

SINGING TO THE HEART

with

Tony Backhouse

17- 31 May - 2020

An epic singing journey into the
Heart of Australia



Over two exquisite weeks you will
EXIST INSIDE A BEAUTIFUL DESERT SONG.

THE CONCEPT

Singing to the Heart will be a deep cultural *experience* that travels not just to the centre of Australia, but to the heart of things; of nature, of people and of history.

In the tradition of Aboriginals who 'sung up' the country in order to give it meaning and story, we will sing as we travel under the musical directorship of the legendary choirmaster - Tony Backhouse.

We will sing over the Flinders Ranges as the sun rises; over Lake Eyre as it sets; from the balcony of the famous old Marree Hotel to the assembled audience below; in the underground Serbian Church at Coober Pedy; to the remote Aboriginal Community of Indulkana; in ancient gorges in the MacDonnell Ranges and in classic Australian wool-sheds. We will sing around graves in remote cemeteries to honour the people buried there and as the sun goes down over Uluru[Ayers Rock]. As a finale, we will sing with the Hermannsburg Choir at the old Lutheran Precinct of Hermannsburg.

Singing to the Heart will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience where emotion, history and landscape will seep into the very core of your being.

This will be a *Backhouse & the Backroaders* gig of epic proportions, an incredible journey into a parallel universe.

**BACKHOUSE &
THE BACKROADERS**

THE GIGS & FILMING

The essence of a Backroaders Tour is to integrate the experience of singing in beautiful places, the joy of travelling as part of a choir and the wonderful sharing of music with audiences. It is enhanced further by supporting local causes in the difficult economic environments of rural Australia.

As we travel to the heart, we will sing in pop-up gigs as the spirit takes us. Travelling with Aboriginal elder Alison Hunt will provide us with incredible access into the indigenous cultural landscape.

But the gigs on this tour will really be something else. The Maree Hotel, overlooking the Railway Station where the old Ghan terminated and produce was loaded or unloaded by Afghan camaleers, will be extraordinary.

In Coober Pedy I was left stunned by the underground Serbian Church, drilled into the hard rock with stained glass windows at ground level perched high above the congregation. Our concert here will be recorded for the sound quality that will be perfect. We will be welcomed by the local community mostly from the former Yugoslavia, who despite miners' access to dynamite, avoided the cultural wars waging in their homelands.

The final gig will be in the precinct of Hermannsburg, in the old Lutheran Church. We will sing with, and to the benefit of, the Hermannsburg Choir,

This is a tour with a wonderful story and it deserves to be shared, not just with local communities, but with a wider audience. To that end, I am talking with a local filmmaker, familiar with Aboriginal customs and desert conditions, to capture the mystical potential of Singing the the Heart.



"Each man, woman and child should
see the desert, just once before they
die"



THE ITINERARY - Just the bare bones! This program will definitely evolve as determined by the experience of the inaugural event. Any change will be designed to make the experience deeper and more powerful.

17th May - ADELAIDE - Pickup TBA

17 - 20 May - Flinders Ranges - 4 Days - We will spend 4 days rehearsing in this beautiful remote landscape of the Flinders Ranges.

21 - 22 May - MARREE - 2 Days - The old Ghan terminated in this Outback town, where the descendents of Afghan Cameleers still live alongside local Aboriginals. We'll access Lake Eyre from here and perform on the balcony of the famous Marree Hotel.

23 - 24 May - COOBER PEDY - 2 Days - a fascinating place to explore opal mines and the incredible Breakaways before performing in the underground Serbian Church, one of the most unique devotional spaces on earth.

25 May - INDULKANA - 1 Day - We will stay in Marla as an access point for a day long workshop in the Aboriginal community of Indulkana, workshopping and singing with the local people.

26 - 27 May - ULURU - 2 Days - Sing the sun down over Uluru before spending a day exploring Uluru [Ayers Rock] and Kata Tjuta. [The Olgas]

28 - 31 May - ALICE SPRINGS - 4 Days - Visit the East & West Macdonell Ranges and rehearse with the Hermannsburg Choir. Perform in the Community Precinct with the Hermannsburg Choir.

31 May - Depart ALICE SPRINGS.



THE TEAM

Tony Backhouse

Composer • Vocal Arranger • Singer • Author • Choir Director • Workshop Leader

Tony Backhouse, BA, BMus, is one of the leaders in the Australasian a cappella movement. He founded Australia's foremost a cappella gospel choir Café of the Gate of Salvation in 1986, and directed it for 21 years. He arranged and composed the bulk of their repertoire and still writes music regularly for them. He founded a cappella choir the Honeybees and has directed and sung with reclusive male a cappella trio Heavenly Lights since 1996. In demand for his inspiring teaching style, Tony has run more than 2000 vocal workshops throughout the world for the public, for festivals, schools, universities, churches, organisations and corporate training events. He currently lives in Napier, New Zealand.

www.tonybackhouse.com.au



Raymond Hawkins - Tour Leader

Raymond Hawkins - owner of SOUND TRACKS TRAVEL - has operated eclectic tours all over Australia for decades. He toured with some of Australia's greatest bands - Midnight Oil, Cold Chisel and The Angels as tour manager, lighting designer and/or production manager. He has worked with Opera Australia, The Sydney Dance Company and ran the Audio/Visual Department at the Sydney Opera House. Raymond created the Burra Gospel & Soul Festival, operates and designed the BackRoaders tours and ran the Desert Choir program with Tony for almost a decade.

www.soundtrackstravel.com.au



Aboriginal Communities

The choirs in the remote Aboriginal Communities of Indulkana and Hermannsburg have agreed to host us for workshops and joint singing sessions.

As such they are considered part of the team, an integral part as they will provide a chance to connect to an ancient civilization.

In both locations we will be subject to the traditions and customs of these Pitjantjarra and Arrente people who still practice their complex set of laws and customs.

Singing provides a beautiful meeting point with Aboriginal people. It fits well into the notion of sharing culture which was an established part of traditional life.





A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Over years of leading choirs into beautiful places throughout Australia there have been many wondrous experiences: recitals in sea caves on the wild coast of Tasmania; pop-up gigs in remote pubs, in outback woolsheds and in lonely churches.

*One such experience was so sublime that it has never left me, and it resonates still in the design of **Singing to the Heart**.*

At night the desert landscape of Australia mirrors a Shakespearean set, landscape a principal player, stage lighting provided by moon and stars, theatre props of shadowed rocks and spikey grevillias. All the while a sub-plot underpins the scene, the sense that Indigenous people lived and conducted ceremony here for thousands of years.

In a place like this, just six months from my father's death, I listened to a choir sing around a campfire. In one beautiful piece my loss found its expression, a universal register for those feelings you feared were yours alone. At that moment ...

... sound was stripped to the elemental, attuned to a stark desert that demands sparseness in all things. At that perfect moment, around that fire, private grief morphed into something universal. It spoke to the transcendent power of song.

NOTICEBOARD

CHOIR & GIG NOTES

The tour is for people who want to sing, there is no requirement for people to be professional singers. The attitude of the Choir is an immensely supportive one where practiced choristers and novices sing happily side-by-side.

The gigs will be on a donation-at-the-door and support local causes. They will all be street posted and supported with radio and press.

ACCOMMODATION NOTES

Mix of hotels and glamping. Limited single supplement will be available.

FOOD NOTES

Breakfast and lunch supplied daily plus two evening meals. All other evening meals at participants' expense. This gives a change for people to be a little independent and will allow quicker food preparations.

COACH & LUGGAGE NOTES

We will most likely be travelling in 2 coaches that are able to access off road locations such as Lake Eyre and remote communities. It also adds flexibility to the programme.

We ask that you keep your wardrobe to the practical side of lavish.

Whats In and whats Out!

The workshop **INCLUDES:**

- daily workshops with Tony Backhouse 14 days/ 14 nights twin share accommodation [see below for Accommodation Options]
- 14 nights accommodation.
- all transport in 4WD Coaches.
- all breakfasts and lunches.
- two evening meals.
- Aboriginal local interactions.
- all side excursions, National Park fees.
- professionally promoted and stage managed performances and concerts.
- surprises you will just have to take my word for.

It **EXCLUDES:**

- airfares to Adelaide and return from Alice Springs.
- evening meals except as indicated above.
- alcohol.

BOOKING & PRICE OPTIONS

This second SINGING TO THE HEART will sell out quickly. Already there is a huge Wait List who will be offered spaces first.

It is therefore advised that you deposit early to avoid disappointment.

1. PRICE - \$6,500 p.p. Non-refundable DEPOSIT of \$1,500
 2. LIMITED SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS AVAILABLE - \$2,000 p.p.
- **** Not payable until balance due.

CLICK LINK TO BOOK

www.soundtrackstravel.com.au/singing-to-heart-2020

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