

GOSPO COLLECTIVE

Australia's Leading Vocal Powerhouse



African rhythm meets western harmony and worlds of hymns and hip-hop collide, while Australia's leading choral ensemble displays the intricacy of the human voice like no other in the

Southern Hemisphere. Collaborating with accomplished instrumentalists from around the nation and often a backing choir of sixty plus, this vocal powerhouse is a sonic and visual feast to inspire the mind and heart.

Birthed out of a love for people, passion for education and a belief that music can transcend us to a deeper level of understanding of ourselves and others, **Gospo Collective**, Australia's Leading Vocal Powerhouse was created.

Director, Conductor and Arranger, **Charmaine Jones** is reputed for her vocal stylings, influenced by her musical journey through life which in turn creates a unique and powerful 'choral experience'. Charmaine spent over a decade teaching jazz voice at the *Adelaide University Elder Conservatorium of Music* where she completed her education under the tuition of Connaitre Miller (conductor of renowned Afro Blue, US) and is now Choral and Vocal director at *Pembroke School* and part of the music lecturing team at *Monash University* (Melbourne) where she has well and truly embedded herself into a nation-wide education system. Over the years, Charmaine's desire has grown steadily to musically excite and teach, not only those in such learning institutions but the general public. So in true roots style, she takes it to the 'streets' with the help of 'The Collective' for all to enjoy.

The ensemble's song list is inspired by traditional spirituals, genius gospel gurus such as *Kirk Franklin, Andrae Crouch, Israel Houghton, Aretha Franklin* and the artists we know and love on the main waves; *Prince, Earth Wind and Fire, Justin Timberlake, The Jackson's* to name but a few. The repertoire is then tailored to the show, its audience and purpose, interwoven with the flavours of

secular and sacred; herein displaying the identifying difference in the work of the Gospo Collective.

GospoCentric, March 2009, highlighted the eccentricity of gospel music from the early slave songs and other contributors to the more modern gospel R&B music heard today, while **GospoTivity**, December 2009, was a new musical interpretation of the old nativity story combining well-loved carols and modern gospel anthems bringing a fresh offering to the festive season.

GospoAzz featured in the South Australian Jazz Series for 2010, displayed the essential place of gospel music in the jazz idiom. Utilising negro spirituals, jazz standards, and contemporary jazz-gospel with tunes made famous by greats from Billie Holiday, Chick Corea to The Yellow Jackets, **GospoAzz** re-featured in the **Adelaide Fringe Festival**, March 2011. This show combined more than 200 students from a plethora of Adelaide's secondary schools at historic Adelaide Town Hall, there was no definition of private or public institutions present - emulating Jones' ethos of art imitating life.

There is no discrimination between Sacred and Secular tunes. Music is the food of life, and we aim to give that full tasting plate to our listeners. We choose tunes with real meaning and real feelings to connect with our audience on an equal level. Gospel music has all those elements - it's got a lot of history. It's about storytelling. That is what makes it moving and spectacular. Everyone has a story, a struggle... Lord knows we all share that common bond. - Charmaine Jones

Gospo Collective has been privileged to work with pop icon Leo Sayer for the Leukemia Foundation Fundraiser, Light the Night, and the gospel set even included a tribute to Sayers hit You Make Me Feel Like Dancing! Perhaps this was the conception point for Gospo's offering for the hit show Gospolicious. In 2014, the troupe brought Gospel back with a slammin' show of new tunes, new beats, and Secular/Sacred remixes with a sold-out season of performances during the Adelaide Fringe Festival, collaborating with American touring RnB artist Heston for a finale.

The team have performed with and for a variety of highly recognised artists including Patti Lupone, Eddie Perfect, Kelly Osbourne, Sophie Monk, Kate Ceberano, Andrew De Silva and Thirsty Merc who have all revelled in the magic of the music which is The Collective.

In 2017, Charmaine and the Gospo Collective took their product to the streets by turning the *Cirque Africa Big Top* in Hindmarsh Square into an arena-style venue when **Gospolation** became one of the top rating shows in the **Adelaide Fringe Festival** that year, receiving a **Weekly Award for Best Music** and rave reviews from various media outlets and the public.

Most recently Hugh Sheridan took to the stage with the group in their most successful and commercial production yet, a two week season of **Jackson vs Jackson** at the **Adelaide Fringe Festival** in 2018. This soulfully sharp production saw more than 5,500 people through their Gluttony tent doors, once again winning a **Weekly Award for Best Music** and gaining a position as one of the **20 highest selling shows** of the season. With a house band including members from Brisbane's jazz fusion trio 'Jackal', Jackson Vs Jackson was reviewed by many as The Collective's most empowering show to date.

'If you're a fan of either, or both, of the Jacksons - or just love to hear an amazing vocal orchestra - this show's a must-see.' - Anna Vlach (*The Advertiser*) ★★★★★

'From the very start of the show, the audience was pumped and cheering with excitement. Jackson fans are very passionate and it created such a feel-good buzz throughout the show. It was hard not to get swept up with the euphoric atmosphere.' - Anastasia Lambia (*All About Entertainment*) ★★★★.5 stars

Charmaine Jones dreams to travel with this talented and committed group of musicians, throughout Australian schools, suburban and rural, changing their perspectives on art and life, bringing the wider community together to celebrate Australian talent through music and the capability of the youth of today to achieve goals wherever the road leads through the Gospo experience.

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