



ADELAIDE
CHAMBER
SINGERS

Stellar

Friday 14 August 2026, 8.30pm

Saturday 15 August 2026, 6.00pm & 8.30pm

Baroque Hall, Tynte Street, North Adelaide

Christie Anderson - Artistic Director & Conductor

'Night is full of light'

Australian poet Kate Llewellyn in her poem *Faith*.

From the Artistic Director

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Welcome to the stunning acoustic of the Baroque Hall, where the splendour of architecture meets the charisma and radiance of this program. We are especially thrilled to premiere our newest commissioned work, *I Saw a Girl (Womma mukurta)*, by Peramangk/Ngarrindjeri composer Cheryl van Wageningen.

Stellar looks to the cosmos and to our own musical supernovas: the Australian composers we work and play with to create the extraordinary music heard throughout ACS history. Their music sets a high standard for choral creativity and captures the humanity of voice and text.

Stellar is almost entirely Australian music, highlighting the compositional voices we love and the works that will represent ACS and Australian composition at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Macau in two weeks' time! ACS is honoured to be one of 14 international artist groups in residence, and we are delighted that you can join us for the first performance of this music.

Stellar is ACS and Australia. It represents our energy, our environment and our stories. By sunlight or moonlight, it shines so bright.

Christie Anderson

Artistic Director & Conductor

Singers

Soprano:

Victoria Coxhill
Alexandra Stubberfield
Imogen Tonkin
Ruby Washington
Brooke Window

Alto:

Rachel Bruerville
Courtney Day
Sophie Schumacher

Tenor:

Philip Houghton
Rhys Williams
Graham Yuile

Bass:

Andrew Bettison
Aidan Foyel
Nikolai Leske
Edward Vaught

We acknowledge that we are meeting and making music on Kurna Country, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect First Nations' 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 people.



ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Program

Sing to the Moon *Laura Mvula*

On the Night Train *Joe Twist* Soloist: *Victoria Coxhill*

I Saw a Girl (Womma mukurta) **Cheryl van Wageningen (b.1960)*

Soloists: Sophie Schumacher, Ruby Washington, Imogen Tonkin

Stars *Ēriks Ešenvalds*

Kondalilla *Stephen Leek*

- SHORT BREAK (10 minutes) -

All Flesh is Fire *Anne Cawrse (b.1981)*

1. Under the Olive Tree *Soloists: Brooke Window & Alexandra Stubberfield*

2. War Is Over *Quartet: Brooke Window, Imogen Tonkin, Rachel Bruerville, Courtney Day*

3. White Petals *Soloist: Courtney Day*

4. living being spirit *Soloists: Alexandra Stubberfield & Brooke Window*

5. Night / Light *Soloist: Victoria Coxhill*

6. This Old Woman *Quintet 1: Imogen Tonkin, Sophie Schumacher, Graham Yuile, Andrew Bettison, Nikolai Leske. Quintet 2: Ruby Washington, Rachel Bruerville, Rhys Williams, Edward Vaught, Aidan Foyel*

7. Angel of the Olive Tree *Soloist: Brooke Window*

Quartet: Alexandra Stubberfield, Victoria Coxhill, Graham Yuile, Andrew Bettison

* World premiere, commissioned by ACS with the generous support of the Adelaide Chamber Singers Supporters Fund.

Notes on the program

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Sing to the Moon - *Laura Mvula*

Laura Mvula, a classically trained British singer-songwriter, has built a remarkable career across jazz, gospel, and contemporary music. She arranged *Sing to the Moon* for performance by the BBC Singers at the 2019 Last Night of the Proms, then recorded it during lockdown in 2020. The piece speaks to resilience, hope, and finding strength in adversity, with the moon and stars becoming symbols of guidance and light, and comfort found in the constancy of the night sky.

On the Night Train - *Joe Twist*

ACS had the pleasure of recording some seminal works by Australian composer Joe Twist this year. *On the Night Train*, set to poetry by the inimitable Henry Lawson, was new to ACS, and it encapsulates the essence of our ancient land, ever old, ever unchanging. Imagine being on a train and dashing through the Australian bush at dusk - the composer and the poet take us there.

I Saw a Girl (Womma mukurta) - *Cheryl van Wageningen*

Every new composition that ACS commissions is an addition to the Australian choral vocabulary and cultural landscape, and this is the first time we've had the privilege of commissioning a First Nations composer from the lands on which we live. *I Saw a Girl (Womma mukurta)* speaks to ancestry, community, belonging and the myriad of people across thousands of years who have walked before us. We are honoured to have Cheryl with us for these performances.

The composer writes: *There is often that moment in time that cannot be captured entirely on a photo. I took a photo of such a moment and composed a song to share the experience.*

My grand-daughter was walking around the beautifully landscaped garden at the entrance to the UKARIA Cultural Centre at Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills. The centre is strategically placed to face the Mount Barker Summit. The summit is known by the local Aboriginal people as "Womma mukurta" and literally translated means "The Hill on The Plain". A culturally significant meeting place for the traditional landowners, the Peramangk people.

My grand-daughter discovered the Labyrinth at UKARIA and immediately started walking through the lines of stones that formed the circular pattern. She picked up sticks randomly because there were so many and she wanted to see the maze more clearly. "It was something I wanted to explore" she told me later. I was mesmerised by her movement with the sticks - sweeping the leaves and brushing the earth as she walked. We could hear birds, crickets and the whistling of the wind. The key of A minor and the ambulant pace reflects a melancholy contemplation - a connection to country and the spirit of our ancestors.

Program note by Cheryl van Wageningen, June 2026

Stars - Ēriks Ešenvalds

In Stars, Latvian composer Ēriks Ešenvalds has created an aural “planetarium” with a simple concept - reimagining celestial harmonies (the music of the spheres) through the use of tuned wine glasses. Through the otherworldly harmonics of the glasses, there is a sense of heaven and earth being so separate, yet close enough to touch. These instruments create the splendour of the sky, woven throughout with text by American poet Sara Teasdale. We stand alone and above us the sky is filled with stars - we are honoured to be witness to the majesty of heaven and of nature.

Kondalilla - Stephen Leek

Originally composed as a movement in the song cycle *Great Southern Spirits*, Stephen Leek’s *Kondalilla* is the name of both a national park and a waterfall in a small remaining pocket of rainforest in South East Queensland. The piece is in three free sections - the waterfall, the still water and the rainforest. In the Indigenous Dreamtime stories of the area, Kondalilla is the spirit of the waterfall and Ouyen is the spirit of the still water.

All Flesh is Fire - Anne Cawrse

We bring back one of the most beautiful works written for ACS - the award-winning choral cycle *All Flesh is Fire*, commissioned by ACS for the Art Gallery of South Australia’s 18th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, “Inner Sanctum”, in 2024. In 2025 it won the APRA/AMCOS Australian Art Music Award for Choral Work of the Year and the IAWM Choral and Vocal Composition Prize, and ACS was a Performance of the Year finalist for the premier season of the work.

Picture a green chair, under an olive tree... The simplicity of these words, and 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. Anne has structured the movements so the listener hears the singers both in full ensemble and as single soloists or configurations of one voice per part - smaller groupings that let each distinct voice be heard, as distinguishable as a fingerprint, within the larger ACS ensemble.

The composer, Anne Cawrse, writes:

All Flesh is Fire is a 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.

All Flesh is Fire continued...

The opening anthem 'Under the Olive Tree' is an invitation not just to imagine a scene, but to feel its visceral energy - a green chair, an olive tree, and our narrator safe in her garden, a place of refuge and solace. 'War is Over' takes us back to a childhood memory of a momentous, world-changing occasion, four female voices combining 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 - a tone of gentle acceptance alongside a recognition of aging, and the quiet joy of being alone.

The central movement, 'living being spirit', departs from Llewellyn's poetry, drawing instead on quotes from Hildegard and Blake that were footnoted in the poem as sources of inspiration. 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), forms 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, beginning 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.

Program note by Anne Cawrse, February 2024

"There are special events and then there are SPECIAL events. The world premiere of Anne Cawrse's song cycle All Flesh is Fire certainly falls into the latter category.

Anne Cawrse and Kate Llewellyn's song cycle is a transcendent work...

With the glorious voices of the Adelaide Chamber Singers echoing through its historic Elder Wing, the Art Gallery of South Australia is exalted through their voices, Llewellyn's words and Cawrse's music.

Cawrse's composition... is a masterpiece of choral writing and deserves to find a place in the repertoires of choirs around the world. Her harmonic progressions and resolutions provide moments of ecstasy... a voice entirely of her own making, confident and accomplished... All Flesh is Fire stays with you long after the performance is over."

- Jansson J. Antmann, Limelight, March 2024

All program notes except those otherwise acknowledged, by Christie Anderson.

Sing to the Moon

Poetry: Steven James Brown & Laura Mvula

Hey there you, shattered in a thousand pieces
weeping in the darkest night
Hey there you, standing on your own two feet and
stumbling through the sky

Sing to the moon and the stars will shine
Over you, lead you to the other side
Sing to the moon and the stars will shine
Over you, heaven's gonna turn the tide

Hey there you, looking for a brighter season
need to lay your burden down
Hey there you, drowning in a helpless feeling
buried under deeper ground

Sing to the moon and the stars will shine
Over you, lead you to the other side
Sing to the moon and the stars will shine
Over you, heaven's gonna turn the tide

On the Night Train

Poetry: Henry Lawson

Have you seen the bush by moonlight, from the train, go running by,
Here a patch of glassy water, there a glimpse of mystic sky?
Have you heard the still voice calling - yet so warm, and yet so cold:
"I'm the Mother-Bush that bore you! Come to me when you are old?"

Did you see the Bush below you sweeping darkly to the Range,
All unchanged and all unchanging, yet so very old and strange!
Did you hear the Bush a-calling, when your heart was young and bold:
"I'm the Mother-bush that nursed you! Come to me when you are old?"

Through the long vociferous cutting as the night train swiftly sped,
Did you hear the grey Bush calling from the pine-ridge overhead:
"You have seen the seas and cities; all seems done and all seems told;
I'm the Mother-Bush that loves you! come to me, now you are old?"

I Saw a Girl (Womma mukurta)

Words & Music: Cheryl van Wageningen

I saw a girl / She was standing / Stand, stand, standing
She saw a girl / She was standing / Stand, stand, standing
Then she started walking round
Walking round and round and round
Walking round and round and round ...the circle

She was picking up the sticks
And listening to the birds
Walking carefully all around the circle

Then she stopped... She turned around
And looked up, to Womma mukurta
It was the summit on the hill
The meeting place for all
She could see, the Summit from the circle

"I can see Womma mukurta
Hear the crickets on the ground
And see the Eagle, circling above me
I feel the wind whistling around me
The spirits of my people
The hill above the plain"

The moment of reflection, gone in an instant
As her Meema called her out of the circle
The lines of stones leading the way
Treading carefully on the path
On her journey out of the circle
Then she was gone.
Womma mukurta!

Stars

Poetry: Sara Teasdale

Alone in the night / On a dark hill / With pines around me /
Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars / Over my head, / White and topaz /
And misty red;

Myriads with beating / Hearts of fire / That aeons / Cannot vex
or tire;

The dome of heaven / Like a great hill,
And myriads with beating / Hearts of fire - heaven full of stars!

I know I am / Honoured to be / Witness / Of so much majesty.

Kondalilla

Text: Stephen Leek

Kondalilla...

Ouyen watches the whispers of time
Passing over the black water in the breeze
Ouyen listens, hidden in the shadows
Counting the splashes and chasing the Dream.

Kondalilla...

All Flesh is Fire

Poetry from "Faith" 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 - 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 -
This old woman / almost ninety now,
the letters, daily scrawled, / written on my knee -
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.



ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Adelaide Chamber Singers (ACS) is widely respected as Australia's finest chamber choir - the embodiment of the art of choral chamber singing. ACS was founded in 1985 by Dr Carl Crossin OAM (Artistic Director and Conductor 1985-2021) and has been a passionate and innovative contributor to music-making for over 40 years.

Led since 2022 by Artistic Director and Conductor Christie Anderson, the ensemble's membership is drawn from among Adelaide's best and most experienced ensemble singers. From the beginning, ACS has existed to showcase the highest order of musical interpretation, to transport our audiences to new heights, and to challenge the very boundaries of what choral music can be. Our combined voices echo the majesty of the great cathedrals and concert halls of the world, but our sound and our soul is proudly grounded in the intimacy and warmth of our home city of Adelaide.

ACS has been honoured by a number of awards, including a CreateSA Ruby Award for "sustained contribution by an organisation" (2011) and a Ruby Award for the world premiere season of *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan* (2022) at the Adelaide Festival. ACS' eight international tours have also garnered international accolades, including "Choir of the World at Llangollen 2013" at the Welsh International Musical Eisteddfod. ACS is frequently invited to support and collaborate with a wide range of artists, including The Rolling Stones, The Tallis Scholars, Kronos Quartet, Hilltop Hoods, Greta Bradman and Katie Noonan. As part of the UKARIA A Cappella Academy, ACS has worked with former King's Singer Tim Wain-Wright (2022), along with two celebrated British ensembles, The Gesualdo Six (2023) and VOCES8 (2024). A strong and consistent advocate for Australian music, ACS has proudly commissioned over 30 new works from established and emerging composers.

Recent achievements have included further growth for the emerging artist ensemble Rising Voices associated with ACS, and a highly successful 40th anniversary year in 2025.

The Celebrate You Concert in October 2025 at St Peter's Cathedral featured 40 singers, Thomas Tallis's 40 part motet *Spem in alium* and a major commissioned work in 40 parts by ACS founder Carl Crossin OAM. The anniversary program and commission have further confirmed Adelaide's pre-eminence in the field of choral music.

In 2026 ACS collaborated in Adelaide Festival Peter Sellars' Opera *El Niño*, and has been selected to represent Australia at the forthcoming World Symposium on Choral Music in Macau. ACS won the South Australian Luminary Award for sustained contributions to commissioning and artistic excellence, Choral Work of the Year for *All Flesh is Fire*, and was a Performance of the Year finalist, also for *All Flesh is Fire*.

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Christie Anderson

Artistic Director & Conductor

Christie is an award-winning conductor and singer. She became Artistic Director and Conductor of the multi-award-winning Adelaide Chamber Singers in 2022 and has led youth choir school Young Adelaide Voices as Artistic Director since 2009, specialising in treble voice artistry and new music.

Christie initiated a Composer in Residence program, a choir for changing voices, and the WATU Youth Choir Festival. She also founded Aurora Vocal Ensemble, acclaimed for *The Pulse* with Gravity & Other Myths (GOM) and their award-winning recording of *The Djari Project* (2021 National Indigenous Music Award winner).

Christie has contributed to two Ruby Award-winning festival performances: Musical Director of *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan* (ACS, AF22) and conductor/soloist in *The Pulse* (Aurora, AF21). In 2024, Christie conducted the ACS commission *All Flesh is Fire* for the 18th Biennial of Art, and toured Germany with *The Pulse*; she also toured France and Italy with YAV, winning Youth Choir and Creative Performance prizes. In 2025 she was Chorus Master and Offstage Conductor for *Innocence* with ACS, recently toured The Pulse to South Korea and the UAE with Aurora and GOM, and represented ACS and composer Anne Cawrse at the 2025 Australian Art Music Awards, where ACS won the Luminary Award (SA) and Anne won Best New Work - Choral for *All Flesh is Fire*.

In 2025/26 she worked in Germany with GOM on their acclaimed new work *LOUDER* with the Brandenburger Symphoniker, then the Australian season in Sydney's Dame Joan Sutherland Theatre. Christie is incredibly proud and excited to be touring with ACS as the Australian ensemble in residence at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Macau, China.



Cheryl van Wageningen

New Commissioned Composer

Cheryl van Wageningen is a proud Peramangk/Ngarrindjeri descendant who has lived all her life in Adelaide, South Australia. Her birth mother was a member of the Stolen Generation, and Cheryl was placed with a loving “white” family at three months of age who subsequently adopted her. The piano and a classical music education were an important part of Cheryl’s upbringing, showcased in the short documentary *Dot Music*, aired on Channel 44 and NITV since 2018 - nominated for the 2019 Documentary of the Year at the South Australian Screen Awards and a finalist in the 2023 Antenna Awards in Melbourne.

Cheryl is a graduate of the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide and a Full Member of the Music Teachers Association of South Australia (MTASA). Career highlights include performances at Apology Day events and Fleurieu Festivals, and a nomination and appearance on the ABC’s *The Piano* (Series 2, Episode 2) in 2026.

Cheryl plays pieces of both classical and contemporary style and often begins a performance with one of her own compositions, such as *The Coorong Trilogy*. Her compositions are a tribute to her own life experiences and Aboriginal background, and include *Not Sorry Today*, *Woven Threads* for cello and piano, and *Seaside Interludes* for saxophone and piano. In June 2025, the Academy Voices performed with the Nobuntu women at the UKARIA Cultural Centre, Mount Barker, on Peramangk country, singing *All Because of You*, which Cheryl composed for NAIDOC Week 2017.

It is with great pleasure that Cheryl has accepted a commission from Adelaide Chamber Singers to compose *I Saw a Girl* (*Womma mukurta*) - receiving its world premiere in this program.

We are grateful for your support

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Bequestors

Professor Susan Magarey AM
& Professor Sue Sheridan
Professor Junia Vaz de Melo

Donors

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With thanks to the following:

Andrew Georg - Repetiteur; Ella Moeck; Lauren Keen - North
Adelaide Baroque Hall; Mat Noble - Marryatville High School
Photography: Sam Roberts Photography

We thank all Donors for their generosity and note here those who have given over \$200 during 2026. We are grateful. Your gifts allow us to do so much more for our creative composers and singers.

Your donations to our giving program - the Adelaide Chamber Singers Supporters Fund - continue to support our creative programs, our singers, our tours and the commissioning of new music.

All donations over \$2 made to the Fund are tax deductible.

If you would like to donate, please visit

adelaidechambersingers.com/donate.

You can also contact us by phone on 0414 692 016
or email susan@adelaidechambersingers.com.

ADELAIDE CHAMBER SINGERS

Upcoming Performances Adelaide Chamber Singers

UKARIA - *with Umberto Clerici and James Crabb*
Saturday 22 August 2026, 4.30pm - SOLD OUT

2026 World Symposium on Choral Music, Macau

Adelaide Chamber Singers is proud and honoured to have been selected to represent Australia at the 2026 World Symposium on Choral Music in Macau. The theme of the Symposium is 'Reimagining the Future' - ACS will proudly wave the flag for Australian artists and composers, performing to an international choral audience as one of a small number of Ensembles in Residence.

Rising Voices - *"Aura" featuring Requiem, Gabriel Fauré*

Conducted by Emma Borgas, with organist Josh van Konkelenberg and soloists Brooke Window and Pelham Andrews. Saturday 24 October, 7.30pm, Baptist Church, Tynte Street, North Adelaide. Presented in partnership with the National Trust of South Australia.

Christmas Concert: **"Grace"** - *Freedom. Joy. Peace.*

Conducted by Christie Anderson. Sunday 6 December, 2.30pm, St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide. Join Adelaide Chamber Singers for a Christmas celebration of joy, featuring two of J.S. Bach's most beloved choral masterpieces: the radiant *Magnificat* and the exuberant motet *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* ("Sing to the Lord a new song").

*Higher
calling*

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