

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS



All Flesh Is Fire

by Anne Cawrse

based on the poem *Faith* (2023) by Kate Llewellyn AM

Performed by Adelaide Chamber Singers

Conducted by Christie Anderson

Commissioned by the Art Gallery of South Australia for the
18th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Inner Sanctum

Created and performed on Kurna Yerta

Thursday 29 February 6.00pm & 7.30pm

Saturday 2 March 12.30pm & 2.00pm

Friday 5 April 6.00pm & 7:30pm

Created with support from Arts SA Major Projects

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Season 2024
adelaidechambersingers.com



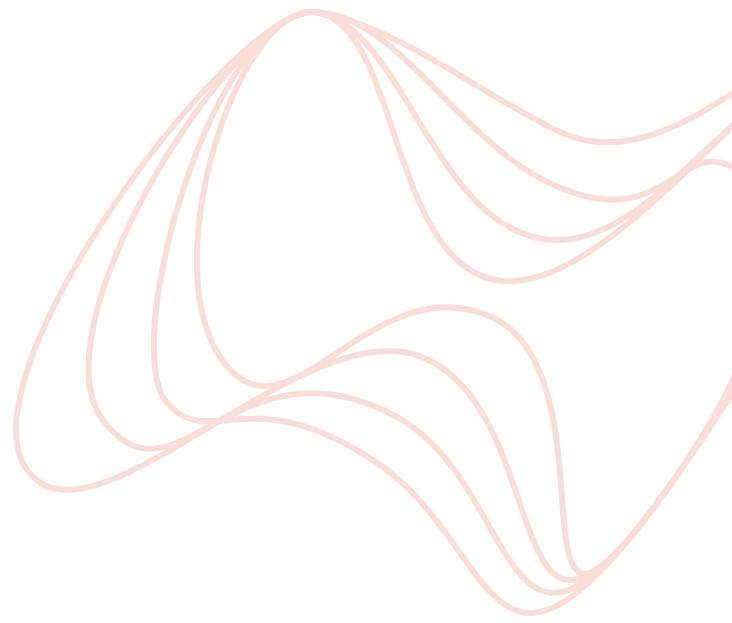
All Flesh Is Fire

for Chamber Choir by Anne Cawrse
based on the poem *Faith* (2023) by Kate Llewellyn AM

Contemplating a life's journey with themes of faith, refuge and sanctuary, *All Flesh Is Fire* fills the gallery with song, turning the gaze inward, reflecting the impact and transience of the temporal landscape.

Sixteen singers appear in shifting combinations throughout this staged exhibition, combining the alchemy of voice and solitude in the splendour of small moments.

- 1. *Under The Olive Tree***
Chorus & Soloists: Brooke Window, Emma Borgas, Alexandra Bollard, Courtney Day
- 2. *The War Is Over***
Solo Quartet: Brooke Window, Imogen Tonkin, Rachel Bruerville, Courtney Day
- 3. *White Petals***
Chorus & Soloists: Emma Borgas, Sophie Schumacher, Alexandra Bollard, Courtney Day, Graham Yuile, Aidan Foyel, Nikolai Leske
- 4. *living breathing spirit***
Soloists: Alexandra Bollard & Brooke Window
- 5. *Night / Light***
Chorus & Soloist: Emma Borgas
- 6. *This Old Woman***
Solo Quintets and Soloists: Imogen Tonkin, Sophie Schumacher, Kit Tonkin, Jordan Rose, Jonathan Bligh; Emma Borgas, Rachel Bruerville, David Hamer, Chris Gann, Aidan Foyel; Courtney Day, Alexandra Bollard
- 7. *Angel Of The Olive Tree***
Chorus, Solo Quartet & Soprano Solo: Alexandra Bollard, Georgie Simmons, David Hamer, Chris Gann; Brooke Window



Adelaide Chamber Singers

Artistic Director & Conductor: Christie Anderson

Soprano: Alexandra Bollard, Emma Borgas, Imogen Tonkin, Brooke Window

Alto: Rachel Bruerville, Courtney Day, Sophie Schumacher, Georgie Simmons

Tenor: David Hamer, Aidan Foyel, Kit Tonkin, Graham Yuile

Bass: Jonathan Bligh, Christopher Gann, Nikolai Leske, Jordan Rose

Artistic Director's notes

Christie Anderson

Picture a green chair, under an olive tree...

The simplicity of these words, the underlying peace, joy and contentment are at the heart of *All Flesh is Fire*, a timely cross-pollination of Kate Llewellyn's text, Anne Cawrse's music and the interpretation and emotional expression of Adelaide Chamber Singers. As Artistic Director, it's always such a profound experience to delve into something new and vibrant, breathing life into a performance work. We are grateful to curator José Da Silva, who brought Kate's voice into our world for the Adelaide Biennial, our friend Anne Carwse and the wonderful ACS and AGSA teams who support our work. Being in the Elder Wing of Australian Art feels like coming home.

Above all, this is a work written for the skill, musicality and heart of Adelaide Chamber Singers. Anne has structured the movements so the listener hears the singers both in full ensemble and as single soloists or configurations in one voice per part. These smaller groupings allow you to hear each distinct voice, as distinguishable as a fingerprint, and how they fit into the larger ACS ensemble. Each singer has made this work their own, and have taken something away from this process, to cherish in their own inner sanctum. It is a stunning contribution to this outstanding 18th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art.



Composer's Notes

Anne Cawrse

All Flesh is Fire is a new work in seven parts composed for the superb voices of the Adelaide Chamber Singers, with text taken from the poem *Faith* by poet and writer Kate Llewellyn, AM.

I see this work as a meditation on memory, aging, and the passage of time. There is an enchanting beauty in Llewellyn's words: her niece Annabel's claim that "*the humble is the most beautiful*" certainly rings true throughout. Colour, light, and texture all play an important role in the imagery used in the poem, where all living things are imbued with divinity and spirit, and the temporary nature of life is celebrated rather than mourned.

The opening anthem *Under The Olive Tree* is an invitation to not just imagine a scene, but to feel its visceral energy— a green chair, an olive tree, and our narrator safe in her garden, which for her is a place of refuge and solace. *War is Over* takes us back in time to a childhood memory of a momentous, world-changing occasion. Four female voices combine as one in the roles of first child, then mother. The outlook lightens for *White Petals*, a work for the full choir that contemplates the passing of time as observed through seasonal changes in the garden. The tone here is one of gentle acceptance along with a recognition of aging, and the quiet joy of being alone.

The central movement of the work, living being spirit is a departure from Llewellyn's poetry, using instead quotes from Hildegard and Blake. These quotes were footnoted in Llewellyn's poem as sources of inspiration for her words. Here, two soprano voices dance and swirl above a quiet drone, using canon and modal harmony to evoke adoration and celebration of the natural world.

The full choir returns for *Night / Light*, a warm and rich-toned hymn that expounds the virtues of possibility and impermanence, as embodied by the night sky. The line '*All flesh is fire held in time*', taken from the poem *Ceremony* by Father Andrew Bullen SJ (another of Llewellyn's footnotes) is the climax of this piece.

From here, the music turns inward once more, back to our narrator and her garden. The image of *This Old Woman* is painted by a vocal quintet, often split into intimate pairs and trios. It begins with an external view of the almost-ninety-year-old writing letters in her garden, before shifting to a personal declaration of strength, humility and sanctuary. Finally, *Angel of The Olive Tree* brings us back to where we began, encouraging us to wrestle with our faith and to see the presence of the divine in the everyday.

Curator's Notes

José Da Silva, 18th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Inner Sanctum

Composer Anne Cawrse has adapted Llewellyn's poem for a series of performances by sixteen members of the Adelaide Chamber Singers. *All Flesh is Fire*, 2024, focuses on the characterisation of memory, ageing and time in Llewellyn's poem, whereby, as Cawrse notes, 'all living things are imbued with divinity and spirit, and the temporary nature of life is celebrated rather than mourned'.

The seven-part composition draws out scenes from the poem, accompanied by words attributed to the German Benedictine saint, mystic and poet Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179): *The Word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greening, all creativity*. Hildegard's idea of viriditas here represents divine nature and avows the ultimate sin as ecological – against nature.

All Flesh is Fire

adapted by Anne Cawrse
from Faith by by Kate Llewellyn, AM

1. Under The Olive Tree

Picture a green chair
under an olive tree.
Peace holds its breath
for anyone who sits there.

2. War Is Over

I was playing with Josie
at her place
when the last world war was ended.
Her mother came in and said,
“Girls, the war is over.
Kneel down and thank God.”
On the cold linoleum floor
beside the single bed
we knelt and put our hands together.
I can’t remember what I said.

3. White Petals

White petals from the quince tree
flew past the window. It looked like snow.
The garden grew taller
seasons still had scent,
the birds sang.
Everything looked normal
yet something was missing -
a parcel posted without stamps.
Time seemed banished.
(White petals from the quince tree...)
I felt grateful sitting in the sun
with a bowl of soup alone.

4. living being spirit

The word is living, being, spirit,
all verdant greening,
all creativity. (Hildegard)
All that lives is Holy. (Blake)

5. Night / Light

Night is full of light.
The sun still rose and night fell.
Night is full of light.
I buried dahlia rhizomes
upside down like bombs
and when they rose they’d turned around.
All flesh is fire ¹
All flesh is fire held in time.
Night is full of light.

6. This Old Woman

Who is this old woman
shuffling around her fruit trees,
only distinguished from the homeless
by her haircut?

This old woman
alone for years
with the green chair and the olive tree –

Who is this old woman
shuffling around her fruit trees

This old woman
almost ninety now,
the letters, daily scrawled,
written on my knee –

Who is this old woman
This old woman
Who is this old woman
Alone for years
Who is this old woman
With the green chain and the olive tree
This old woman.

Here is my refuge where I hide
writing paper letters
daily scrawled, written on my knees.

The humble is the most beautiful
Put your feet up Mary Ann...

7. Angel of the Olive Tree

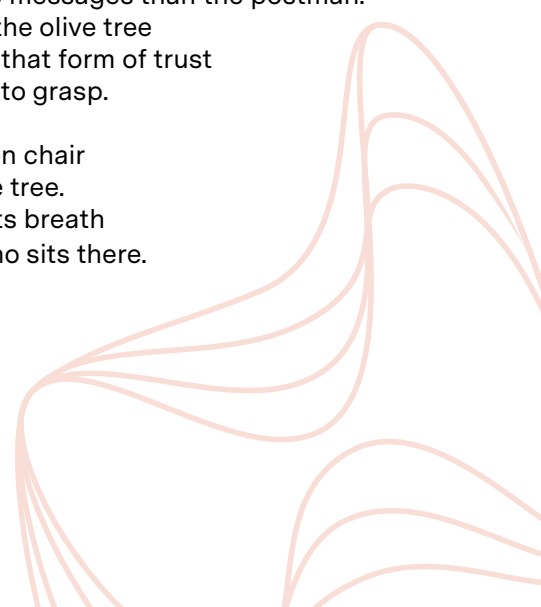
Angels are time made numinous.

On occasions, people
mistake the fruit trees
white-netted from the birds
for angels.

Angels are time made numinous
carrying more messages than the postman.
Oh! Angel of the olive tree
give me faith, that form of trust
most difficult to grasp.

Picture a green chair
under an olive tree.
Peace holds its breath
for anyone who sits there.

¹ All flesh is fire held in time courtesy Father Andrew Bullen SJ
from poem *CeremonyEtiquette with Angels* David Lovell Publishing, 2018



Faith

by Kate Llewellyn, AM

Picture a green chair
under an olive tree.
Peace holds its breath
for anyone who sits there.
That people like love,
it seems childish to say.
When one dies, if they were loved,
it seems a limb is cut from the living.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

The soldier and the sailor
who, when they came home from war,
built these two houses
in one of which I dwell.
They hammered wardrobes out of kindling
and made kitchens out of lino
In mine, the owner made a boot brush box
and hammered a dustpan out of tin.
Wives planted lemon trees and roses
which, when children left to marry,
turned to root-stock.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

'We all make mistakes in life.'
We are frightened now.
The plague is everywhere.
Bodies crowd the morgues.
The last pandemic hit us badly
and wrecked this family.
It almost killed a son,
(iron lung etc.)

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

I was playing with Josie
at her place
when the last world war was ended.
Her mother came in and said,
'Girls, the war is over.
Kneel down and thank God.'
On the linoleum,
beside the single bed
we knelt and put our hands together.
I can't remember what I said.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

What has the virus taken?
For some, life, for others, funerals,
kissing, imagine! Even hugs and handshakes.
Visitors, also.
The winds still blew
the front door shut
making the house tremble.

White petals from the quince tree
flew past the window. It looked like snow.
The garden grew taller
everything looked normal
yet something was missing –
a parcel posted without stamps.
Seasons still had scent,
birds sang.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

I felt grateful sitting in the sun
with a bowl of soup alone.
Time seemed banished
clocks weren't stopped
but it felt as if they were.
Night is full of light.
The sun still rose and night fell.
I buried dahlia rhizomes
upside down like bombs
and when they rose they'd turned around.
'All flesh is fire held in time.'

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

Who is this old woman
shuffling around her fruit trees,
only distinguished from the homeless
by her haircut?

Alone for years
with the green chair and the olive tree –
the librarian brings bags of books
and takes away those I've read.
This may go on until one of us is dead.

Here is my refuge where I hide
writing paper letters.
Annabel my niece said, 'The most humble
is the most beautiful.'
Angels are time made numinous
carrying more messages than the postman
these are sometimes written in Aramaic.
others, we can read.
On occasions, people
mistake the fruit trees
white-netted from the birds
for angels.
If, by chance, you frighten an angel,
it can, like a goose, break your arm
as it flees.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann.

Almost ninety now,
the letters, daily scrawled,
written on my knees
look as if Clancy of the Overflow wrote them.
Oh! Angel of the olive tree
give me faith, that form of trust
most difficult to grasp.

Put your feet up Mary-Ann.
Put your feet up Mary-Ann

Biographies

Christie Anderson – Artistic Director, Conductor

A singer and internationally award-winning conductor, Christie Anderson became the new Artistic Director and Conductor of Adelaide Chamber Singers in 2022. Additionally, Christie has been Artistic Director of youth choir school Young Adelaide Voices since 2010.

In 2021, Christie and Aurora Vocal Ensemble won a National Indigenous Music Award for their recording of *The Djari Project* with Galpu songman, Mr Gurruwiwi, and Netanela Mizrahi. At the 2022 Adelaide Festival, Christie was Musical Director and Conductor of the award-winning production, *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan*, with ACS, composer Joe Twist, director Neil Armfield AM, and librettists Alana Valentine and Christos Tsiolkas.

In 2023, Christie was Chorus Master of *Messa da Requiem* with Zurich Ballet (Adelaide Festival), conducted Aurora's solo debut at WOMAdelaide and ACS' first Dark Mofo performance. In 2024 Christie performs as vocal soloist and conductor of the Dortmund Womens' Chorus for *The Pulse* at Ruhrspielfest in Germany with acrobatic ensemble Gravity and Other Myths and will be Guest Artistic Director for The Song Company in September.

Anne Cawrse – Composer

Composer Anne Cawrse is inspired by stories, art, nuance, and the fragility of the human condition. Based in Adelaide, she composes for orchestral, band, choral, and chamber groups, as well as solo instruments and voice. She is highly sought after as a teacher and mentor, and is developing an esteemed reputation as a curator and programmer.

Anne has been commissioned by many of Australia's leading ensembles and performers. These include the Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, the Australian String Quartet, the Benaud Trio, Seraphim Trio, Lyrebird Trio, the Adelaide Chamber Singers, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sharon and Slava Grigoryan, Claire Edwardes, Celia Craig, the Australian Vocal Ensemble, Bowerbird Collective, Arcadia Winds, and the Adelaide Wind Orchestra.

A multiple finalist and award winner at the APRA/AMC Art Music Awards, Anne has also received the Albert H Maggs Award, a Prelude Composer residency, and was a finalist in the Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize (2022) and the Australian Women in Music Awards (2023). She curates the *She Speaks* Festival of Women Composers for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Discover more at www.annecawrse.com

Kate Llewellyn AM – Poet, Author

Kate Llewellyn AM is the author of 22 books comprising eight books of poetry along with essays, diaries, letters, travel and nature writing. Kate is the co-editor of *The Penguin Book of Australian Women's Poetry*, and author of the bestseller *The Waterlily: a Blue Mountains Journal*.

For *Inner Sanctum*, Kate was commissioned to write a poem by the curator José Da Silva for his Biennial exhibition at the AGSA. The poem is called *Faith* (2023), and is adapted into a choral work by composer Anne Cawrse and performed by members of Adelaide Chamber Singers.

Jason van Hamburg – Wardrobe Designer

Jason van Hamburg is a self-taught garment maker living and working on Kurna yerta.

Jason van Hamburg designs, tailors and assembles garments. The process of making each garment involves working with long-term wear and hand finished details in mind.

Each piece of clothing is made with guiding values of utility, ease and modularity, using high quality found textiles and responsibly sourced new material.

At the invitation of curator José Da Silva, Jason began work on garments for Adelaide Chamber Singers for the performance of *All Flesh is Fire*.

When considering this project, the intention was to assemble a wardrobe more than a strict uniform or something thematic. Neutral garments offer greater focus on the auditory experience of the piece, as well as calm and union for the wearers.



Biographies cont...

Cheryl Pickering – Outside Eye

Cheryl Pickering is a director, creative producer and singer, with a current focus on cross-art form and socially engaged classical vocal music performance. Her recent PhD explores ethics, authenticity and aesthetics in the creation of socio-political multi-art form work.

Cheryl's creative and performance work in the UK and Australia ranges from intimate performances to large productions with both professional and community performers, in opera, concert and multi-art form events. As Chair of Chamber Music Adelaide, Cheryl created the award-winning annual event *On The Terrace*, attracting over 1400 people over one day to curated chamber music performances within Adelaide's four North Terrace cultural institutions.

Cheryl acted as Associate Director to Neil Armfield on the highly acclaimed premiere of *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan* (Joe Twist, Alana Valentine, Christos Tsiolkas) in the 2022 Adelaide Festival of Arts, and will repeat this role for Opera Australia in 2024.

Jakub Gudasinski – Sound & Recording Engineer

Jakub is a studio and live audio engineer, producer, and computational sound designer, working in commercial audio as well as electronic engineering. He frequently contributes to radio, film, and television sound, and to electronic audio hardware development.

He is a graduate of the Adelaide Elder Conservatorium in composition, and runs Synthetica Engineering, a business specialising in high-end live audio reinforcement as well as computational sound design. His work encompasses a wide variety of projects, ranging from engineering and mixing ARIA-award nominated studio album recordings, audio synthesis programming for motion picture, and live sound design and operation for many international touring artists.

With a background in live radio production owing to several years working at ABC Classic as producer and post-production mixer, he is frequently involved in major festivals as a front-of-house operator and recording engineer.

Max Mackinnon – Film Director

Max Mackinnon is a freelance documentary filmmaker based in Adelaide, South Australia.

Max learnt his craft as a Producer/Director with ABC TV working on iconic shows like *The Cook and the Chef*, *Poh's Kitchen* and *Restoration Australia*. Upon leaving the ABC in 2015 Max set up Same River Studio and has been fortunate to work all around Australia, Japan and New Zealand for clients including Foxtel, Miele, BBC, Netflix and AGSA.

In recent years Max has been incredibly privileged to spend time on Country helping to share First Nations stories. Max's film *Warru Ngurakutu Kulpanyi* won Best Indigenous Film at the 2024 Wild Earth Oceania Wildlife Film Festival.

When not filming Max can usually be found with a guitar strapped round his neck sculpting experimental soundscapes. His music features in *Warru Ngurakutu Kulpanyi*, the 2023 documentary *The Defenders* and many of Max's short films.



Acknowledgements

ACS Artistic Staff

Christie Anderson, Artistic Director & Conductor
Dr Carl Crossin OAM, Founder & Conductor Emeritus

ACS Management Staff

Anne Rundle, General Manager
Dani Raymond, Administration Manager and Front-of-House
Matthew Madden, Operations and Staging Manager
Aidan Foyel, Singer Liaison Coordinator
Jo Pike, Bookkeeper

AGSA Management Staff

Dr Lisa Slade, Assistant Director, Artistic Programs, Art Gallery of South Australia
Erin Davidson, Project Manager, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art
Isobel Clemow-Meyer, Public Programs Officer

Wardrobe Designer Jason van Hamburg

Sound & Recording Engineer Jakub Gaudasinski

Film Director Max Mackinnon

Produced by Jude Gun

Program image by: Dave Pascoe, Palms Photography

Program design by: Karen De Nardi, De Nardi Creative Design

Thanks to

Vincent Cicarello, Andrew Georg, Dr Cheryl Pickering, Julia Tymukas and Jo Pike.

ACS Board

Dr Julia Szuster, Chair
Christie Anderson
Anthony Burt
Robyn Pearson OAM
Martin Penhale
Dr Cheryl Pickering
Richard Ryan AO
Brooke Window

Adelaide Chamber Singers acknowledges that we meet and make music on Kurna country, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect the Kurna community's cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to Kurna people living today. We also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.