Salon, Melbourne

### **1970 - 1970**

Performed in a local production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* directed by her teacher E Allan Bindley

### **2001 - 2001**

Made her first London appearance at a St James's Hall concert with Ada Crossley and Clara Butt

### **1902 - 1902**

Returned to Australia to tour for J C Williamson

### **1905 - 1905**

Reappeared in London at Queen's Hall concerts

### **1906 - 1906**

Gave a command performance before King Edward VII

### **1907 - 1907**

Made her European debut at Cologne in Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet*

### **2009 - 2009**

Returned to Australia for a four-and-a-half month tour of seventy-two towns for J & N Tait

### **1911 - 1911**

Returned to London for a series of Chappell concerts

### **1912 - 1912**

Accepted an offer of a four-year contract from the Imperial Opera in Vienna and was appointed chamber singer to the Imperial Court

## Published resources

### Resource Section

Castles, Amy Eliza (1880 - 1951), Radic, Maureen Therese, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070595b.htm>

### Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia 1950, Alexander, Joseph A, 1950

Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

### Book

"Footprints on the sands of time" : Bendigo's citizens, the 1909 Bendigonian annual and community history, Brownrigg, Jeff, 2002

A New Melba?: The Tragedy of Amy Castles, Brownrigg, Jeff, 2006

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### State Library of Victoria

Illuminated address, 1911 [manuscript].

### National Library of Australia

[J.C. Williamson scrapbooks of music and theatre programmes, Sydney and Melbourne, 1905-1921] [microform]

[Biographical cuttings on Amy Castles, singer, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

### Author Details

Anne Heywood

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