

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** IMP0003

## Melba, Nellie

(1861 - 1931)

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**Nationality** Australian

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**Born** 19 May, 1861, Richmond Victoria Australia

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**Died** 23 February, 1931, Darlinghurst New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Opera singer

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### Summary

Dame Nellie Melba (née Helen Porter Mitchell) was an internationally renowned opera singer, celebrated for her magnificent coloratura (soprano) voice.

### Details

Melba's musical training began in Melbourne at Presbyterian Ladies' College, and continued in France under Mathilde Marchesi. Her operatic debut was in Brussels, in 1887.

Melba went on to perform in London, Paris and New York before returning to Australia to tour in 1902. She also toured Australia in 1909, 1911, 1924 and 1928. She founded a women's singing school in Melbourne and wrote a singing manual and a memoir.

Melba was appointed to The Order of the British Empire, Dame Grand Cross (Civil) on 3 June 1927 for services to Australia. She was also appointed to The Order of the British Empire, Dames Commander, on 15 March 1918 for giving fund-raising concerts to assist war wounded during the First World War.

### Events

#### 2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

#### 1918 - 1918

#### 1927 - 1927

### Published resources

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Victorian Women's Roll of Honour: Women Shaping the Nation, 2001,  
<https://herplacemuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2001-Honour-Roll-Booklet.pdf>

#### Resource Section

Melba, Nellie (1861-1931), Davidson, Jim, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100464b.htm>

### Book

Nellie Melba : the first Australian diva, Magee, Adrian, 1995

Popular Australian singers from the early years of sound recording [sound recording]. Volume 1., c1988

Nellie Melba, a contemporary review, Moran, William R., 1995

Nellie Melba : the legend still lives, Vickery, Marian, 1982

Red plush and black velvet : the story of Dame Nellie Melba and her times, Wechsberg, Joseph, 1962

Melba method, Melba, Nellie, Dame, 1926

Melodies and memories, Melba, Nellie, Dame; Beverley Nichols, 1925

Papers of Dame Nellie Melba, National Library of Australia

100 great Australians, Macklin, Robert, 1983

Evensong, Beverley Nichols, 1932

Australian nurses since Nightingale 1860-1990, Burchill, Elizabeth, 1992

The Shire of Lilydale and its military heritage : the First World War and its effect on the community, McAleer, A J, c1995

Victoria, the first century : an historical survey, compiled by the Historical Sub-committee of the Centenary Celebrations Council, 1934

The Complete Book of Great Australian Women: Thirty-six women who changed the course of Australia, De Vries, Susanna, 2003

#### **Book Section**

Melodies and memories; introduction and notes by John Cargher, Melba, Nellie, Dame; Beverley Nichols, 1980

#### **Edited Book**

Dame Nellie Melba, Franklin Peterson, 1915

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

Double Time: Women in Victoria - 150 Years, Lake, Marilyn and Kelly, Farley, 1985

#### **Souvenir**

Dame Nellie Melba and J.C. Williamson Ltd. : grand opera season, June-July-August 1924, souvenir, 1924

#### **Newspaper Article**

Dame Nellie Melba: Death in Sydney, 1931,  
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4264309>

Death of Dame Nellie Melba: Australia's Greatest Singer, 1931,  
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16756845>

Obituary [Dame Nellie Melba], 1931

Melba's keys to past, O'Connor, Shaunagh, 2003

#### **Site Exhibition**

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

## Archival resources

### **State Library of Victoria**

Letters relating to Australia, 1856-1889 [manuscript].

Biographical file of information on Dame Nellie Melba, ca. 1961. [manuscript].

Scrapbook, ca. 1911-1937. [manuscript].

Letters, ca. 1916. [manuscript].

Papers, [manuscript].

Scrapbook, 1909-1931. [manuscript].

Papers, 1845-1870 [manuscript].

### **National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection**

Account book, 1902-1903 [manuscript]

Miscellaneous papers re Caroline Chisholm and Dame Nellie Melba, c1833-c1953 [microform]

Papers of Fritz Bennicke Hart 1898-1951 [manuscript]

Collection of papers relating to Dame Nellie Melba, 1911-1928 [manuscript]

Family papers, ca. 1869 - ca. 1945 [manuscript]

Correspondence, [19--] [manuscript]

The discovery of a Nellie Melba archive 1971 [manuscript]

Papers of Dame Nellie Melba, circa 1908-1970 [manuscript]

Papers of Dame Nellie Melba 1895-1923 [manuscript]

Scrapbooks 1924 [manuscript]

Letters and diary, 1911-1931 [manuscript]

### **Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection**

Nellie Melba papers, 1901-1903

[Collection of pamphlets containing souvenir concert programmes and Australian biographies.]

### **Performing Arts Museum**

Van Straten Collection

Cochran Collection

Papers of Lemmone, John, 1861-1949.

### **Grainger Museum**

Percy Grainger: outgoing correspondence

Correspondence: Nellie Melba to Rose and Percy Grainger

Correspondence: "Melba letters"

Correspondence: Letters between Percy Grainger and Nellie Melba

### **Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music**

Records of Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music

### **Author Details**

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