

11-19 March 2023  
Wollongong | Newcastle | Canberra  
Sydney | Digital Broadcast

# The Song Company

The Song Company is Australia's leading vocal ensemble, presenting music from all times and places. Since its beginnings in 1984, it has captivated Australian and international 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.

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## Songs Under the Southern Cross Artists



SUSANNAH LAWERGREN



AMY MOORE



JESSICA O'DONOGHUE



LOUIS HURLEY



HAYDEN BARRINGTON



AIDAN O'DONNELL

images: Keith Saunders



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# Songs Under the Southern Cross

<b>Wollongong</b>	St. Francis Xavier Cathedral	Saturday 11 March, 3pm
<b>Newcastle</b>	Newcastle Conservatorium of Music	Sunday 12 March, 3pm
<b>Canberra</b>	Wesley Music Centre	Tuesday 14 March, 7pm
<b>Sydney</b>	The Neilson, ACO Pier 2/3	Friday 17 March, 7pm* & Sunday 19 March, 3pm

\*Performance streamed live via Australian Digital Concert Hall

## Program

<b>David Yardley</b> (b. 1978)	<b>A Vision of Julian Norwich</b> (2015) Text by Julian of Norwich (c. 1342-1416)
<b>Anne Boyd</b> (b. 1946)	<b>Revelations of Divine Love</b> (1993) Text after Julian of Norwich
<b>Richard Dering</b> (c. 1580-1630)	<b>Factum est silentium</b> (1618) Antiphonal response for Michaelmas
<b>Ross Edwards</b> (b. 1943)	<b>Southern Cross Chants</b> (2004) Text by Fred Watson (b. 1944)
<b>J.S. Bach</b> 1685-1750)	<b>Jesu, meine Freude</b> BWV 227 (1723) Texts by Johan Franck (c. 1650) and Romans VII, IX

## The Song Company

**Amy Moore**, Guest Director and Soprano  
**Susannah Lawergren**, Soprano  
**Jessica O'Donoghue**, Mezzo Soprano  
**Louis Hurley**, Tenor  
**Hayden Barrington**, Baritone  
**Aidan O'Donnell**, Bass Baritone  
**Francis Greep**, Continuo

**Robyn Martin Weber**, Program Patron

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# Guest Director's Note

My first impressions of The Song Company, as a relative newcomer to Australia, were of an energetic and engaging group of musicians with a passion for storytelling through the transformative beauty of the human voice. I was struck by their proud history of championing Australian composers and commissioning new works for vocal ensemble. Their joy in experimentation, willingness to embrace new ideas, and the adeptness with which they move between music old and new, is something which has attracted audiences over their almost-40-year history. Even for a company with such a rich legacy, the fact remains that many excellent commissioned works don't get a second performance, and this was at the forefront of my mind when conceiving the program for **Songs Under the Southern Cross**.



**Amy Moore**

Our program opens with **A Vision of Julian of Norwich** (of whom more anon), by Australian composer, countertenor and mediaeval harpist, David Yardley. Based on a lifelong love of medieval music, Yardley was inspired by the soaring music of the visions of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) to create musical settings of the words of the medieval English mystic, Mother Julian of Norwich. Yardley's work is both contemporary and ancient, creating a timeless vehicle that elevates Julian of Norwich's poignant words and elegantly sets the scene for Anne Boyd's exploration of 14th century England, and Christian Mysticism.

Mother Julian of Norwich lived in isolation as an anchoress during a pandemic – the bubonic plague, no less. She was enclosed in a cell attached to a church, devoting herself to an ascetic life of prayer and contemplation. Her 'Revelations of Divine Love' are the earliest surviving English Language works by a woman.

**"All shall be well,  
and all shall be well,  
and all manner of things  
shall be well."**

**Julian of Norwich, (c1343-1416)**

Composer Anne Boyd defines her music as "an expression of Christian Love and Buddhist Silence". **Revelations of Divine Love** has a series of contrasting scenes – 'panels', as Boyd describes them. From the opening 'Ma' chords (a reference to Buddhist meditation) which flow seamlessly into the 'Benedicite Domine' section, one could imagine being in a vast cathedral, before Boyd catapults us forward with modern musical language and the drama of the first vision.

Richard Dering (1580-1630) was an English composer who, like a number of Roman Catholic converts, spent most of his professional life in the Netherlands. **Factum est silentium in coelo** ("There was Silence in Heaven") is a wonderfully descriptive work conjuring up scenes of the war in heaven, as described in the book of Revelation. Listen out for the Archangel Michael who fights the dragon, "draco" in the Latin.

In Ross Edwards' **Southern Cross Chants**, our focus moves from the Christian mysticism of Julian's visions to the familiar but eternally unfathomable night sky. One of my first projects with The Song Company was a performance of Ross' **De Spiritu Sancto**. I fell in love with his strikingly energetic approach to vocal writing – joyful, exuberant, and refreshing. In **Southern Cross Chants**, Edwards explores the rich tapestry of First Nations People's Dreaming alongside Western names of stars and constellations, in a text given to him by friend and astronomer, Fred Watson. The music moves from Edwards' trademark lively passages to moments of sublime contemplation.

In the final work of the program we return to sacred music with J.S. Bach's monumental motet, **Jesu, meine Freude** – a musical language that for some needs no introduction. As well as references to Revelations and "the old dragon," I am particularly struck by the overarching theme of Divine Love and how it is represented in the cross. The author, Johann Franck, compares human affliction with Christ's suffering on Earth, before finally exclaiming in the final stanza:

**Denen, die Gott lieben // For those who love God  
Muss auch ihr Betrüben // even their afflictions  
Lauter Zucker sein. // become pure sweetness.**

All three major works are impressive standalone pieces and, as often in concert programming, juxtaposition invites comparison and the inevitable discussion of thematic links. In this program I invite you to see these three works as if from the vantage point of our familiar and beloved Southern Cross – Crux Australis, and Mirabooka, one of the many First Nations' words for the same sky. In **Songs Under the Southern Cross**, with substantial works written here, I hope we can feel our strong connection to the soil, sky and rich culture of our land, Australia.

**Amy Moore**

# Texts and Translations

I'm delighted that this work has been included in **Songs Under the Southern Cross**.  
First performed by The Song Company on my recent album of compositions, **The Lost Codex of Avalon Vol 1**,  
this piece mirrors Julian's vision of the hall of heaven and the enveloping bliss as her insights unfold.  
In a few short lines, we ascend, musically and mentally, from feast and fellowship,  
through the "marvellous melody of endless love", to indescribable "joy and blisse."

David Yardley, 2023

## A Vision of Julian Norwich

I saw the Lord as a Lord in His owne house,  
which hath clepid al his derworthy servants  
and friends to a solemne feste.  
Than I saw the Lord take no place in His owne house,  
but I saw him rialy regne in His owne house  
and fulfillid it with joy and mirth,  
Hym selfe endlessly to gladden  
and to solacyn His derworthy frends  
full homeley and full curtesly,  
with mervelous melody of endles love  
in His owen faire blisside chere,  
which glorious chere of the godhede  
fulfillith Hevyns of joy and blisse.

I saw our Lord as a lord in his own house,  
which hath called all his dear-worthy servants  
and friends to a stately feast.  
I saw the Lord take no place in His own house,  
but I saw Him royally reign in His house,  
fulfilling it with joy and mirth,  
Himself endlessly to gladden  
and to solace His dear-worthy friends,  
full homely and full courteously,  
with marvellous melody of endless love,  
in His own fair blessed Countenance.  
Which glorious Countenance of the Godhead  
fulfilleth the Heavens with joy and bliss.

It was exciting to hear that The Song Company was reviving **Revelations of Divine Love**,  
a commission dating back some 30 years!

The trip down memory lane has been interesting, even profound, coinciding with the death of close family members.

Grief brings with it thoughts of a possible afterlife and an inevitable re-examination of one's personal spirituality and religious beliefs.  
Julian of Norwich's revelations occurred when she, too, was faced with a severe illness and the likely prospect of her mortal death.

She recovered but the 16 visions, 'shewings', she experienced on the 8th May, 1373 were so vivid  
that she needed to write them down.

Astonishingly, these revelations still speak with meaning to the contemporary mind.

My musical encounter with Julian of Norwich's dramatic and powerful revelations  
is a deeply felt spiritual exercise, founded upon an overwhelming sense of Love.

I can only hope it will have some similar meaning for today's listeners.

Anne Boyd, 2023

## Revelations of Divine Love

*Benedicite Domine*

*Jesu Christe*

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on his  
head.

*And at once I saw the red blood trickling down from under the  
garland, hot, fresh and plentiful, just as it did at the time of his  
passion when the crown of thorns was pressed onto the blessed  
head of God and man who suffered for me.*

*Jesu Christe*

(Luke Chapter 22: 19-20)

"This is my body which is given for thee.

This is my blood which is shed for thee."

"This is his body which is given for me.

This is his blood which is shed for me."

Benedicite Domine

In my sleep, the fiend held me by the throat.

His face was like a young man's face,

long, lean, the colour red, black spots.

He grinned at me with a sly grimace, his face close to mine.

Then a light smoke came through the door,

with great heat and filthy smell.

Benedicite Domine.

The whole place is on fire!

(Matthew Chapter 4: 1-10)

Then was Jesus led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted forty days and forty nights, and was hungry.

The devil came to him and said "If thou be the son of God,  
command that these stones be made bread."

But Jesus said "Man shall not live by bread alone  
but by every word that proceedeth from God the father."



Then the devil led him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him:  
"If thou be the son of God cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest at any time thou shalt bruise thy foot against a stone."

Jesus said unto him "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them:  
"All these things I will give thee if thou wilt worship me."

"Get thee hence Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Him only shalt thou serve."

Then the devil leaveth him and behold angels came and ministered unto him.  
Benedicite Domine

(Revelation Chapter 21: 1-5)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the old heaven and the old earth was passed away; and there was no more sea.

*Then our Lord opened my spiritual eyes and showed me the soul in the middle of my heart. The soul was as large as if it were an eternal world and a blessed kingdom as well. Its condition showed it to be a most glorious city. In the midst of it sat our Lord Jesus, God and man, beautiful in person and great in stature, the greatest of bishops, most majestic of kings, and most worshipful Lord.*

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

*And I saw him arranged in solemn state. Most gloriously he is seated in the soul, in rightful peace and rest. His God-head rules and upholds both heaven and earth, and all that is, and is supreme in might, wisdom and goodness.*

And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, sorrow, nor crying, neither pain:  
All things made new.

*Nor will he quit the place he holds in our soul for ever. For in us he is completely at home, and has his eternal dwelling. Benedicite Domine.*

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#### **Factum est silentium**

Factum est silentium in caelo,  
Dum committeret bellum draco cum Michaelae Archangelo.

There was silence in heaven  
When the dragon fought with the Archangel Michael.

Audita est vox millia millium dicentium:  
Salus, honor et virtus omnipotenti Deo.  
Millia millium ministrabant ei et decies centena millia assistebant ei. Alleluia.

The voice of thousands of thousands was heard saying:  
Salvation, honour and power be to almighty God.  
Thousands of thousands ministered to him and ten hundreds of thousands stood before him. Alleluia.

Whilst accompanying a group of astronomers, including my friend Fred Watson, I found myself, one magical night, contemplating a glittering sky in the Simpson Desert.  
This unforgettable experience was to inspire my choral Fourth Symphony, *Star Chant*, as Fred had also provided a text linking First Nation Peoples' Dreaming with Western names of stars and constellations.

When Roland Peelman asked me to compose **Southern Cross Chants** for The Song Company, I took up Fred's text once more, this time focusing on words relating to the southern sky. As I'd anticipated, the wonderful Song Company was undaunted by the challenge in 2004 and I'm so very pleased it will be touring the work again this year.

**Ross Edwards, 2023**

#### **Southern Cross Chants**

Hydra: Unwala. Spica: Gurie.  
Sirius: Warepil. Fomalot: Gani.

Antares: Djuit; Scorpius: Ingalpir.  
Antares: Alkarinja. Archernar: Agnura.

Proxima Centauri, Proxima Centauri.

Canopus: Wahn. Crux Australis: Waluwara;  
Crux Australis: Yaraan-do; Crux Australis: Wanamoumitja.  
Crux, Centaurus: Iritjinga; Crux. Centaurus: Mirrabooka.

### **Jesu, meine Freude**

Jesu, meine Freude, meines Herzens Weide,  
Jesu, meine Zier, ach wie lang, ach lange  
Ist dem Herzen bange Und verlangt nach dir!  
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam, außer dir soll mir auf Erden  
Nichts sonst Liebers werden.

Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen, die in Christo Jesu sind,  
Die nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln, sondern nach dem Geist.

Unter deinem Schirmen bin ich vor den Stürmen  
aller Feinde frei. Laß den Satan wittern,  
Laß den Feind erbittern, mir steht Jesus bei.  
Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt, ob gleich Sünd und Hölle  
schrecken: Jesus will mich decken.

Denn das Gesetz des Geistes,  
Der da lebendig macht in Christo Jesu,  
Hat mich frei gemacht von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes.

Trotz dem alten Drachen, trotz des Todes Rachen,  
trotz der Furcht darzu! Tobe, Welt, und springe,  
Ich steh hier und singe in gar sicherer Ruh.  
Gottes Macht hält mich in acht; Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,  
ob sie noch so brummen.

Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich, sondern geistlich,  
So anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnt.  
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat, der ist nicht sein.

Weg mit allen Schätzen! Du bist mein Ergötzen,  
Jesu, meine Lust! Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,  
ich mag euch nicht hören, bleibt mir unbewusst!  
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod soll mich, ob ich viel muss  
leiden, Nicht von Jesu scheiden.

So aber Christus in euch ist,  
So ist der Leib zwar tot um der Sünde willen;  
Der Geist aber ist das Leben um der Gerechtigkeit willen.

Gute Nacht, o Wesen, das die Welt erlesen,  
Mir gefällt du nicht. Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,  
Bleibet weit dahinten, kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!  
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!  
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben, gute Nacht gegeben.

So nun der Geist des, der Jesum von den Toten auferwecket hat,  
in euch wohnt, so wird auch derselbige, der Christum von den Toten  
auferwecket hat, eure sterbliche Leiber lebendig machen um des  
willen, dass sein Geist in euch wohnt.

Weicht, ihr Trauergeister, denn mein Freudenmeister,  
Jesus, tritt herein.  
Denen, die Gott lieben,  
Muß auch ihr Betrübten lauter Zucker sein.  
Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,  
Dennoch bleibst du auch  
im Leide, Jesu, meine Freude.

Jesus, my joy, my heart's delight  
Jesus, my treasure, ah how long, ah how long  
must my heart be anxious and full of longing for you!  
Lamb of God, my bridegroom, besides you there is in on earth  
nothing else that is dearer to me.

There is now no condemnation in them who are in Christ  
and who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Beneath your protection I am free from the raging  
of all enemies. Let the devil sniff around,  
let my enemy become incensed Jesus stands by me .  
Even though thunder crashes and lightning blazes, even though sin  
and hell terrify Jesus will protect me.

For the law of the spirit,  
Which makes me living in Christ Jesus,  
has made me free from the law of sin and death.

I defy the ancient dragon, I defy the jaws of death,  
I defy the fear they cause. Rage, World, and leap upon me.  
I stand here and sing In the calm of certainty.  
God's power takes care of me; earth and hell's abyss must fall  
silent, however much they roar.

But you are not of the flesh, but of the spirit,  
and so God's spirit dwells in you in a different way.  
But whoever does not have Christ's spirit is not his.

Away with all treasures! You are my delight,  
Jesus, my desire! Away with all vain honours,  
I don't want to hear of you, remain unknown to me!  
Suffering, distress, the cross, shame and death, however much  
I have to suffer, will never separate me from Jesus.

If Christ is in you,  
Then the body is dead because of sin,  
but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Good night, o earthly existence, what the world has to offer  
does not please me at all. Good night, you sins  
stay far away from here, come no more to the light!  
Good night, arrogance and splendour.  
To everything about you, sinful existence, I bid goodnight.

Now the spirit that has raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you.  
The very same spirit that has raised Jesus from the dead,  
gives life to your mortal bodies, so that his spirit  
may dwell in you.

Vanish, spirits of gloom, for my joyful master,  
Jesus, enters in.  
For those who love God  
even their grief must become pure delight.  
Here I may have scorn and derision,  
but even in the midst  
of suffering you remain, Jesus, my joy.

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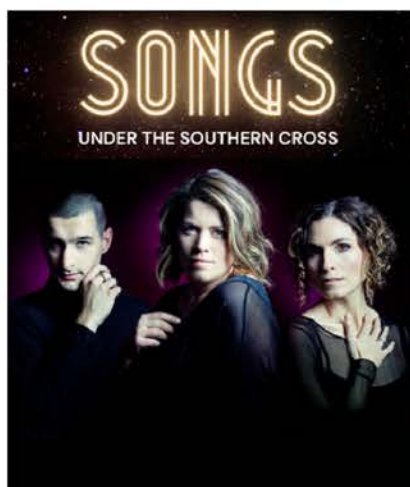
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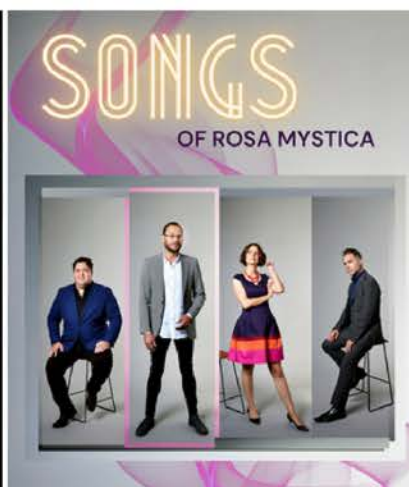
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