



THE  
SONG  
CO.

# RUMOURS OF *Glory*

★★★★★

"Celestial sounds from underground as  
The Song Company delivers an expert  
and enlightening performance in Tudor polyphony"  
- LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE April 2021

NEWCASTLE | WOLLONGONG  
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# The Song Company

The Song Company belongs to a land whose first peoples have always used songlines and vocal music to pass knowledge and culture from one generation to another. We acknowledge and respect those traditions and are honoured to work together with Indigenous creative artists as part of our artistic mission. As Australia's national vocal ensemble, The Song Company is an elite chamber vocal ensemble demonstrating international excellence and bringing together the country's finest voices in innovative performances, artist development, educational outreach and collaborative music-making – unique in its stylistic diversity with repertoire spanning the 9th century to today.

Led by Artistic Director, Antony Pitts, The Song Company comprises eight Principal Artists and a consort of Ensemble and Associate Artists mentored by Associate Artistic Director, Francis Greep. It is at the forefront of scholarly early music performance and of contemporary vocal music through an extensive commissioning program, and cross-artform collaborations with artists of the highest calibre from across Australia and around the world.

Together we are reshaping the professional vocal landscape in Australia for today and the next generation.

## **BOARD**

Louise Guy, Acting Chair  
Elizabeth Grey  
Matthew Hindson  
Antony Pitts

## **THE SONG COMPANY TEAM**

Antony Pitts, Artistic Director  
Francis Greep, General Manager & Associate Artistic Director  
Eva Frey, Marketing & Development Manager  
Sarah Elise Thompson, Production Manager  
Jane Diamond, Bookkeeper

## **PRINCIPAL ARTISTS**

Roberta Diamond, Chloe Lankshear, Amy Moore, sopranos  
Stephanie Dillon, Jessica O'Donoghue, mezzo-sopranos  
Dan Walker, Koen van Stade, tenors  
Thomas Flint, bass

## **2022 ASSOCIATE ARTISTS**

Janine Harris, Ethan Taylor, Hayden Barrington

## **2022 ENSEMBLE ARTIST**

Elias Wilson

## **2022 SONGCO APPRENTICES**

Lily Harper, Adele Kozak, Elise Morton, sopranos  
Cassandra Doyle, Steph Macindoe, Emma Warburton, mezzo-sopranos  
Alexander Caldwell, Alex Gorbатов, David Lee, tenors  
Lincoln Law, Brendan McRae, Jesse van Proctor, basses

## **2022 GUEST ARTISTS**

Hannah Fraser\*, Sonya Holowell, Elizabeth Sheppard, Jenny Eriksson,  
Robert Macfarlane, Jack Stephens, Christopher Richardson, Paul Capsis,  
Gerard Willems, Thomas E.S. Kelly, Hylton Mowday,  
*\*Emerita Artist*



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

The Song Company acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and we pay our respect to the Elders both past, present and yet to come

The Song Company Pty Ltd trading as The Song Company is a non-profit organisation registered as a company of limited guarantee ABN 27 001 577 377

# Rumours of Glory

Tuesday 15 March, 7pm  
Thursday 17 March, 5pm  
Friday 18 March, 7pm  
Saturday 19 March, 4pm  
Tuesday 22 March, 7pm

Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle  
Wollongong Art Gallery  
The Crypt, St Mary's Cathedral Sydney  
The Crypt, St Mary's Cathedral Sydney  
Abbotsford Convent Melbourne

## PROGRAM

Romano Crivici: *Dreams and Visions* (introduction)

Orlande de Lassus: *Prophetiae Sibyllarum*

Carmina chromatico

I – Sibylla Persica

II – Sibylla Libyca

III – Sibylla Libyca

IV – Sibylla Cimmeria

VI – Sibylla Sarnia

VII – Sibylla Cumana

VII – Sibylla Hellespontiaca

VIII – Sibylla Phrygia

IX – Sibylla Europaea

X – Sibylla Tiburtina

XI – Sibylla Erythraea

XII – Sibylla Agrippa

Heather Percy: *Locus iste* (after Bruckner)

Josquin des Prez: *Missa Pange lingua*

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

*Pange lingua gloriosi* (plainchant)

Agnus Dei

## THE SONG COMPANY

Roberta Diamond – Soprano

Dan Walker – Tenor

Antony Pitts – Director

Hannah Fraser – Mezzo-soprano

Hayden Barrington – Baritone

## Artists



Roberta Diamond



Hannah Fraser



Dan Walker



Hayden Barrington



Antony Pitts

# Program Notes

The Song Company's 2022 Season, **Higher Ground**, aims to lift the spirit with exceptional ensemble singing by Australia's elite national chamber vocal ensemble across a range of smaller- and larger-scale vocal music with a particular highlight on sacred polyphony from the 16th to 19th centuries. Seeking refuge by moving ever higher is an instinct deep within the human psyche; we can discover shelter and meaning in the exquisite and intricate works of the polyphonic masters of the Renaissance, and as loved and imitated by later generations of composers such as Buxtehude and Brahms.

Our new series of SongCo Underground takes us on a pan-European tour of 16th-century polyphony – beginning with Josquin at the tail end of his 500th anniversary year, expanding with Brumel's 12-part 'Earthquake Mass', and climaxing with Tallis's 40-part motet *Spem in alium*, all interleaved with works by composers living and creating in Australia today. **Rumours of Glory** is the first in our 2022 Underground series and is sung one-to-a-part by a quartet of our Artists – Roberta, Hannah, Dan and Hayden. The program takes us back both to the glories of the European Renaissance and millennia further to the ancient Greek and Roman empires.

Just as Hildegard of Bingen presents a procession of female personified Virtues in *Ordo Virtutum* (recently recorded and released by The Song Company), so in Lassus's *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* we hear from a line-up of twelve gifted women known collectively as Sibyls and revered for uttering prophetic pronouncements on "the secrets of salvation". Perhaps the two most famous Sibyls in history are the Oracle of Delphi (echoed in the recent film series *The Matrix*), followed closely by the Cumaean Sibyl immortalized in Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where she accompanies the hero Aeneas on his journey to the Underworld. In the famous mediaeval plainchant, *Dies irae*, the testimony of these ancient pagan women was set alongside the Judeo-Christian prophets and patriarchs: "Teste David cum Sibylla" ("as testifies David with the Sibyl"). By the 15th century these writings had been anthologized and versified with as many as ten different Sibyls from Ancient Greece and Rome and across the Middle East; Lassus's text includes two more (the European and Agrippan Sibyls).

"To attend and to be attentive one must first be called to attention... The ear must be excited, incited, invited to hear..." writes Professor Gary Watt (who collaborated with us in 2016 in **A Strange Eventful History**) about the art of listening: "the call to give or lend the ear had long been a staple of theatrical practice just as it had long been a staple of the rhetorical tradition...". Shakespeare opens *Henry IV, Part II* with such an invitation: "Open your ears; for which of you will stop / The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?"

The music of contemporary Australian composer Romano Crivici, from his cycle *Dreams and Visions*, invites us into the mysterious world of **Rumours of Glory**. Crivici explores the 'Dark Night of the Soul' with twisting and turning melodic meditations on "the hole that lies in your soul" as "Light dawns in strange ways"....

Born in what is now Belgium around 1530, Orlando di Lasso (as he was known on the Italian peninsula where he spent much of his early life) was one of the most prolific Renaissance composers with some sixty Masses and many hundreds of Magnificats and motets to his name. In *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* Lassus set Latin verses encapsulating the Messianic sayings of twelve of these precognisant Sibyls in six pairs of madrigals, and dedicated them to his new patron in Munich, Albrecht V of Bavaria. Musically speaking, *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* departs from the usual "diatonic" way of creating counterpoint within a mode with only a limited number of extra accidentals, and focuses instead on pushing the tonal (hexachordal) system to its limits. Lassus puts together many unrelated chords very close to each other and the result can be quite shocking to the ear. Although both chromatic and shocking, as is the music of his infamous contemporary Gesualdo, the effect of Lassus's chromaticism is unexpected beauty, as the harmonies shift and shimmer in the light. Charles IX, King of France, who wanted to employ Lassus, having heard the prologue to *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* was "so ravished by it that I cannot describe it". For the singers this means tuning every major or minor chord as sweetly and "justly" as possible, while listening closely to hear where the harmony is moving next.

Lassus's predecessor, Josquin des Prez, born not far away (near the modern Belgian-French border) halfway through the previous century, was considered the absolute paragon of early polyphony, with his contemporary Martin Luther calling him simply the "master of the notes". In perhaps his final and most well-known setting of the 'Ordinary' of the Mass (the sung parts that are repeated at every service), the *Missa Pange lingua*, Josquin created a model of the style that was to dominate the 16th century throughout Europe, using the plainchant hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* as its inspiration and foundation: "Sing, my tongue, of the mystery of the glorious Body". The beginning of the plainchant melody steps up a semitone and back down, and this simple motif can be heard at the beginning of each of the five movements of the Mass, as well as at other important moments.

**Rumours of Glory** ends with new Australian music, this time by Heather Percy, whose model here is Anton Bruckner's famous motet, *Locus iste* – itself stemming from a 19th-century resurgence of interest in the polyphonic style. Percy references Bruckner's music directly but reworks it into her own harmonic world.

"At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door...", ruminates C.S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*: "We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in... human souls... will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch..." Perhaps there are hints of this glory that are able to shine through our program today.

Antony Pitts

# Texts & Translations

## Prophetiae Sibyllarum – Prologo

Carmina chromatico quae audis modulata tenore,  
Haec sunt illa quibus nostrae olim arcana salutis  
Bis senae intrepido cecinerunt ore Sibyllae.

## I – Sibylla Persica

Virgine matre satus, pando residebit asello,  
lucundus princeps, unus qui ferre salutem  
Rite queat lapsis: tamen illis forte diebus  
Multi multa ferent immensi fata laboris.  
Solo sed satis est oracula prodere verbo:  
Ille Deus casta nascetur virgine magnus.

## II – Sibylla Libyca

Ecce dies venient, quo aeternus tempore princeps,  
Irradians sata laeta, viris sua crimina tollet,  
Lumine clarescet cuius synagoga recenti:  
Sordida qui solus reserabit labra reorum,  
Aequus erit cunctis, gremio rex membra reclinet  
Reginae mundi, sanctus, per saecula vivus.

## III – Sibylla Delphica

Non tarde veniet, tacita sed mente tenendum  
Hoc opus. Hoc memori semper qui corde reponet,  
Huius pertentant cor gaudia magna prophetae  
Eximii, qui virginea conceptus ab alvo  
Prodibit, sine contactu maris. Omnia vincit  
Hoc naturae opera: at fecit, qui cuncta gubernat.

## IV – Sibylla Cimmeria

In teneris annis facie praesignis, honore  
Militiae aeternae regem sacra virgo cibabit  
Lacte suo: per quem gaudebunt pectore summo  
Omnia, et Eo lucebit sidus ab orbe  
Mirificum: sua dona Magi cum laude ferentes  
Obiicient puero myrrham, aurum, thura Sabaea.

## V – Sibylla Samia

Ecce dies nigras quae tollet laeta tenebras,  
Mox veniet, solvens nodosa volumina vatum  
Gentis Judaeae, referent ut carmina plebis.  
Hunc poterunt clarum vivorum tangere regem,  
Humano quem virgo sinu inviolata fovebit.  
Annuit hoc caelum, rutilantia sidera monstrant.

## VI – Sibylla Cumana

Iam mea certa manent, et vera, novissima verba,  
Ultima venturi quod erant oracula regis,  
Qui toti veniens mundo cum pace, placebit,  
Ut voluit, nostra vestitus carne decenter,  
In cunctis humilis. Castam pro matre puellam  
Deliget, haec alias forma praecesserit omnes.

## VII – Sibylla Hellespontica

Dum meditor quondam vidi decorare puellam,  
Eximio (castam quod se servaret) honore,  
Munere digna suo et divino numine visa,  
Quae sobolem multo pareret splendore micantem:  
Progenies summi speciosa et vera Tonantis,  
Pacifica mundum qui sub ditione gubernet.

## VIII – Sibylla Phrygia

Ipsa Deum vidi summum punire volentem  
Mundi homines stupidos et pectora caeca rebellis,  
Et quia sic nostram complerent crimina pellem  
Virginis in corpus voluit demittere caelo  
Ipse Deus prolem, quam nunciet Angelus almae  
Matri, quo miseros contracta sorde levaret.

## Prophecies of the Sibyls – Prologue

The songs you hear modulating with chromatic tenor,  
these are they in which the secrets of salvation were  
once sung with bold mouth by our twice sixfold Sibyls.

## The Persian Sibyl

Seed of a virgin mother, sitting on a hunched ass,  
the happy prince, the one able to bring salvation  
rightly to the fallen: however in those days it will happen  
that many will make many prophecies with immense labour.  
But it is enough for the oracles to come forth with one word:  
the great God Himself will be born of a chaste virgin.

## The Libyan Sibyl

Behold, the days are coming, when in time the eternal prince,  
radiating lively seed, will take away men's crimes from them,  
whose synagogue will shine with new light:  
the sordid lips of the accused will be opened by Him alone,  
being equitable to all, may the king rest His limbs in the lap  
of the queen of the world, holy and living evermore.

## The Delphic Sibyl

He will not be slow in coming, but keep in quiet mind  
this act. This will He always place in a conscious heart,  
as is witnessed with great joy by the prophets,  
the exalted One, who was conceived in a virginal womb  
will come forth, without contact with a husband. He triumphs  
over all works of nature – it is done – He governs all things.

## The Cimmerian Sibyl

In His tender years, preeminent in looks, in honour,  
the holy virgin will feed the king of the eternal army  
with her milk: through whom shall rejoice with heart uplifted  
all people, and from the turning globe's dawn will shine a star  
quite wonderful: bearing their gifts the wise men with praise  
will offer to the child myrrh, gold, and incense from Seba.

## The Samian Sibyl

Behold the joyful day which will lift the black darkness!  
Soon it will come and unlock the prophets' entangled volumes  
from the Jewish nation, as the songs of their people do tell.  
They will be able to touch the living ones' bright king,  
whom at a human breast an inviolate virgin will nourish.  
Heaven declares this, the glowing stars show it forth.

## The Cumæan Sibyl

Now certain and true remain my newest words  
which were the latest prophecies of the coming king,  
who, coming with peace for the whole world, will be pleased,  
as He willed, to be suitably clothed in our flesh,  
humble in all things. A chaste girl for his mother  
will He choose, who in beauty shall surpass all others.

## The Hellespontine Sibyl

While I was meditating I saw a girl adorned  
with favoured honour (for she kept herself chaste),  
through His gift and Spirit divine having been deemed worthy,  
in great splendour would bear a glorious offspring:  
the child, fair and true, of the highest Thunderer,  
who will govern the world with peaceful authority.

## The Phrygian Sibyl

I myself saw the highest God wishing to punish  
the rebellious earth's stupid men and blind hearts,  
and because our skin is so filled with crimes  
in a virgin's body from heaven was sent down by the will of  
God Himself His son, announced by an Angel to his nourishing  
mother, in order to raise wretches caught in squalor.

**IX – Sibylla Europæa**

Virginis aeternum veniet de corpore verbum  
Purum, qui valles et montes transiet altos.  
Ille volens etiam stellato missus Olympo,  
Edetur mundo pauper, qui cuncta silenti  
Rexerit imperio: sic credo, et mente fatebor:  
Humano simul ac divino semine gnatus.

**X – Sibylla Tiburtina**

Verax ipse Deus dedit haec mihi munia fandi,  
Carmine quod sanctam potui monstrare puellam,  
Concipiet quae Nazareis in finibus, illum  
Quem sub carne Deum Bethlemitica rura videbunt.  
O nimium felix, caelo dignissima mater,  
Quae tantam sacro lactabit ab ubere prolem.

**XI – Sibylla Erythræa**

Cerno Dei natum, qui se demisit ab alto,  
Ultima felices referent cum tempora soles:  
Hebraea quem virgo feret de stirpe decora,  
In terris multum teneris passurus ab annis,  
Magnus erit tamen hic divino carmine vates,  
Virgine matre satus, prudenti pectore verax.

**XII – Sibylla Agrippa**

Summus erit sub carne satus, carissimus atque,  
Virginis et verae complebit viscera sanctum  
Verbum, consilio, sine noxa, spiritus almi:  
Despectus multis tamen ille, salutis amore,  
Arguet et nostra commissa piacula culpa:  
Cuius honos constans et gloria certa manebit.

**Locus iste**

Locus iste a Deo factus est,  
inaestimabile sacramentum,  
irreprehensibilis est.

**The European Sibyl**

From the body of a virgin will come the eternal Word,  
pure, and crossing valleys and high mountains.  
He, sent even willingly from starry Olympus,  
shall be born to the world a pauper, who all things in silent  
majesty shall rule: thus I believe and will confess with my mind:  
from seed human and divine both at once He is born

**The Tiburtine Sibyl**

True God Himself gave me these prophetic duties,  
so I could reveal in song the holy maiden  
who within the borders of Nazareth will conceive Him  
whom as God in the flesh the fields of Bethlehem will see.  
O mother happy beyond measure, most worthy of heaven,  
who such a child will nurse at her holy breast.

**The Erythræan Sibyl**

I see one born of God, who sent Himself from on high,  
when joyful days shall bring the times of the end:  
whom from Hebrew root the comely virgin will bear,  
on earth about to suffer much from his tender years,  
he will yet be a great prophet with song divine,  
the seed of a virgin mother, truthful and wise-hearted.

**The Agrippan Sibyl**

The highest, yes and the dearest will be born in flesh, the seed  
of the true virgin whose womb will be filled with the holy  
Word, by design, yet without taint, of the nourishing Spirit:  
but despised by many, He, for love of salvation,  
will convict of the sins committed by our fault:  
His constant honour and certain glory will endure.

This place was made by God,  
sacred beyond price,  
it is irreproachable.

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# Upcoming SongCo tours



Singer, composer and all-round musician Dan Walker tackles this rarely-performed monument of contemporary culture in a series of live Close-Up appearances with Antony Pitts on keys.

Songs from Liquid Days has been described as Philip Glass's "single greatest achievement" and is a cycle of meditations on the power of love, time, and change.

**DAN WALKER, TENOR**  
**ANTONY PITTS, PIANO**

**THU 24 MAR, 7:30PM**  
The Song Company Studio @ Walsh Bay, Wharf 4/5

**FRI 25 MAR, 7PM**  
Wesley Music Centre, Canberra

**THU 7 APR, 7PM**  
Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne

Tickets: [the.song.company/liquid-days](https://the.song.company/liquid-days) (02) 9156 2781



16th Century Composer Anton Brumel's exquisite 12 part a capella "Earthquake" Mass

**SUN 24 April, 3PM**

Wollongong Art Gallery

**TUES 26 April, 7pm**

Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle

**FRI 29 April, 7PM**

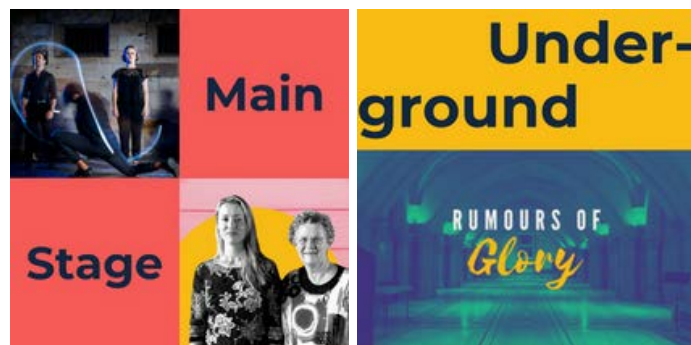
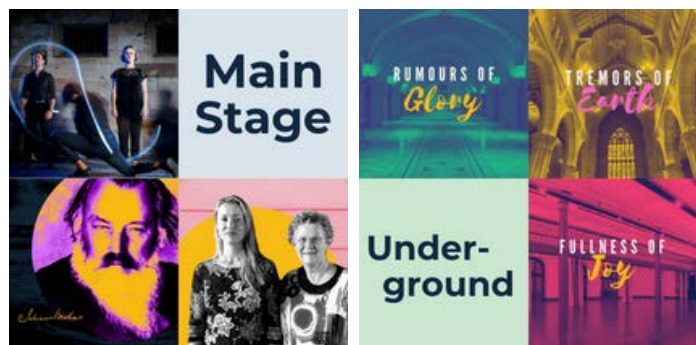
St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney

**SUN 1 May, 1:30PM**

ACO The Neilson Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay

Tickets: [the.song.company/tremors-of-earth](https://the.song.company/tremors-of-earth) (02) 9156 2781

## Concert Seasons



**Sydney Season**  
**Info & Tickets**

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