



Raffaello Squarise was born in Vicenza, Italy, on 13 November 1856, the son of sculptor, David Squarise and an unknown mother. Raffaello studied violin and composition at the Liceo Musicale in Turin.

He emigrated to Melbourne in 1882, and after a 10 month tour with the Williamson, Garner & Musgrove opera company, he settled in Adelaide until 1889 when he was invited to Dunedin to lead the orchestra for the New Zealand & South Seas Exhibition.

He arrived in Dunedin on 29 October 1889 and quickly made an impression with his virtuoso skills with the violin and his success in leading the orchestra. He decided to settle in Dunedin, making a brief trip back to Adelaide before returning permanently with his wife Louise in June 1890.

By July, with pianist Arthur Barmeyer, he had opened the 'Otago Conservatorium of Music'. In March 1891 he was appointed conductor of St Joseph's Cathedral Choir until he was dismissed in August by Bishop Moran for appearing at a Masonic Lodge meeting. Only in January 1914 did he return to the Cathedral as choirmaster. A position he retained until 1921.

In March 1891 Squarise inaugurated a fortnightly series of chamber music concerts, usually featuring himself, Arthur Barmeyer, and other Dunedin musicians. He became conductor of the Dunedin Liedertafel for their 1893 and 1894 seasons, and founded the Citizens' Military band in 1893. In 1893 he directed a season of *The Barber of Seville* at the Princess Theatre, and in 1894 directed performance of his own comic opera *Fabian*.

In 1904 Squarise founded the Dunedin Philharmonic Society Orchestra, which he regarded as 'a musical educator to the Dunedin public.' The group was very successful and over the years most of the players were his own pupils. Its concerts regularly attracted audiences of 1000. Until its demise in 1933 it performed many major works of Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Beethoven and Sibelius.

Popularly known as Signor Squarise, he was a colourful and energetic figure in Dunedin's musical history. On 15 April 1945 he died on a visit to Roxburgh. He is buried in Dunedin's Andersons bay Cemetery with his wife Louise who had predeceased him on 9 July 1941.