

# Choir's world-class act

Rod Bennett

HE once shared the stage with the great Luciano Pavarotti at a World Festival of Choirs event in Stockholm in 1999.

But Warriewood's Oreste Aquilina will appear at Cardinal Cerretti Chapel, St Patrick's Estate, on May 10 as part of the Manly Warringah Choir in *Celestial Harmonies*.

He has been singing tenor in this choir for the past five years.

"We only have about eight tenors," he said. "When I was approaching retirement I had to think about what I would do with my time."

So when that day came and he retired from the Australian Defence Force he decided to enlist with several choirs.

"The first was with the Combined Churches Choir, which annually performs Handel's *Messiah*," he said.

"The next was the Beethoven Society, the Macquarie University Singers and then Manly Warringah.

"I started doing some painting in my retirement, but there's no time for that now."

Aquilina came to Australia from Malta in 1956 and as well as working for the navy, has done



Oreste Aquilina, of Warriewood, will sing at Celestial Harmonies.

Picture: ANNIKA ENDERBORG AAZ87490

subtitling for SBS and some interpreting.

At the Cardinal Cerretti Chapel on May 10 the Manly Warringah Choir will perform Bach's *Christ Lay in Death's Dark Prison* cantata No. 4, Franz Schubert's *Mass in G* and *Unfinished Symphony No. 8* and Greig's *Holberg Suite*.

"Our conductor is very consistent and works us hard," he said. "But being part of this choir is also about mateship."

Following the Pavarotti experience, when Aquilina was selected as one of 10 singers representing Australia at the World Festival of Choirs, came another of his choral highlights – singing at the opening

ceremony of the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

"I was first on stage in Malta as a boy soprano, at about the age of seven," he said. "I distinctly remember singing a solo part in church (some years on) when my voice broke."

Doors open 7.30pm. Tickets \$35, concession \$30, children \$15. Phone 9971 5570 or 9982 4395.