Reviews of the 2018 season

“The Song Company performed with pinpoint accuracy and perfect balance, allowing the great music to speak clearly and with emotion...”

“...such was the exceptional quality of the singing...”

“...it was sometimes difficult to believe that everything was sung a cappella...”

“...a really stunning emphasis on the superbly crafted individual lines, each plaint exquisitely brought out...”

“...ancient musical textures echoing in one’s head with freshness, immediacy, and joy...”

“...it sounded fresh right to the very last note...”

“This was a virtuoso performance without one weak link...”

Antony Pitts seems to be one of those exceptional musicians gifted with musical talent, a spirit of adventure, and enormous energy...

“Everything about this production is restrained, intelligent and elegant...”

“It is rare to see dramatic musical productions in Australia that also succeed as theatre...”

“The Song Company’s attention to detail permeated every aspect of their performance...”

“Displaying its trademark ability to inform and delight...”

“From a baby’s first cry, the human family sings – to celebrate, to mourn, to love, to communicate our deepest thoughts and feelings to each other – above self, beyond words. The Song Company belongs to a land whose first peoples have always used songlines and vocal music to pass knowledge and culture from generation to generation. As vocal adventurers and cultural ambassadors our unique voices and personalities engage in the telling of new stories and the re-telling of ancient stories through vocalization as old as the human voice itself.

Our repertoire spans more than a thousand years – from antique manuscripts to scores fresh from the printer today, and is breathtaking in its stylistic diversity and often virtuosic in its demands. We are ambassadors for Australian artistic vibrancy, championing new Australian music and collaborating across artistic genres and disciplines. We present original and authentic programs that open doors into lost or long-forgotten as well as completely new musical worlds.

We are nurturing the next generation of vocal talent across Australia by providing unique opportunities and mentoring to early career artists.

We invite you to join us for our next round of vocal adventures – Above Beyond.

From across the continent we come together as The Song Company – to give voice to stories from far and wide – together we are Australia’s premier vocal ensemble.
“The thing that I mainly strive after is wonder…”
M.C. Escher

Half a lifetime ago, The Song Company was born into a musical landscape very different from today’s Australia.

The idea of a permanent professional vocal ensemble to match the quality of Australia’s symphony orchestras and opera companies was a bold and forward-thinking move – today we are still growing and diversifying from that initial burst of energy, and have become agents of change for the next generation of singers across the country. With 35 years of vocal heritage to draw on, our 2019 season takes us even further beyond the usual boundaries of genre and style, with Mind Over Matter, my chamber opera/musical on the perils of Artificial Intelligence, and a collaboration with metal artists The Omnific in Power Chords Attached. We continue our rediscovery of communal reading from original manuscript sources with the sumptuous Renaissance polyphony of the Eton Choirbook in Treble Helix Unlocked, and bring together nineteen Australian composers for a newly-commissioned “conversation without words” in Nineteen to the Dozen.

To borrow a line from Escher, the artist who delighted in the impossible, we “try to awake wonder in the minds” of our audience, and so this season we venture with a mixture of the very fresh and the very mature – from music over 800 years old via the decisive harmonic progression of the 15th century and golden melodies of the 1980s to the latest outpourings of local creative minds concerned with the beauty and structure of the sounds that can come out of our mouths. Like the busy lifts in Mind Over Matter we go up and down, hunting high and low, for sounds from above, under, around, and beyond – finding in Escher’s transformations both the inspiration for the metal-to-plainchant fusion and a faint realization of the dizzying webs of melody chained up in the extraordinary collection of vocal music from Eton College. Our intimate popup shows include the time-honoured story of The Arrow of Song and our newly ensemble-curated Madrigalesque, while we focus the spotlight on one artist from the Company at a time in a SongCo Solo series. At the other end of the scale, 2019 sees a new collaboration with the Choir of Trinity College, Melbourne, and a continuing celebration of sacred choral masterpieces with the Choir of St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney including Thomas Tallis’s 40-part Spem in alium. When we sing awesome, we mean awesome.

Antony Pitts
Artistic Director

Above
Beyond
Ethereal interlocking harmonies from the turn of the 16th century sung standing around a beautiful facsimile of the Eton Choirbook.

One of the greatest surviving glories of pre-Reformation England, The Eton Choirbook is a giant 500-year-old manuscript from the royal foundation at Eton College Chapel – a stone’s throw from Windsor Castle. This sequence of music from the Choirbook features a thrilling setting of the Magnificat, heartrending motets, the earliest polyphonic Passion by a named composer, and an extraordinary 13-part canon by the man in charge of the Choristers at Eton, Robert Wylkynson. Continuing a journey begun with the partbooks of Byrd-Round-Table and Machaut’s manuscript in True-Love-Story, we read the music of the Eton Choirbook from a beautiful Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music facsimile, all gathered around a central music stand.

the.song.company/Treble-helix-unlocked

**Program**

**Walter Lambe** Nesciens mater
**William, Monk of Stratford** Magnificat
**Richard Davy** St Matthew Passion
**John Browne** Stabat mater a 6
**Robert Wylkynson** Jesus autem transiens

**Dates**

Sat 9 Feb 3pm  Blackheath Uniting Church
Tue 12 Feb 7.30pm  Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House
Thu 14 Feb 7.30pm  Ballarat Art Gallery
Fri 15 Feb 7pm  Primrose Potter Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre
Sat 16 Feb 7.30pm  Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide
Thu 21 Feb 7pm  Newcastle Concersatorium
Fri 22 Feb 7.30pm  St James’, King Street, Sydney
Tue 26 Feb 7.30pm  St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane
Fri 1 Mar 7.30pm  Wesley Uniting Church, Canberra
Sat 2 Mar 3pm  Wollongong Art Gallery
Bach, Sorrow and Joy

A timely repeat of this 20th-century minimalist masterpiece in collaboration with Christopher Watson and the Choir of Trinity College, Melbourne.

Arvo Pärt’s setting of the St John Passion is a mesmerizing minimalist masterpiece and with the most concentrated of musical means Pärt communicates the depth and universal spirituality of the Passion story.

The music of Arvo Pärt shimmers like the surface of the sea in sunlight: with almost infinite and unpredictable detail: “Tintinnabuli is the mathematically exact connection from one line to another... Tintinnabuli is the rule where the melody and the accompaniment... is one. One plus one, it is one – it is not two. This is the secret of this technique.”

In Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi secundum Ioannem Pärt divides the text of the St John Passion into a narrative sung by the Evangelist Quartet with accompanying instrumental quartet, and dialogue by Jesus, Pilate and other characters sung by the soloists and chorus with organ. Rather like Brighton rock, the character of Pärt’s music in general and of Passio in particular is stamped throughout, and yet the different episodes in the narrative vary enormously in emotional intensity and acoustic texture.

Arvo Pärt says: “I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me.”

Fri 12 April 7.30pm
St Andrew’s, Brighton
Sat 13 April 3pm
Melbourne
the.song.company/Passio

Pärt Passio

SongCo Solo

Schubert Winterreise

Soprano Susannah Lawergren and guest pianist Vatche Jambazian perform together one of the greatest song cycles of all, Schubert’s “Winterreise”.

Sat 1 June 3pm Wollongong Art Gallery
Sun 2 June 2pm Canberra
Sat 8 June 3pm Blackheath Uniting Church
Sun 9 June 3.30pm The Independent Theatre, North Sydney
the.song.company/Winterreise

Songs Before Sleep

Andrew O'Connor sings music by Richard Rodney Bennett, Ivor Gurney, Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Eric Korngold, Martin Wesley-Smith, and Eric Whitacre

Accompanied by pianist Anna Rutkovska-Schock

Selections from this program will be performed with Hourglass Ensemble on April 27 in the Utzon room, Sydney Opera House.

The Independent Theatre, North Sydney
Visit website for dates and venues.
the.song.company/Songs-before-sleep

Bach, Sorrow and Joy – a contemplation of the mysteries of Lent and Passiontide in the timeless music of J.S. Bach including his contemporary adaptation of Pergolesi’s heartfelt Stabat mater.

This is the first of two projects in collaboration with Thomas Wilson and the Choir of St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney demonstrating the transcendent power of vocal music in sacred masterpieces inspired by the above and the beyond.

Program includes:
Giovanni Battista Pergolesi Stabat mater arr. J.S. Bach as Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden BWV 1083
J.S. Bach The Art of Fugue / Contrapunctus XIX
J.S. Bach Jesu, meine Freude
Fri 29 March 7pm & Sun 31 March 2pm
Crypt of St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney
the.song.company/Bach-sorrow-joy
Our singers join forces with the rising bass guitar duo from Melbourne metal band The Omnific for a resonant mix of plainchant, dynamic basslines, and 12th-century organum.

A collaboration across genres with a uniting interest in the deep resonances of vocal cords, struck-strings, and powerful harmonies. A cluster of rising stars from Melbourne, The Omnific has already made a name for its unique rhythmic interplay and wordless metallic fantasies. The Omnific’s two five-string bass guitarists’ classic duo Kismet and other new works are interleaved with multi-voice chanting and improvisation from the male voices of The Song Company in music from Magister Pérotin’s masterpiece Viderunt omnes and its late 12th-century inspirations, echoed by a high soprano in his most haunting of songs, Beata viscera.

the.song.company/Power-chords-attached
A zany and toonful chamber opera about two lifts and a computer virus in a bed of 1980s pop gold served up by five singers, two speakers, and four hands at one piano.

A cartoonesque prequel to Anna’s Rapid Eye Movement (premiered by The Song Company at the Sydney Opera House), Mind Over Matter is a chamber opera by Antony Pitts for five singers, speaking piano duet and computer operator, with theatrical direction by Leonie Cambage. The story is set (not far) in the future: the world has been taken over by a giant computer corporation called BABEL, run by a man known simply as “the Boss”, and, of course, someone is trying to hack into its central computer system. BABEL’s corporate headquarters has 127 floors and just two lifts (with characters of their own). The music is inspired by the melodic pop of the 1980s and the program begins and ends with arrangements of some classic hits from Joe Jackson’s Stepping Out to Wang Chung’s Dance Hall Days.

Featuring

Susannah Lawergren as Anna
Anna Fraser as Mabel
Maximilian Riebl as Professor Karl Rime
Robert Macfarlane as Doctor Phil T. Reezon
Andrew O’Connor as The Guard

Dates

Tue 20 August 7.30pm
Lend Lease Darling Quarter Theatre

Wed 3 Aug 7.30pm
Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre

Fri 23 Aug 7.30pm
Street Theatre, Canberra

Sat 24 Aug 3pm
Wollongong Art Gallery

Thu 29 Aug 7.30pm
Hobart Town Hall

Fri 30 Aug 7.30pm
Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

Sat 31 Aug 7.30pm
Nexus Arts Centre, Adelaide

Tue 3 Sept 7.30pm
Brisbane

Thu 5 Sept 7pm
Newcastle Conservatorium

Sat 7 Sept 3pm
The Independent Theatre, North Sydney

the.song.company/Mind-over-matter
**Madrigalesque**

An ensemble-curated selection of madrigal favourites with a cultural twist

An a cappella selection of audience and Company favourites from the 16th and 17th centuries and beyond. **Madrigalesque: Le Parole** is the first in a series of ensemble-curated programs in which we hand-pick some of our favourite a cappella repertoire. *Le Parole* or ‘The Words’ focuses on the traditions (both old and new) of the Italian Madrigal and some of its greatest masters: Giaches De Wert, Heinrich Schütz, Claudio Monteverdi, Carlo Gesualdo, and Luciano Berio – with a few extra surprises along the way. Discover the passion of the vocal music that paved the road to opera – as a quintet of singers weave together words and harmonies that will leave you spellbound.

**Program:**
- Anders Edenroth *Words*
- De Wert *Qual musico gentil / Sorgi e rischiara al tuo apparir il cielo / M’ha punt’Amor con velenoso dardo*
- Monteverdi *Sestina: Lagnime d’Amante al Sepolcro dell’Amato*
- Gesualdo *Se la mia morte brami / Mille volte il di / Ardo per te / Io parto e non più dissi*
- Schütz *O Primavera*
- Corteccia *Bacco, bacco e, u, o, e*
- Gordon Hamilton *Initialise*

**the.song.company/Madrigalesque**

---

**Tallis, Hope and Crown**


This is the second of two projects in collaboration with Thomas Wilson and the Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, demonstrating the transcendent power of vocal music in sacred masterpieces inspired by the above and the beyond.

**Program includes:**
- Thomas Tallis *Sancte Deus*
- Henry Purcell *Hear my prayer, O LORD a 8*
- Thomas Tallis *Spem in alium a 40*

**Fri 20 Sept 7pm & Sat 21 Sept 7pm**

St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney

**the.song.company/Tallis-hope-crown**

---

**The Arrow of Song**

A guided tour through the long and fascinating story of unaccompanied vocal music in a unique timeline from early chant to contemporary a cappella.

This chronological program captures the long and fascinating history of unaccompanied vocal music in a progressive timeline that is both informative and entertaining – from early chant to contemporary forms of a cappella singing. Hearing how harmony and notation have developed into many styles and genres over the last two thousand years inspires and encourages people of all ages to find their voice.

**Sample program:**
- Plainchant (Laon Codex, c.930) *Ecce virgo concipiet*
- Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) *O Virtus Sapientiae*
- Alfonso X el Sabio (1221-1284) *Entre Ave e Eva from Cantigas de Santa Maria*
- Guillaume Dufay (c.1397-1474) *Conditor alme siderum*
- Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517) *Isbruck ich muss dich lassen*
- Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) *Sfogava con le stele from Il Quarto Libro dei Madrigali a 5 voci (1603)*
- J.S. Bach (1685-1750) *part of Jesu, meine Freude BWV 227*
- Traditional Spiritual arr. Moses Hogan as performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers (c.1870s) *Wade in the water*
- John Cage (1912-1992) *Story from Living Room Music (1940)*
- Paul McCartney *Blackbird (1968 The Beatles)*
- Trad. Christina Macpherson (c.1895) arr. Ruth McCall (2007) *Waltzing Matilda*

Please check **the.song.company/Arrow** for latest popup dates
A tapestry of nineteen brand-new commissions from Australian composers playlisted against fragmented miniatures from each of the last 12 centuries.

In a bold attempt to paint the state of the current Australian compositional landscape, a diverse selection of composers from across the country have been asked to fill a segment of time with sounds that draw on the rich heritage of The Song Company’s first 35 years and look forward to a resonant future. These nineteen commissions are set against fragments of art music from the last thousand years, and together form a dialogue about the nature of vocal music and musical expression. Including music by Alice Chance, Bernie Van Tiel, Lyle Chan, Matthew Hindson, Owen Elsley, Sally Whitwell and many more.

the.song.company/Nineteen-to-the-dozen

Dates

Tue 22 Oct 7.30pm
Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House

Thu 24 Oct 2pm
Berry School of Arts

Fri 25 Oct 7.30pm
Wesley Uniting Church, Canberra

Sat 26 Oct 3pm
Wollongong Art Gallery

Thu 31 Oct 7.30pm
Ballarat Art Gallery

Fri 1 Nov 7pm
Primrose Potter Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre

Tue 5 Nov 7.30pm
St George’s Cathedral, Perth

Thu 7 Nov 7pm
Newcastle Conservatorium

Sat 9 Nov 3pm
The Independent Theatre, North Sydney
The Song Company has a long history and depth of experience of pioneering educational work across the country. We deliver workshops and performances aimed at engaging people at all ages, we work with schools providing a history of music in an hour, with national children’s choirs at summer camps and tours, and community groups of all shapes and sizes, working on a collaborative performance, or just helping out. We work with other choral groups and vocal ensembles providing mentorship and educational training – allowing singing to flourish around Australia at the highest level. With a range of packages to meet diverse needs, and the ability to provide training, workshops, mentoring or educational performances – contact us to discuss how The Song Company can assist your educational goals.

email us at edu@song.company

SongCo Lab is a unique opportunity to work closely together with the singers and Artistic Director of The Song Company on a range of repertoire and vocal techniques. SongCo Lab is designed for aspiring or early/mid-career professional singers and for accomplished amateurs – to find out more and to register your interest, please visit the.song.company/lab

Pioneering Education

SongCo Lab
Enrich our Shared Future

Focus Collaborate Nurture
The Song Company has a proud tradition of philanthropic support that underlies its rich vocal legacy. We are seeking to enrich our shared future by focusing, collaborating, and nurturing.

We focus on original and authentic programs that open doors into lost, long-forgotten, or completely new musical worlds. Programs such as Treble Helix Unlocked and its exploration of the treasures of the Eton Chorbook and the brand-new commissions in Nineteen to the Dozen are refreshing the Australian vocal repertoire with unique stories and sounds.

We collaborate across artistic genres and disciplines including design, technology, world musics, theatre, and dance – this season’s Power Chords attached brings together the young bass guitarists of The Omnific and some of the oldest surviving vocal polyphony from over 800 years ago, creating a unique program that crosses boundaries and antitheses.

We are committed to nurturing the next generation of vocal talent across Australia. We have developed and are continuing to work with a circle of young and emerging artists both within and alongside our established ensemble in order to pass on a range of techniques and a coherent vocal sound that draws on the rich legacy of The Song Company.

You’re invited to Enrich Our Shared Future
A world-class beacon of vocal excellence and adventure – shining across and beyond the continent – is our vision: we invite you to accompany us on our challenging progress into a future that is both exciting and daunting! The money you donate will be used to sponsor an artist, support directly the work of The Song Company all year round. You enable us to plan further in advance and receive a range of benefits for your support:
- Secure your seats for the 2019 season at a reduced rate
- Be the first to purchase popups and special projects
- Rewards for referring friends to The Song Company
- Invitation to subscriber-only events and open rehearsals
- Offers and discounts from other arts organisations
- Renewing subscribers each year receive an extra 10% discount on subscription prices
- To take advantage of all these offers, purchase your subscription prior to 16 November, 2018.

Subscription prices (listed per concert)
Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart | Full $60 / Concession $55
Berry, Blackheath, Wollongong, Newcastle | Full $55 / Concession $50

Booking Info

How to Book
Visit www.song.company/subscribe to select the concerts you wish to add to your subscription package.
Download a booking form from our website, request a booking form by emailing mail@song.company or phone 02 8272 9500, fill it in and send it back to us.

Subscribe & Save
By purchasing a subscription, you directly contribute to and support the work of The Song Company all year round. You enable us to plan further in advance and receive a range of benefits for your support:
- Secure your seats for the 2019 season at a reduced rate
- Be the first to purchase popups and special projects
- Rewards for referring friends to The Song Company
- Invitation to subscriber-only events and open rehearsals
- Offers and discounts from other arts organisations
- Renewing subscribers each year receive an extra 10% discount on subscription prices
- To take advantage of all these offers, purchase your subscription prior to 16 November, 2018.

Subscription prices (listed per concert)
Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart | Full $60 / Concession $55
Berry, Blackheath, Wollongong, Newcastle | Full $55 / Concession $50

Information for 2019
Visit www.song.company/subscribe to select the concerts you wish to add to your subscription package.

Use your voice! Visit www.song.company/share
Help us spread the word about the unique and unmatched work of The Song Company:
- Request a free copy of our 2019 souvenir brochure to be sent to someone you know who will love what we do.
- Turn your friends into first-time subscribers and you’ll both receive an additional discount on your 2020 renewal.
- Like us on Facebook and share our posts with your friends: www.facebook.com/thesongcompany

Follow us on

Enquiries
For any enquiries please call The Song Company (02) 8272 9500 or visit www.song.company
For media enquiries, please call DMCPR on (02) 9550 9207 or email debbie@dmcpr.com.au
This brochure is correct at the time of printing in September 2018. Artists, venues, and programs are subject to change without notice.

The Song Company
Level 2, 52-58 William Street
Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011
Australia

“I came across The Song Company after coming to Sydney in 1999. I love their combination of storytelling, the ways they use space and the sheer joy of hearing what the human voice can do. I come away in a very satisfying state of rich reflection and ‘where did that comes from’ surprise. That’s why I support The Song Company.”
Sandy Belford, long-time subscriber.

“... the voices of angels. I couldn’t believe such beautiful music could be made with voice alone. That’s why, years later, I donate to The Song Company.”
Rachel Scanlon, lawyer, musician, advocate for women, and mother-of-three.
At a Glance
\textit{Treble Helix Unlocked} 9 Feb - 2 March
\textit{Bach, Sorrow and Joy} 29 - 31 March
\textit{Pärt Passio} 12 - 13 April
\textit{Power Chords Attached} 7 - 25 May
\textit{Winterreise} 2 - 9 June
\textit{Mind Over Matter} 20 Aug - 7 Sept
\textit{Tallis, Hope and Crown} 20 - 21 Sept
\textit{Nineteen to the Dozen} 22 Oct - 9 Nov

Government Funding Partners
The Song Company Pty Ltd is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the NSW Government through Create NSW.

\textit{the.song.company}