

VESPERS FOR MOTHER EARTH



40th ANNIVERSARY GALA
COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM
Sunday 23 June, 2024

**CITY
RECITAL
HALL**

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY



On behalf of the NSW Government and Create NSW, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to The Song Company on reaching its 40th Anniversary.

This remarkable milestone is a testament to your enduring commitment to excellence in vocal performance and your significant contributions to Australia's cultural life.

For four decades, The Song Company has not only showcased the extraordinary talents of Australian singers but also championed the works of home-grown composers, enriching our nation's artistic heritage.

We look forward to many more years of your innovative performances and continued success.

Congratulations once again on this outstanding achievement.

The Hon John Graham MLC
Special Minister of State
Minister for Roads
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy
Minister for Jobs and Tourism
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

WELCOME FROM THE CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

40 years of The Song Company – what a way to kick off our first year as Co-Artistic Directors! As we planned the 2024 concert season, we were keenly aware of the significance of this exciting opportunity. How could we best pay tribute to such an incredible legacy and showcase the immense contribution this ensemble of vocal soloists has made to Australian music?

A quick visit to the Australian Music Centre's website provides a glimpse. Just search 'vocal ensemble' and 'sextet'! Building on the initiatives of previous Artistic Directors, we are proud to continue the company's tradition of commissioning new works. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, private foundations, and government support, The Song Company has commissioned over 120 works in its 40-year history. While we can't showcase the full body of works, this program offers a snapshot of the music from each decade.

In 2023, The Song Company transitioned to an artist-led structure. Each singer brings a wealth of experience and a touch of their own stardust to the music-making process. With shared leadership from the individual singers within our ensemble, or by one of our expert Guest Directors, the creative possibilities for The Song Company's future programs are endless.

In the first half of the program, we wanted to pay tribute to the amazing 'stars' of The Song Company's rich 40-year history: the Artists who have lent their beautiful voices and incredible musicianship, the Artistic Directors and Guest Directors who have programmed so imaginatively, the composers whose works the company has brought into the Australian musical canon, the office staff who have tirelessly kept things running behind the scenes, the board and volunteers who have given their time and expertise, our donors, supporters, and you, our audience.

The second half is on a much larger scale than what we normally do. When Ross Edwards told us that his ambitious new work, *Vespers for Mother Earth*, was awaiting its first performance, it was an easy decision to feature this in our gala. This gave us a chance to include some of our musical friends from across the sector, including Ensemble Offspring (led by the indefatigable Claire Edwardes), Genevieve Lang, and of course, Roland Peelman.

Music ensembles are nothing without their audiences and supporters. In paying tribute to the tremendous creative output of the ensemble, we also extend our deep gratitude to the audiences who have journeyed with us over these incredible 40 years.

Jessica O'Donoghue
& Amy Moore



IMAGE CREDITS

Cover Image	Green Peas for Breakfast - Monica Higgins
Facing image	Oliver Miller
P 19	The Song Company collage: Keith Saunders
P 19	Ensemble Offspring: Keith Saunders
p 23	Fire Songs & Madrigals Image: Green Peas for Breakfast - Monica Higgins
Back cover	Oliver Miller

40 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN MUSIC

NEW WORKS & RECORDINGS

- 1984 The Song Company debut
- 1990 *Ekstasis* - Andrew Schultz premiere
- 1992 *Purgatori* - Michael Whiticker
Paradiso - Michael Whiticker
- 1993 **The Laughter of Mermaids** [CD]
- 1994 *The Burrow* - Michael Smetanin
Ficta - Elliott Gyger
War and Peace - Colin Bright
Revelations of Divine Love - Anne Boyd
- 1995 *FishTale* - Raffaele Marcellino
Funeral Rites - Vincent Plush
- 1996 **Josquin: The Secular Josquin** [CD]
- 1997 **Gone with the Waltz** - Elena Kats-Chernin
Quito [CD]
- 1998 *Data est Lux* - Andrew Schultz
- 1999 *The Rage Within* - Matthew Hindson
The Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior [CD]
- 2000 *Mater* - Elena Kats-Chernin
As a Lily [CD]
- 2001 *Paradise Unseen* - Nigel Butterley
Eat and be eaten - Jennifer Fowler
Pink Edges - Gerard Brophy
Bats' Ultrasound - Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen



The Song Company c. 1984
Back row: James Bonnefin, David Foley, Romola Tyrrell, Charles Coleman
Front row: Stephen Bennett, Narelle Tapping, Martin Cooke, Margaret Schindler

The 1970s were a transformative era for the arts in Australia, marked by the founding of the Australia Council for the Arts, the opening of the Sydney Opera House, and significant developments in the film industry. This vibrant period saw new musical initiatives, both commercial and classical, shaping the cultural landscape. One such initiative was the Leonine Consort, led by Charles Coleman, which showcased some of Australia's best young singers performing early and vocal chamber music from the 19th and 20th centuries.

In 1983, Peter Seymour, Artistic Director of the Sydney Philharmonia, invited Charles Coleman to direct a new professional vocal ensemble within the Sydney Philharmonia. Auditions were held across Australia in early 1984, and from over 100 applicants, an initial octet was formed, featuring Margaret Schindler, Romola Tyrrell, Susan Gotts, Narelle Tapping, James Bonnefin, Adrian Brand, Martin Cooke, and Stephen Bennett.

The Song Company made its debut in July 1984 at the Rothbury Estate winery in the Hunter Valley. As the group toured the country, their ambitions grew, leading to independence from the Sydney Philharmonia. By July 1985, The Song Company Pty Ltd was established as a legal entity.

By the end of its first year, The Song Company had presented several challenging programs, collaborated with the contemporary ensemble Flederman, started commissioning composers, and launched a schools touring program with Musica Viva in Schools. Notably, conductor David Porcelijn engaged the ensemble for performances at the 1986 Adelaide Festival. This marked a turning point, establishing The Song Company as a significant presence in the Australian music scene.

After Charles Coleman resigned due to ill health in 1988, the group transitioned to a sextet under John Grundy until Roland Peelman took over as Artistic Director in early 1990. Under Peelman's leadership, The Song Company built a reputation for its wide-ranging repertoire and expertise. Their focus on vocal consort music from the 16th and 17th centuries expanded to include medieval music and contemporary compositions.

The Song Company 1993
From Left: Jo Burton, Matthew Glasgow, Brett Weymark,
Jane Edwards, Penny Sharpe, Clive Birch, Roland Peelman



The group celebrated its 10th anniversary with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, performing works by Bach, Fauré, and a virtuosic new work, *Ficta*, by Elliott Gyger. For their 20th anniversary, they premiered Andrew Schultz's *Song of Songs*, beginning a collaboration with indigenous artist William Barton. The 30th anniversary season featured a performance of Berio's *Laborintus II* at the Sydney Festival and the premiere of Gerard Brophy's *Mass for Voices and Didgeridoo*.

One of their stand-out projects of 2007 was a day-long exploration of John Cage's unique sound aesthetic, created in collaboration with Ensemble Offspring. This imaginative endeavour marked the 15th anniversary of Cage's death and celebrated his profound influence on subsequent generations of musicians and artists, offering audiences a truly revelatory concert experience.

In 2009, the company launched a biennial composer development program called MODART. MODART gave composers the opportunity to develop a piece under Peelman's guidance, take part in a fortnight-long workshop with the ensemble and end with public performances of their works.

For the company's 30th anniversary in 2014, the company featured a composite mass with each movement composed by different renowned artists: Graeme Koehne, Ross Edwards, Dan Walker, Stephen Cronin and Gerard Brophy.

Closing out 2015, The Song Company presented its final projects under the leadership of outgoing Artistic Director Roland Peelman, who was at the helm for an impressive 25 years. The *All-Leunig Song Almanac* featured 12 new songs by a different artist composer, setting texts by Michael Leunig. *Point Final* closed out the year with a program of music from Lassus to Martin Wesley-Smith.

In 2016, British composer and conductor Antony Pitts succeeded Roland Peelman as Artistic Director, bringing a new programming approach, often

- 2003 *Shoal* - Damien Ricketson
The City, the River, the Elm, the Stone - Hayden Reeder
- 2004 *Song of Songs* - Andrew Schultz (and CD)
- 2007 *Waltzing Matilda* - Ruth McCall
Ekstasis and Wildflower [CD]
Visitatio Sepulchri [CD]
- 2008 **Kalkadunga Man** [CD]
Schultz: Song of Songs [CD]
12 Days of Christmas [CD]
- 2009 *Pirrk! Pirrk!* - Rosalind Page
- 2010 *Gethsemane* - Gerard Brophy
Sacred Kingfisher Psalms - Ross Edwards
- 2013 *Australian Aphorisms* - Andrew Ford
- 2014 **30 Years of Song** [CD]
- 2015 *The All Leunig Song Almanac:*
Ahhh Summer! The municipal pool - Mark Viggiani
Awfulise - Gareth Farr
Let it all unravel - Robert Davidson
Inner Man - Lachlan Skipworth
God be with the Mother - Alice Chance
Flying - Katy Abbot
When the heart is cut or cracked or broken - Drew Crawford
Song - Kate Moore
No Sooner - James Wade
The Duck - Ruth McCall
Tomatoes - Kate Neal
Love is always born - Lyle Chan

Point Final 2014. Image: Peter Hislop
Susannah Lawergren, Richard Black, Roland Peelman,
Andrew O'Connor, Hannah Fraser, Mark Donnelly, Anna Fraser



incorporating semi-staged elements, such as *True Love Story* (2018), featuring music of 14th Century composer and poet Guillaume de Marchaut, and *Mind Over Matter* (2019), an opera in one act written by Pitts.

The last major project undertaken by the company before the Covid-19 pandemic were four well-received appearances at the Adelaide Festival for its *150 Psalms* program with sister ensembles The Tallis Scholars from England; Netherlands Chamber Choir and the Norwegian Soloists' Choir. Throughout the remainder of 2020 and into 2021, despite the pandemic, the ensemble produced digital and live performances, including a semi-staged production of Hildegard of Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum* and commissioned a setting of the Uluru Statement from the Heart from Indigenous composers Elizabeth Sheppard and Sonya Holowell, which was eventually performed in 2022.

Like many small-medium arts companies in Australia, The Song Company had often faced significant financial challenges. In 2019, the company went into voluntary administration but was able to continue operating with the help of an anonymous donor.

This, combined with the challenges of COVID-19 and the non-renewal of multi-year funding from the Australia Council for the Arts (now Creative Australia) led the Board to implement a new artistic and business model in 2022. As a result, Antony Pitts stepped down at the end of that year.

An interim period of shared artistic management between the board and a core group of singers proposed that much of the company's core repertoire could be performed without a conductor, which was showcased in the first project of 2023, *Song Under the Southern Cross*. Following on from the success of this approach, ensemble members Amy Moore and Jessica O'Donoghue were appointed Co-Artistic Directors in July 2023.

Moore and O'Donoghue bring a passion for vocal excellence and a desire for new collaborations, inviting guest directors chosen for their specific

Recording *In Illo Tempore* at St Mary's Crypt 2018
From left: Andrew O'Connor, Susannah Lawergren, Richard Black
Hannah Fraser, Antony Pitts, Anna Fraser, Mark Donnelly



musical expertise. To date, these have included composer and conductor Jack Symonds, early-music conductor and tenor Christopher Watson, and contemporary music specialist and soprano Jane Sheldon.

In 2024, with multi-year funding from The Ian Potter Foundation, The Song Company launched its Emerging Artist Program. The program has attracted emerging talent from across Australia and is designed to build professional pathways through understudying, skill development and mentorship from the artists of The Song Company.

The influence of The Song Company on Australia's contemporary music scene is profound. One clear indicator is the impressive roster of singers who have performed with the company and continue to excel in concerts, opera, and recitals both nationally and internationally.

Equally significant is the impact on generations of composers. Over the past 40 years, The Song Company has commissioned and performed works by many composers, often giving them their first experience writing for the voice. In many ways, the company has pioneered Australian vocal ensemble music, contributing to the creation of a rich variety of unique styles and sounds that remain distinctly Australian.

As The Song Company celebrates its 40th anniversary, it continues to innovate and inspire, reflecting on a rich history while looking forward to a vibrant future.

Francis Greep
Executive Director

Sources:
The Song Company program archive
australianmusiccentre.com.au;
musictrust.com.au
smh.com.au

THE SONG COMPANY

Core Members

- Hayden Barrington*
 - Stephen Bennett
 - Clive Birch
 - Richard Black
 - James Bonnefin
 - Adrian Brand
 - Jo Burton
 - Tobias Cole
 - Martin Cooke
 - Rowena Cowley
 - Roberta Diamond
 - Mark Donnelly
 - Stephanie Dillon
 - Jenny Duck-Chong
 - Jane Edwards
 - Lauren Easton
 - Owen Elsley
 - Tom Flint
 - Anna Fraser
 - Hannah Fraser
 - Matthew Glasgow
 - Susan Gotts
 - David Hamilton
 - Lanneke Jones
 - Chloe Lankshear
 - Susannah Lawergren
 - Ruth McCall*
 - Paul McMahon
 - Amy Moore*
 - Andrew O'Connor*
 - Jessica O'Donoghue*
 - Timothy Reynolds*
 - Max Riebl
 - Margaret Schindler
 - Penny Sharpe
 - Narelle Tapping
 - Nicole Thompson
 - Romola Tyrrell
 - Koen van Stade
 - Dan Walker
 - Brett Weymark
- *denotes current members*

Artistic Directors

- Charles Coleman
- John Grundy
- Jessica O'Donoghue*
- Amy Moore*
- Roland Peelman
- Antony Pitts

Guest Directors

- Christie Anderson
- Andrew Connor
- Bo Holton
- Andrea Keller
- Ruth McCall
- Amy Moore
- Nigel North
- Nicholas Routley
- Jane Sheldon
- Jack Symonds
- Simone
- Vallerontonoa
- Christopher Watson
- Thomas Wilson

- (2015) *Songs from the Paddock to the Trenches* (CD)
- 2016 *Absolute Bird* (CD)
- 2017 *Fiat Lux* - Alice Chance
- Out of the Deep* - Andrew Batt-Rawden
- De Profundis* - Paul Stanhope
- 2018 *In Illo Tempore* (CD)
- 2019 **Power Chords Attached** - with The Omnific
- 19 to the Dozen.** Untitled commissions from:
Colin Black
Alice Chance
Sarah Elise Thompson
Elizabeth Sheppard
Owen Elsley
Aristea Mellos
Natalie Maschmeyer
Stephen Adams
Gordon Hamilton
Chris Williams
Felicity Wilcox
Sally Whitwell
Matthew Hindson
Lyle Chan
Naomi Crellin
Dan Walker
- 2020 *Psalm 11* - Clare Maclean
Psalm 12 - Cathy Milliken
- 2021 **Burden of Truth** (and LP)
- 2022 *i pray the sea* - Chris Williams
- Songs from the Heart** - program commissioned from Elizabeth Sheppard and Sonya Holowell
- 2023 *Fire-Featuring Heaven* - Jack Symonds
- 2024 *Vespers for Mother Earth* - Ross Edwards
- Lime Song* - Angus Davison
- 2025 Contact The Song Company to commission new work

PROGRAM

VESPERS FOR MOTHER EARTH

Sunday 23rd June 2024, 3pm

City Recital Hall, Sydney

Genevieve Lang, Compère

This performance is being recorded for broadcast by ABC Classic

Peter Sculthorpe	The Stars Turn	Arranged David Matthews. 1970, arr. 2004
Andrew Ford	At Night on the Beach	from <i>Australian Aphorisms</i> . 2012/3
Katy Abbott	Flying	[2015] Commissioned by the family of Robert & Tania Black
Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen	Bats' Ultrasound	from <i>Four Madrigals from the Natural World</i> . 2001 Composed for The Song Company
Stuart Greenbaum	A Cicada in the Blackbird's Beak	from <i>Upon the Dark Water</i> . 1991 Commissioned by The Song Company with assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts
Andrew Ford	Hear the Bird of Day	from <i>Australian Aphorisms</i> . 2012/3 Commissioned by Penny Le Couteur & Greg Dickson for lost loved ones
Elena Kats-Chernin	Mater	2000. Written for The Song Company with Claire Edwardes and Bree van Reyk , percussion
Sonya Holowell	Become Like Children	2022. Commissioned by The Song Company
Alice Chance	Untitled	2019. Commissioned by The Song Company
Angus Davison	Lime Song	2024. Commissioned by Penny Le Couteur & Greg Dickson World Première Performances
Raffaele Marcellino	Memory	from <i>FishTale</i> . 1995 Commissioned by The Song Company with assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts
Martin Wesley-Smith	Who Stopped the Rain?	1990. Written for The Song Company
INTERVAL		
Ross Edwards	Vespers for Mother Earth	2020. Commissioned by Judith Neilson World Première Performance Eleanor Brimblecombe , electronic soundscape
	1. To Invoke the Morning	
	2. Flame of the Sun (Aria)	
	3. Bird and Flower Chants	
	i The Joy of Being	
	ii A Dream of Wildflowers	
	4. Zenith	
	5. Orison	Julian Smiles , cello
	6. Canticle of the Earth	
	7. O Magnum Mysterium	

PERFORMERS

THE SONG COMPANY

Susannah Lawergren	Soprano
Amy Moore	Soprano
Jessica O'Donoghue	Mezzo-Soprano
Timothy Reynolds	Tenor
Hayden Barrington	Baritone
Andrew O'Connor	Bass-Baritone

VESPERS FOR MOTHER EARTH

Susannah Lawergren	Soprano
Amy Moore	Soprano
Jessica O'Donoghue	Mezzo-Soprano
Hannah Fraser	Mezzo-Soprano
Timothy Reynolds	Tenor
Louis Hurley	Tenor
Hayden Barrington	Baritone –
Andrew O'Connor	Bass-Baritone
Lamorna Nightingale*	Flute
James Nightingale*	Alto Saxophone
Dominic Longhurst	Trumpet
Nigel Crocker*	Trombone
Lindsay Dugan	Shakuhachi
Matthew Doyle	Didjeridu
Lu Liu	Pipa
Genevieve Lang	Harp
Julian Smiles	Cello
Claire Edwardes*	Percussion
Bree van Reyk*	Percussion
Roland Peelman	Guest Director

*Ensemble Offspring

THE SONG COMPANY

BOARD

Natalie Mina Chair
Nick Galvin, Kimbali Harding, Hamish Lane,
Jack Percy, Jacqui Smith, Paul Stanhope, Min Zhu

CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Amy Moore & Jessica O'Donoghue

ADMINISTRATION

Francis Greep	Executive Director
Jane Diamond	Book Keeper
Aedan MacNamara	Administration & Marketing Coordinator
Louis Hurley	Social Media Manager
Nicola Macindoe	Content Creation

2024 COMPANY

Susannah Lawergren, Amy Moore, Hannah Fraser,
Jessica O'Donoghue, Hayden Barrington, James Fox,
Louis Hurley, Andrew O'Connor, Timothy Reynolds

2024 EMERGING ARTISTS

Alexandra Amerides, Eliza Bennetts O'Connor,
Marjorie Butcher, Annika Hinrichs,
Alexander Gorbatov, Jack Jordan,
Bailey Montgomerie, Anish Nair, Alex Owens

2024 GUEST DIRECTORS

Christie Anderson, Roland Peelman,
Andrew O'Connor, Jane Sheldon



The Song Company is assisted by
the NSW Government through Create NSW

The Song Company Pty Ltd trading as The Song Company is a non-profit organisation registered as a company of limited guarantee

The Song Company recognises and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the unceded land and waters on which we live, perform and work, and we pay our respect to Elders past and present. We honour the sharing of traditional stories that have been passed down by spoken word and song through generations

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

THE STARS TURN

Tony Morphett

The stars turn, the sun turns, the earth turns forever.
we throw our weight on the windless spars,
and little and steady it turns the stars,
and the suns turn, and the windlass turns, for ever.

The rope turns, the rope twines, the rope winds forever.
we weigh our lives while the hempen holds,
and little and steady it bears our souls,
as the stars twine, as the windlass winds, for ever.

The sea falls, the sea folds, the sea holds forever.
The earth's an island afloat in space,
and little and steady it turns its face,
and the sun burns, and the windlass turns for ever.

The sun grows, the moons grow, the stars blow forever.
The earth is rigged while the hempen holds,
the man is saved who can bear his soul to
the stars burn as the stars turn for ever.

AT NIGHT ON THE BEACH.

Judith Wright

At night on the beach
the galaxy looks like a grin

FLYING

Michael Leunig

As a child I dreamed
that my bed could fly
and glide and swoop and hover
high over the countryside
I wished my bed could fly.

The bed we are born in.
The bed we embrace or pray in.
The bed we retreat to and heal in.
The bed we grow in and grow old in.
The bed in which we repent and change our minds.

The bed of dreams.
The bed we weep alone in.
The bed we sit next to or stand by,
and see our loved one die in.

The bed we die in.
The dear trusty bed we rise from which we rise.
And meet the glorious and dreadful new day.

BATS' ULTRASOUND

Les Murray

Sleeping-bagged in a duplex wing
with fleas, in rock-cleft or building
radar bats are darkness in miniature,
their whole face one tufty crinkled ear
with weak eyes, fine teeth bared to sing.

Few are vampires. None flit through the mirror.
Where they flutter at evening's a queer
tonal hunting zone above highest C.
Insect prey at the peak of our hearing
drone re to their detailing tee:

*ah, eyrie-ire, aero hour, eh?
O'er our ur-area [our era aye
ere your raw row] we air our array,
err, yaw, row wry – aura our orrery,
our errie ü our ray, our arrow.*

A rare ear, our *aery Yahweh*.

A CICADA IN THE BLACKBIRD'S BEAK

Ross Baglin

Based on a poem from *Treasury Gardens*

A spark of green spits and chirrs in the toed claw ;
The dipped spear clacks the tessellated shell,
The luculent green fans twirled,
The nerves cut, the netted wings wave
Unbidden circles, the clash of strings
Bewilders instinct, and the golden thighs
That rattled Summer nights are cracked,
Snap !
The flakes of flame smack in the scarlet beak.

The dismantling of a frail jewel
Will not be accounted in the published report
Of beauty's ravished accessories,
Beauty does not stir when hunger's march
Pounds sullen on.

HEAR THE BIRD OF THE DAY

David Campbell

Hear, the bird of the day
Stirs in his blue tree,
Fumbles for words to say
The things a bird might learn
From brooding half the night,
What's matter but a hard'ning of the light?

Hear the bird!
Out of this seed of song
Discoursing with the dark
Now in a clear tongue
Rises his lonely voice
And all the east is bright.

Mountain and brilliant bird,
The ram and the wren,
For each there is a word;
In ev'ry grain of sand
Stands a singer in white.

STABAT MATER

Text: 13th Century

Stabat mater dolorosa juxta
Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta,
mater Unigeniti!

Quae moerebat et dolebat,
pia Mater, dum videbat
nati poenas inclyti.

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Jesum in tormentis,
et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.

Eja, Mater, fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.

Tui Nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,
poenas mecum divide.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
crucifixo condolere,
donec ego vixero.

Juxta Crucem tecum stare,
et me tibi sociare
in planctu desidero.

Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
All his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has pass'd.

Oh, how sad and sore distress'd
Was that Mother highly blest
Of the sole-begotten One!

Christ above in torment hangs;
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
Whelm'd in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?

Bruis'd, derided, curs'd,
defil'd, she beheld her tender Child
All with bloody scourges rent;

For the sins of his own nation,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His Spirit forth He sent.

O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord:

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.

Holy Mother! pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified:

Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourn'd for me,
All the days that I may live:

By the Cross with thee to stay;
There with thee to weep and pray;
Is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest!,
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief divine;

Virgo virginum praeclara,
mihi iam non sis amara,
fac me tecum plangere.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
passionis fac consortem,
et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
fac me Cruce inebriari,
et cruore Filii.

Flammis ne urar succensus,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
da per Matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae.

Quando corpus morietur, fac,
ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria.
Amen.

At the Cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last:

Let me, to my latest breath,
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with his every wound,
steep my soul till it hath swoon'd,
In His very blood away;

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
In his awful Judgment day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
Be Thy Mother my defence,
Be Thy Cross my victory;

While my body here decays,
May my soul thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.
Amen.

BECOME LIKE CHILDREN.

from *The Uluru Statement from the Heart*

Used with permission by the composer

Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates.
This cannot be because we have no love for them.
And our youth languish in detention in obscene number.
They should be our hope for the future.

They will walk in two worlds and their culture
will be a gift to their country.

LIME SONG

Angus Davison

One time,
on a warm night,
in the garden of my home,
I met an owl.
It called,
and I replied,
and we spoke of unknown things.
I wonder, did it write a song about me?

It was a tiny thing.

One time,
on a still day,
near the crest of a mountain,
I heard an ant,
as its foot fell on dry grass.
I wonder, did it sense my silent breathing?

It was a tiny thing,
but it made me full.

One time,
on a hillside,
in a lake across the world,
a water beetle swam
among my friends and I.
The hill was strewn
with wildflowers and the
touch of icy water set me free.

It was a tiny thing,
but it made me full,
and I want it for you.

One time,
I hope one time,
you scratch the skin of a lime,
and that the perfume smells like a universe.
And that you feel such joy you could explode into a
thousand points of light.
Which might be stars...
or eyes...
of a choir
of owls,
waiting,
in the warm night,
ready,
to sing.

Memory

DIE FORELLE

Christian Schubart

In einem Bächlein helle,
da schoss in frohe eil,
Die launische Forelle vorüber
wie ein Pfeil.

Ich stand an dem Gestade
und sah im süßer Ruh
Des muntern Fischleins Bade
im klarem Bächlein zu.

The Trout

Translated: Richard Wigmore

In a limpid brook
the capricious trout
in joyous haste
darted by like an arrow.

I stood on the bank
in blissful peace, watching
the lively fish swim
in the clear brook.

WHO STOPPED THE RAIN

Peter Wesley-Smith

Who stopped the rain?
Tell me who stopped the rain coming down?

Falling from the sky
Oh why?
Middle of July
Rivers running dry

Trees are drying out
Dying in the drought
Waterholes are dry
Kookaburras cry

Flame of the Sun

O NOBILISSIMA VIRIDITAS

Hildegard von Bingen

O nobilissima viriditas,
que radicas in sole
et que in candida serenitate
lucet in rota
quam nulla terrena excellentia
comprehendit:

Tu circumdata
es amplexibus
divinorum mysterium.
Tu rubes ut aurora
et ardes ut solis flamma.

Zenith

Text: adapted from the Catholic Requiem

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla.
Mater, Mater,
exaudi vocem meam
ad te omnis caro veniet

Canticle of the Earth

Text adapted from the Hindu hymn "Prithvi Sukta"

O Earth my Mother,
set me securely in bliss,
in grace, and in accord with Nature.

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

Fred Watson

O magnum mysterium
between earth and stars
an unquiet sky
darkens our minds

the flash of creation
ancient beyond belief
red-shifted to black

we are alone
among quintillions
unique consciousness
heart of the matter
what is it all for
the answer is love

Curse the endless sun
Nothing can be done
Will it ever fall again?
The rain: Tell me it's falling

Yesterday a cloud
Hung there like a shroud
Now it's overcast
Will it rain at last?

O noblest green viridity,
you are rooted in the sun
and in the clear bright calm
you shine within a wheel
no earthly excellence can
comprehend:

You are surrounded by the
embraces of the service,
the mysteries divine.
As morning's dawn you blush,
as sunny flame you burn.

This day, this day of wrath
Shall consume the world in ashes,
Mother, Mother,
hear my voice,
to you all flesh shall come.

unfashionable god
alone makes sense
o magnum mysterium

ROSS EDWARDS & VESPERS FOR MOTHER EARTH



Australian composer **Ross Edwards (b.1943)** has created a distinctive sound world, unmistakably his own and profoundly influenced by the natural environment, especially birdsong, the mysterious rhythms and drones of living organisms, as well as the philosophy of deep ecology. He has stated that his motivation, universal in that it is concerned with age-old mysteries surrounding humanity, is to reconnect music with elemental forces and to help restore its traditional association with ritual through dance and chant. This is reflected in his highly idiosyncratic language, deeply connected to its roots in Australia, whose cultural diversity it celebrates while drawing upon and integrating influences from diverse cultural sources.

VESPERS FOR MOTHER EARTH 2020 – World Première

A few years ago, not long after a dazzling performance of my *Tyalgum Mantras* in the Dangrove Art Space by Continuum Sax and Will Barton, Helen, my wife and manager, and I were invited by philanthropist Judith Neilson to a meeting in her Chippendale office. Judith proposed to commission from me a large-scale work of about an hour's duration for vocal and instrumental forces entirely of my own choosing.

Having always been strongly influenced by the sounds of Nature, I conceived the new work as a response to our present-day ecological crisis, as well as Claudio Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine (Vespers for the Blessed Virgin)* from 1610. Full of symbols of the day and night, ranging from the manifest to the subliminal, it may be seen as a swansong for humankind or the hope of a new beginning – the renewal of an eternal cycle which would restore the feminine (night) principle after an often devastating ascendancy of the masculine (day).

COVID-19 restrictions meant that the scheduled performance in 2020 was cancelled. Happily, the première is taking place today, Sunday 23 June 2024 at 3pm in Sydney's City Recital Hall as the centrepiece of The Song Company's 40th Anniversary Gala. The company, with whom I have had a long association, will be joined by Ensemble Offspring, augmented by Asia-Pacific instruments and directed by Roland Peelman.

Vespers for Mother Earth is divided into seven sections:

1. **To Invoke the Morning.** A shaman with a bamboo flute (shakuhachi) ceremoniously breathes light and life into the void of night in a solo which loosely parodies the sacred meditational music (hokyoku) performed by Zen monks in their quest for enlightenment.
2. **Aria: Flame of the Sun.** Inward contemplation gradually yields to riotous morning birdsong from the didjeridu, out of which emerges a soprano voice with harp accompaniment. The ecstatic text, sung in Latin, is by the 12th century Rhineland mystic Hildegard von Bingen.
3. **Bird and Flower Chants** is divided into two parts:
 - i. **The Joy of Being.** A playful, ritualized chanting of the Aboriginal names of some Australian birds of the parrot and cockatoo families: *akala, jeriang, gagadju, moolangora, moori* etc. The words quickly become fragmented into phonetic units which are coalesced, a technique I've applied in much of my music for the voice where ethos prevails at the expense of discernible meaning.
 - ii. **A Dream of Wildflowers.** A similar treatment is applied here to names of Australian wildflowers, this time in their Western scientific nomenclature. The music is tranquil, meditative, and strongly influenced by the second of my Flower Songs, composed in 1987.
4. **Zenith.** The strange stillness of solar noon, benign at first, rises to shrill intensity as maximum energy is released from the midday sun – a scorching heat foreboding the impact of global warming on living organisms.
5. **Orison.** A ruminative, sometimes unquiet cello yearns for a sublime realm beyond the fragmented temporal world.
6. **Canticle of the Earth.** A celebration of the universal dance of life acknowledging Avalokiteshvara, A Buddhist Deity, who is known as the embodiment of compassion.
7. **O Magnum Mysterium.** As darkness descends, Australia's Astronomer-at-Large, Professor Fred Watson, probes beyond rational and geopolitical in contemplation of the night sky. "Is it possible," he wonders, "that life is unique to our planet? Are we the only species capable of wondering what it all means?"

COMPOSERS

BIOGRAPHIES & PROGRAM NOTES

Listed in chronological order of music composition dates



Peter Sculthorpe (1929-2014)

Peter Sculthorpe was born in Launceston, Tasmania, in 1929. Sculthorpe's catalogue consists of more than 350 works and, apart from juvenilia, a good part of it is regularly performed and recorded throughout the world. The composer wrote in most musical forms, and almost all his works are influenced by the social climate and physical characteristics of Australia. Sculthorpe had a deep love for his country and for its landscape, which he regarded as sacred. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island music and the gamelan music of Indonesia were significant influences upon his musical language. He was Emeritus Professor at the University of Sydney, where he began teaching in 1963. In 1977 he was appointed OBE and was the recipient of a Silver Jubilee Medal. He was appointed AO in 1990.

The Stars Turn 1970, arr 1985

The Stars Turn is one of Sculthorpe's most well-known compositions, having arranged it (and had arranged by others) for multiple combinations of solo instruments, voice, orchestra, choir and, in the case today, for The Song Company. It was originally a song contained in the his concert piece *Sun Music* for rock band, female singer and orchestra. The title of the piece is derived from the fact that 1970 was the bicentenary of Cook's sighting of Australia and that the original purpose of his voyage was to observe the transit of Venus. *Sun Music* was the most successful of Sculthorpe's collaborations with the Australian poet and screen writer Tony Morphet.



Martin Wesley-Smith (1945-2019)

Born in Adelaide, Martin Wesley-Smith taught composition and electronic music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he founded and directed its Electronic Music Studio. He was a pioneer in Australia of audiovisual composition.

Wesley-Smith had eclectic tastes and interests, his output ranging from children's songs to environmental events. Political commentary through music was juxtaposed with exploring the life, work and ideas of Lewis Carroll. Wesley-Smith sang in and directed a seven-member *a cappella* group called the Thirsty Night Singers, based in Kangaroo Valley. In 2010 his music theatre piece **Boojum!** was produced by Chicago Opera Vanguard. Martin Wesley-Smith died on 26 September 2019, peacefully at his home in Kangaroo Valley, NSW.

Who Stopped the Rain? 1990

"When I first read, as a teenager, Rachel Carson's book *The Silent Spring*, I was naive enough to believe that the world would heed her urgent warnings and act immediately to stop poisoning our environment and to implement effective conservation policies. But when, twenty years later, I started researching an idea for a piece based on an English folk-song I'd enjoyed as a child, I was shocked to find that the situation had deteriorated far beyond what Ms Carson had described. It became clear that the sparrow's bow and arrow was, in reality, a chemical that an uncle of mine, Brian Wesley-Smith, had campaigned against for years: DDT."



Stuart Greenbaum (b. 1966)

The Stuart Greenbaum sound has overt connections to jazz, pop and minimalism but is equally grounded in the Western art music tradition. He is the author of over 235 works including 26 sonatas, 8 string quartets, 5 piano trios, 7 concertos, 6 symphonies and 2 operas. In 2023 he signed a global publishing contract with Wise Music G. Schirmer Australia. Having studied composition with Broadstock and Conyngham at the University of Melbourne, Greenbaum now holds a position in the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music as Professor, having also served as Head of Composition from 2007 to 2023.

Upon the Dark Water 1991

Set to a text by Ross Baglin, *Upon the Dark Water* was commissioned by The Song Company with assistance from the Music Board of The Australia Council for the Arts. It is dedicated to Roland Peelman, who conducted the première at the Sydney Opera House on 18 July 1991. They subsequently released a studio recording of the work on Tall Poppies. The work has also enjoyed performances in the UK (Arcadian Singers) and the US (Cantori New York).



Raffaele Marcellino (b. 1964)

Raf Marcellino is an Australian composer born in Sydney. His initial musical studies at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music included teachers Richard Vella, Bozidar Kos, Richard Toop, Gillian Whitehead, Graham Hair and Martin Wesley-Smith. His musical output includes orchestral, chamber, and theatrical works supported through commissions and grants, both public and private. His music has been performed, recorded and broadcast in Australia and overseas by leading ensembles and solo artists. His most recent recording release is **L'arte di volare** for strings, recorded by the Janacek Philharmonic Ostrava, available on most streaming services.

FishTale 1995

FishTale was premièred by the Song Company and commissioned by Roland Peelman. *FishTale* is a five-movement work that references Schubert's *The Trout* and the concept of allegory. The fifth movement - *Memory* - has two predominant features (i) the microtonal slide and (ii) the inverted Schubert's melody. *Memory* is the musical equivalent of looking up through the water at the bottom of a running brook, and the five movements explore utterance from singing to speaking, voiced and unvoiced, noise and music; like a musical kaleidoscope looking back upon itself. *FishTale* received highly commended in the 1997 Paul Lowin Song Cycle Prize.

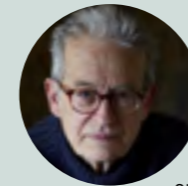


Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1957)

Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Elena Kats-Chernin AO is a Sydney based Australian composer. She created works in nearly every genre, for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, all major Australian Symphony Orchestras as well as for Komische Oper Berlin, Opera Australia and Philharmonie Luxembourg. She also wrote soundtracks to four feature-length silent films, most recent one being for large orchestra for a German film *Variete* (1929) premièred in September 2023 by the Belgian National Orchestra. Her music featured at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the 2003 Rugby World Cup and she received Ian Potter, Sidney Myer as well as Helpmann Awards among others. Her *Russian Rag* was used as Max's theme in the 2009 claymation *Mary and Max* by Oscar winning director Adam Elliot and she wrote a score for his yet to be released new film *Memoir of a Snail*. Her piece *Eliza Aria* served as a popular chart topping jingle for a UK bank from 2007 till 2013.

Mater 2000

"*Mater* was my second collaboration with The Song Company and Roland Peelman, after an earlier work *Gone with the Waltz*. *Mater* was written for their concert devoted to motherhood. I chose sections of the Latin text *Stabat Mater* which resonated with me and my then current situation of one of my sons falling seriously ill. Because of the anguish my family was going through, the air of despair flowed into the piece with its dark rhythmic chordal ostinato figure, yet this work also has lighter lyrical melodic moments."



Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen (1932-2016)

Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, and was the son of the sculptor Jørgen Gudmundsen-Holmgreen. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, with Finn Høffding, Svend Westergaard, Bjørn Hjelmborg, and Vagn Holmboe (instrumentation), graduating in 1958. Amongst other works, he composed fourteen string quartets and a Concerto Grosso for string quartet and orchestra, written for the Kronos Quartet, which he referred to as "Vivaldi on Safari." He won the Nordic Council Music Prize in 1980 for his *Symfoni/Antifoni*.

Bats' Ultrasound 2001

"*Four Madrigals* to texts by the Australian poet Les Murray are composed of two songs written for The Song Company and two written for the Danish Radio Chamber Choir. The texts are pictures and situations from - or meditations over - the natural world. Murray's way of approaching this world is not in the least sentimental or nostalgic; the poems reveal a true being-out-there realism; so basically the approach is realistic, but the creating of form elevates the material to an abstract play, a daring and exuberant poetic language. These poems asked to be set to music. I gave up old idiosyncrasies regarding descriptive music, and surrendered to the madrigal, with its special so-called "madrigalisms", which entails also animal-imitations. You will hear this particularly in *The Octave of Elephants*." [Wise Music]



Andrew Ford (b.1957)

Andrew Ford OAM is a composer, writer and broadcaster who has won awards in each of those capacities, including the Paul Lowin Prize for his song cycle *Learning to Howl*, a Green Room Award for his opera *Rembrandt's Wife* and the Albert H Maggs Prize for his large ensemble piece, *Rauha*. He has been composer-in-residence for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Australian National Academy of Music and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. In 2014 he was Poynter Fellow and visiting composer at Yale University, in 2015 visiting lecturer at the Shanghai Conservatory, and in 2018 HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellow at the Australian National University. Ford has written widely on all manner of music and published ten books. His eleventh, *The Shortest History of Music*, will be out from Black Inc. at the end of July. Andrew has written, presented and co-produced five radio series for the ABC and, since 1995, presented *The Music Show* each weekend on Radio National. He was awarded an OAM in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Australian Aphorisms 2012-13

"For years, Roland Peelman would gently nag me to compose a setting of Les Murray, to go with all the others he'd commissioned. By Murray's final decade, he'd become the greatest poet working in English, but I found him hard to put to music. When I finally lighted on something, it was a very short poem - a single sentence - called *The Averted*, inevitably yielding an equally short piece. I felt it needed companion pieces and so over the next few years composed more settings of aphoristic words by other Australian poets. There are seven in all, to words by John Forbes, Judith Wright, David McCooy, Maria Takolander, Barbara Blackman and David Campbell, and performers are encouraged to mix and match."



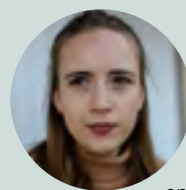
Katy Abbott (b.1971)

Dr Katy Abbott has a deep curiosity in understanding human nature and what drives us. This is reflected and embedded in her work. She possesses a remarkable ability to capture and convey the essence of various subjects through music which adeptly narrates stories, explores the intangible and captures fleeting moments. Her compositions have been performed, published and recorded around the world, brought to life by many leading ensembles and orchestras including Halcyon Ensemble, The Song Company, Syzygy Ensemble, Flinders Quartet, Ensemble Three, Ensemble Offspring and Sydney, Adelaide, Tasmanian and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. Her works have been featured in many Australian and International music festivals.

Flying 2015

"This work was composed for the *All-Leunig Song Almanac* as part of The Song Company NSW Tour in 2015. In searching through Michael Leunig's text for suitable words to set, I came across a newspaper opinion article by Leunig for *The Age* in 2008 titled *Pillow Talk from the Dreamtime*. Although not poetry, the words are immensely singable and this piece, *Flying*, comes from a small amount of words and sentiment in this article. It is the idea of childhood daydreaming that resonates; the cosiness and safety of bed allows the imagination to soar and fly. This work is commissioned by the family of Robert and Tania Black; in memory of Dorrit Black, painter and printmaker."

PERFORMERS

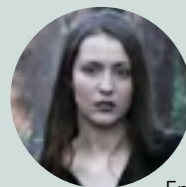


ALICE CHANCE (b. 1994)

Alice Chance is a sought-after composer, conductor, singer, artist, arranger, writer and educator. She is a three-time finalist in the APRA AMC Art Music Awards in the category of Vocal/Choral work of the year, and was a recipient of funding from both Create NSW the Art Music Fund in 2021 for her work *Heirloom* with Rubiks Collective. Alice grew up on the lands of the Darug people and those of the Eora Nation in Sydney, Australia, where she has worked with many of the country's most dynamic ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Offspring, Gondwana Choirs, the Australian String Quartet, The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and The Song Company.

Untitled 2019

Untitled was commissioned for the Song Company's *Nineteen to the Dozen* project in 2019. The piece explores the croaky world of vocal fry to find shimmering subtrees below the normal range of the voice. The fragility of the sustained vocal fry reminds me of glitch and television static, two eerily comforting aesthetics. My hope for the piece is for it to be a moment of respite and curiosity, where lilting folk-like melodies are set alight by an alien sound that drifts in and out of resonance with them.



SONYA HOLOWELL (b.1984)

Sonya Holowell is a vocalist, composer, writer and educator of Dharawal and Inuit descent. Her work spans many contexts and forms, with improvisation as a primary mode towards emancipatory aims. Sonya's work as a vocalist and composer has been shown on numerous platforms including Sydney Festival, Adelaide Festival, Resonant Bodies Festival, Vivid, VOLUME, soundSCAPE, Soft Centre and Liveworks. She has collaborated with leading art music ensembles such as JACK Quartet, Ensemble Offspring, Decibel, and the Australian Art Orchestra; and has presented work at venues including Sydney Opera House, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Museum of Contemporary Art, Carriageworks, Institute of Modern Art, The Powerhouse Museum, MUMA and the National Gallery of Australia.

Become Like Children 2022

Originally commissioned for the Song Company's 2023 *Songs From The Heart* program, *Become Like Children* amplifies the powerful entreaty of the Uluru Statement From The Heart. Utilising various modes of composition and conceptual provocation, the work calls its performers to oscillate between adult strength and childhood vulnerability, balancing emphatic notated refrains and improvised 'playground' soundscapes.



ANGUS DAVISON (b.1993)

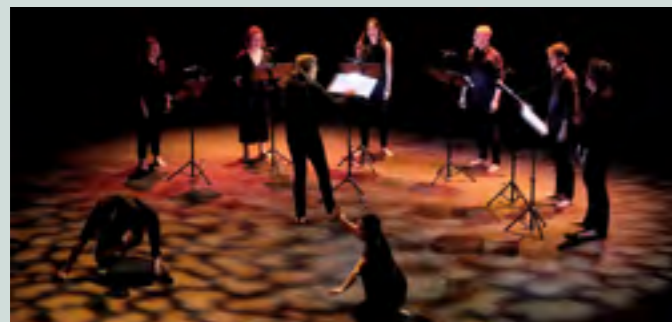
Angus Davison composes music with 'considerable poignancy' (*The Mercury*) and 'a respect for sound in itself' (*Cut Common*). His recent works have explored topics such as the religious life of worms, thermonuclear fusion, and the true story of a bird that fell in love with a statue. In 2023, Angus' music represented Australia at the ISCM World New Music Days Festival in South Africa. He was the 2022-23 Layton Composer Fellow with the Australia Ensemble, and his *Trombone Concerto* was recently presented by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Lime Song 2024 - World Première

A conversation with an owl, the sound of an ant's footstep... these are treasured memories and the inspiration for *Lime Song*. We are always asked to care about big things, grand things. Rarely are we asked to lean in, squint, and open ourselves to the beauty of something small. In writing *Lime Song*, my aim was to draw attention, just for a moment, to tiny experiences that seemed to fill a universe. *Lime Song* was commissioned by Penny Le Couteur and Greg Dickson, kind and generous people I owe a debt of gratitude.



Above: Ross Edwards & Roland Peelman ca. 2010 Image: Peter Hislop
Below: The Song Company & Karul Projects *Four Colour Season* 2017



Above: The Song Company famous pool photo 2004
Below: The Song Company with Claire Edwardes in *Sunken Dreams* 2012



Soprano **Susannah Lawergren** has sung with some of the foremost ensembles, composers and festivals in Australia, and is Principal Artist with the

Song Company and Bach Akademie Australia. Her repertoire varies widely, recently singing Elena Kats-Chernin's *Wild Swans* in flying harness with Legs on the Wall, art songs with harpist Emily Granger at the inaugural Oberon Festival, solo Bach cantatas with Bach Akademie, and a new commission by Ross Edwards written for Susannah and pianist Bernadette Harvey for the 150th anniversary of the Art Gallery of NSW. Susannah will feature in the semi chorus in Opera Australia's upcoming production of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*.



Known for her 'great style and conviction', **Hannah Fraser** is a well-known name on stages across Australia, performing regularly as a soloist and a

consort member. From 2013 until 2017 she was a core member of The Song Company, which led her into a rewarding career spanning repertoire from 12th century Europe to contemporary music. A regular performer with Pinchgut Opera and Bach Akademie Australia, Hannah makes her solo debuts in 2024 with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (*Christmas Oratorio*) and Canberra Symphony Orchestra (*Messiah*). She will also sing with Sydney Philharmonia in Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* and continue with Bach Akademie in their season program.



After honing his skills at the skills at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, **Hayden Barrington** discovered his love for consort singing, oratorios, and music education. He has worked the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Brandenburg Choir, and as a soloist, he has performed across Greater Sydney and Canberra in numerous oratorios. Hayden is also a voice teacher and has inspired countless musicians through his work as a community choral director over the past eight years. Residing in Wollongong, he is the Choral Director of the WollCon Chamber Choir at the Wollongong Conservatorium, bringing his passion and expertise to establish a new era of choral excellence.



Amy Moore takes joy in a broad repertoire, both as a soloist and as ensemble singer. Career highlights include

BBC Proms appearances, countless premieres with EXAUDI Vocal Ensemble, her time as a member of Edvard Grieg Kor in Norway, solo appearances with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, a recording of Messiaen's *Harawi*, and her solo debut with Pinchgut Opera in 2021. In 2022 Amy became Musical Director of Phoenix Choir in the Blue Mountains and founded CASTALIA Vocal Consort. For The Song Company, Amy directed *Songs Under the Southern Cross* in March 2023 was appointed Co-Artistic of The Song Company in July 2023.



Timothy Reynolds has appeared with some of Australia's premier groups including Pinchgut Opera, MSO, Victorian Opera, Royal Melbourne

Philharmonic, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Specialising in early music, Timothy has worked with Ludovico's Band, the Adelaide Baroque Orchestra and frequently performs with St John's Southgate Bach Cantata program. As a contemporary music soloist, his performances include Brett Dean's *The Last Days of Socrates* and Elliot Carter's *What Next*. Internationally, Timothy performed with the Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, Bach Akademie Stuttgart and understudied at Oper Stuttgart.



For more than a decade Perth-born **Andrew O'Connor** has maintained a busy freelance career encompassing opera, the concert platform, vocal

chamber music, and the classroom. In 2024 Andrew makes important solo debuts with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (*Handel's Messiah*) and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra [the world premiere of Katy Abbott's *Hidden Thoughts III: Stories of Awe*]. Other projects include the entirety of Pinchgut Opera's 2024 Season; touring, recording, and creative development with AVÉ - Australian Vocal Ensemble; and numerous projects with Bach Akademie Australia, Salut! Baroque, Moorambilla Voices and more.



Jessica O'Donoghue is a performer, composer and new music advocate. She was the recipient of a 2021 APRA/AMCOS Art Music award

for 'Performance of the Year - Notated Composition', a Fellowship from AIM for 'Outstanding Achievements & Services to the Australian Music & Performing Arts Industry' and a 2021 'Women In Music Mentorship' from Australian Independent Records Association. Jessica appears regularly with Sydney Chamber Opera Company and venues and festivals such as Sydney Opera House, Carriageworks, Melbourne Recital Hall, City Recital Hall, Sydney Festival, and Vivid. In July 2023, Jessica was appointed Co-Artistic Director of The Song Company.



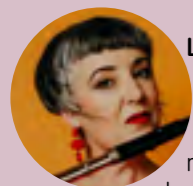
Sydney-based **Louis Hurley** has established himself as a versatile and sought-after artist in the realm of classical music. He is a passionate operatic

and concert performer in repertoire spanning the Baroque through to the 21st Century. In concert, Louis has appeared as a soloist with a number of Australia's leading orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra. Also celebrated in the ensemble singing sphere, Louis appears regularly as a member of some of Australia's premier vocal ensembles, including Australian Vocal Ensemble - AVÉ, The Song Company, Cantillation and CASTALIA Vocal Consort.



Artistic Director of the Canberra International Music Festival since 2015, **Roland Peelman** has drawn many plaudits for his 25 year long stewardship of The

Song Company, and his overall contribution to the creative arts in Australia. Born in Belgium and active in Australia since 1984, he has fostered innovation across a wide field of opera, music theatre, early and contemporary music. He was named 'musician of the year' by the Sydney Morning Herald in 2006, recognised in the 2020 Australia Day Honours list for services to music, and given the National Individual Luminary Award at the 2023 APRA Art Music awards. More recently, the Belgian government also recognised his unique contribution, bestowing him with the title of 'Commandeur in the Order of Leopold'.



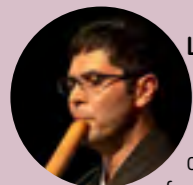
Lamorna Nightingale is a freelance flautist, concert presenter, educator and publisher who is passionate about the future of art music in Australia. She has many years experience working in the orchestral sector and is a core member of the new music group, Ensemble Offspring.

Lamorna is the Artistic Director of 'BackStage Music', a concert series in Sydney which fosters a culture for living music. Lamorna has also created several pedagogical volumes of repertoire for young flute players through her publishing company 'Fluteworthy'.



Studying trumpet at the Royal Northern College of Music, **Dominic Longhurst** received first class honours in performance and the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Award for the most distinguished student at the RNCM. Upon his Australian return, Dominic tours and performs regularly with the Australian Opera & Ballet

Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, records as principal trumpet on film and gaming soundtracks, and has appeared as guest principal with the Tasmanian and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, of which Dominic was the 2022 Trumpet Fellowship recipient.



Lindsay Dugan studied and performed shakuhachi in Japan for over ten years. He is a shihan ('master') of the Chikushinkai shakuhachi lineage, and also holds masters degrees in shakuhachi performance from Tokyo University of The Arts and Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Lindsay focuses primarily on the traditional repertoires of honkyoku

(the solo repertoire for shakuhachi which is historically rooted in Zen Buddhism) and gaikyoku (traditional ensemble music for shakuhachi, koto, shamisen, and voice). Presently based in Tokyo, he is active as a teacher, performer, and researcher of traditional Japanese music.



Dr. **Liu Lu** is a China-trained *pipa* performer and Australia-trained scholar who received her PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Sydney in 2019. She has published ethnomusicological research investigating intercultural music engagement while continuing to perform new *pipa* works by contemporary Australian composers. Career highlights include performing *pipa* in the recent world premiere

The Butterfly Lovers with Victorian Opera, being a soloist for an audience of 7000 at the World Peace Festival in South Korea, as well as performing on Christopher Gordon's soundtrack to the movie *Mao's Last Dancer*. She is the only non-Western musician currently holding a continuing position at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.



Julian Smiles began his career as principal cellist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has been cellist with the Australia Ensemble since 1991. 2024 marks the 30th and final season of the internationally acclaimed Goldner String Quartet, which Julian formed with colleagues Dene Olding, Dimity Hall and Irina Morozova, leaving an

extraordinary legacy of performances, recordings and premiere performances. Active as a soloist, Julian performs concertos with orchestras and appears as a recitalist and guest musician throughout Australia. Julian is sought after as a teacher and is currently Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of Cello at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

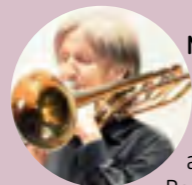


Claire Edwardes OAM is Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring and an internationally acclaimed percussion soloist, chamber musician. She has been described by the press as a 'sorceress of percussion' and is the only Australian musician to win the APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Individual three times. She is the recipient of Australia Council and Freedman Fellowships and the winner of numerous European instrumental and percussion competitions (resident there for seven years) as well as the 1999 Young Performer of the Year. Claire has forged a path as Australia's leading percussion concert soloist with regular engagements with all of the Australian orchestras.



James Nightingale has performed in Sydney's classical music over a period of more than three decades, working many of the most prestigious musical ensembles, including Ensemble Offspring, Australian Chamber Orchestra and Sydney Symphony

Orchestra. He has been a leading exponent of new Australian music for saxophone, commissioning new works and giving premiere performances as a soloist and with Continuum Sax. Recent recordings for Phoenix Central Park have included music by Amanda Cole and Calogero Panvino. James teaches at Sydney Grammar School and volunteers as a presenter and programmer for 2MBS Fine Music Sydney.



Nigel Crocker started his career in rock and funk bands in his home town of Perth. In 1981 he moved to Melbourne where he played with the band Hunters and Collectors, before joining Channel 9 Band on The Don Lane Show. In 1983 Nigel

was appointed Principal Trombone of the TSO before moving to Sydney where he has appeared regularly with Opera Australia, SSO, ACO, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera and ARCO. Nigel was a foundation member of the Sydney Alpha Ensemble and has also appeared with other leading ensembles Seymour Group, Elision and Ensemble Offspring.



Matthew Doyle was born and raised in Sydney, and is a descendant of the Muruwari People from Northwest NSW. He studied at NAISDA College and then became a founding member of the Australian Islander Dance Theatre Company.

He has toured extensively in Australia and abroad, performing in major events such as 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the Sydney 2000 Opening and Closing Ceremonies, ABC Millennium Broadcast on top of the Sydney Opera House, and the *I am Eora* Sydney Festival Production. Matthew has been working in the Indigenous Arts in Education for the last 20 years and is a panel member of the Indigenous Advisory Panel for the City of Sydney.



Genevieve Lang is well known to Australian audiences as a harpist and broadcaster. She has enjoyed a long association with both the SSO and TSO. A founding member of SHE (Seven Harp Ensemble), Genevieve has performed as

a soloist with several orchestras around the country and overseas. These days you're more likely to hear Genevieve's voice than her harp, as a presenter on ABC Classic. For Genevieve, broadcasting and media are the perfect way to share her passion for classical music with the biggest possible audience! But her first love, the harp, is never far from her heart.



Bree van Reyk is a drummer, percussionist, composer, sound artist and occasional maker of unkempt musical instruments. Her solo performances centre on exploring minimal, experimental and meditative soundscapes using rustic, self-invented

instruments and found objects. Bree has forged a unique career collaborating with artists such as Gurrumul, Paul Kelly, Sarah Blasko, Ensemble Offspring, Synergy Percussion, and the ACO. Her debut album, *superclusters* is a massed instrumental ensemble work featuring over 20 musicians including Jim White and Mick Turner and Véronique Serret. Bree is an Associate Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium.

THE SONG COMPANY



The Song Company is Australia's leading professional vocal ensemble. Led by world-leading creative artists, the company has a proud tradition of fostering the careers of the nation's most exciting vocal performers.

Since its beginnings in 1984 it has captivated audiences with exquisite performances of vocal work ranging from the 10th century to contemporary compositions. Every project The Song Company undertakes is underwritten by its unwavering commitment to excellence and to the transcendent and transformative beauty of the human voice.

2024 marks a significant milestone as the ensemble celebrates its 40th Anniversary with an unforgettable journey through the world of vocal ensemble music. Curated by Co-Artistic Directors Amy Moore and Jessica O'Donoghue, this season is dedicated to the exceptional singers of the ensemble and explores the profound connection between music and the natural world.

ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING



Ensemble Offspring is Australia's leading new music group, standing at the forefront of musical innovation. Led by internationally acclaimed percussionist Claire Edwardes OAM, the ensemble unites the country's most fearless and virtuosic instrumentalists. Together, they create "visceral, joyous music" (Sydney Morning Herald) through kaleidoscopically varied performances that blaze a trail for Australian music. By boldly subverting classical traditions, Ensemble Offspring deliver concerts that "burst with imagination, energy and inspiration" (Seesaw Magazine). Through their pioneering spirit, pursuit of excellence and relentless commitment to equality, the ensemble continue to shape a vibrant and diverse future for Australian music.

ensembleoffspring.com

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Lena Edmiston

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