

# The lucrative power of the "grey pound"

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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It is significantly profound films like *Song For Marion* that make us re-evaluate our lives and our relationship with those who share it. Powerfully expressing how music can unify a community and heal broken hearts, *Song For Marion* features Oscar-worthy performances from Terence Stamp as a grumpy 70-year-old pensioner who can't understand why his wife Marion would want to embarrass herself singing silly songs with her unconventional local choir, and Vanessa Redgrave as his wife.



It is the choir director Elizabeth (Gemma Arterton who was the Bond girl in *Quantum of Solace*), who sees something special in the reluctant Arthur and refuses to give up on him, coaxing him out of his shell and making him realise that it is never too late to change. A unique and charming aspect of *Song For Marion* is its journey into world that looks at life beyond growing old and withering away in old-age homes.

## Youthful rebellion against being forgotten

The vibrant characters in the film might seem like granddad and mum, but their youthful rebellion against being forgotten is sometimes hilariously confronted through the choice of music that our guardian angel choirmaster prefers to use; unorthodox numbers like Salt-N-Pepa's *Let's Talk About Sex* and the OAP'Z' *Love Shack* and *Ace Of Spades*. This is well contrasted by traditional contemporary songs like Tom Kelly/Billy Steinberg's *True Colours* (performed by Vanessa Redgrave), and Bob Hilliard and Jule Styne's *How Do You Speak To An Angel* performed by Terence Stamp.

The aim of *Song for Marion* was to create an authentic adult community choir. Musical arranger Richard Scott brilliantly strips the songs right back to the melody and then build them up again. The unconventional choir is most definitely not the *X-Factor*, but its natural rawness and authentic is charming and appealing.

It is equally a touching and sincere story about growing old, and how the older and younger generations can embrace the differences that separate. Important films like *The Sapphires*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Eye of The Storm*, *Lessons of a Dream*, and *People Like Us*, are bridging the generation gap with meaning and insight. *Song For Marion* completely captures the fragile relation between those who feel they are too old to alter their world view and those who fail to understand the fragile disposition of outsiders who want to live in the shadows of life.

## Volatile dynamics between parents and their children



It is also a great exploration of the volatile dynamics that can fester between parents and their children, and how easy it is to overcome these conflicted relationships. Christopher Eccleston is brilliant as the son who has to come to terms with the troubled relationship he has with his father, and is challenged by the heart-breaking events that shape the story.

Without giving too much away about the heart of the story and spoiling its superb and moving resolution, it is a sad and tearful journey that embraces love and the joy of life through heart-breaking events that shape our lives.

A frequently hilarious and ultimately uplifting, aspirational comedy drama, *Song for Marion* doesn't wallow in misery, but will make you feel good about being alive and capable of sharing the lives of those who are sometimes out of reach. If you are looking for an intimate film that deals with people and not a visual extravaganza, make sure to see *Song For Marion*. You will

truly feel good about who you are and see the world around you differently.

## Behind the scenes

"It's a very personal story for me," said writer/director Paul Andrew Williams, who drew on his own family experience to create *Song For Marion*. "I guess you could call it semi-autobiographical: there were scenes where I cried." 'The terrific' and 'wonderfully well-written script' is what made legendary actress Vanessa Redgrave (*Coriolanus*, *Atonement*, and a veteran of singing on screen and stage in productions ranging from *Camelot* to the *Three Penny Opera*) instantly sign up for *Song for Marion*. Though Hollywood has recently rediscovered the lucrative power of the 'grey pound', as the ever socially conscious 75-year-old Redgrave points out, aside from rare classics like *The Bridges of Madison County*, there still aren't many movies about older people.

"Old-age pensioners don't get a look in anywhere really, in our society, and I'm not just talking about the film world. In life they get abused, their funds get taken away from them and they get treated very badly. I love the fact my character, Marion, has become a member of an Old-age pensioners' choir. That is a very, very special subject for a story. But the point is not just the subject, it's how well written it is. And there are many different layers to the story. There's the layer of what an extraordinary life-giving role the choir has, the live-giving element of Elizabeth's story and the story of my husband and our son. This is really a film about three generations."

Read more at [www.writingstudio.co.za/page1037.html](http://www.writingstudio.co.za/page1037.html)

## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)  
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