

Mario Boydagjis



Australian Chamber Orchestra: International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court

22–24 Oct 2018

Australian Chamber Orchestra
Richard Tognetti director & violin

Part of Barbican Presents 2018–19

 Australian Chamber Orchestra

 the SHM foundation

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Australian Chamber Orchestra: International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court

Mon 22 Oct

7:30pm, Milton Court Concert Hall

Mozart's Last Three Symphonies

Mozart Symphony No 39 in E flat major

Mozart Symphony No 40 in G minor

interval 20 minutes

Mozart Symphony No 41 in C major, 'Jupiter'

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti director & violin

Tue 23 Oct

8pm, Barbican Hall

Mountain

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti artistic director & lead violin

Tamara-Anna Cislowska piano

Satu Vänskä violin & voice

Helena Rathbone violin

Ike See violin

Timo-Veikko Valve cello

Nigel Jamieson staging director

Damien Cooper lighting design

Jennifer Peedom writer, director & producer

Richard Tognetti musical director & composer

Renan Ozturk principal cinematography

Robert Macfarlane narration scriptwriter

Willem Dafoe narrator

Christian Gazal, Scott Gray ASE editors

David White sound designer

Robert Mackenzie sound mixer

Jo-anne McGowan producer

Joseph Nizeti music editor & music supervisor

Paul Wiegard, David Gross, Stephen Boyle,

Martyn Myer AO executive producers

Post-concert conversation

Barbican Hall, 15 minutes after performance

Richard Tognetti, director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Jennifer Peedom, director of *Mountain*, will participate in a post-concert conversation, hosted by Huw Humphreys, Barbican Head of Music.

Wed 24 Oct

7:30pm, Milton Court Concert Hall

Bach, Beethoven and Bartók

J S Bach, arr Richard Tognetti The Musical

Offering – Ricercar a 6

C P E Bach Sinfonia in B minor

Sufjan Stevens, arr Michael Atkinson Run Rabbit Run – Suite: Year of the Ox; Year of Our Lord; Year of the Boar

Beethoven Scene and Aria, 'Ah! perfido'

interval 20 minutes

Verdi La traviata – Prelude to Act 3

Verdi Otello – Ave Maria

Bartók Divertimento

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti director & violin

Nicole Car soprano

Musicians from Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Welcome

Welcome to this residency featuring our International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and its brilliantly innovative director Richard Tognetti.

We may begin in relatively traditional territory with Mozart's last three symphonies but, as anyone familiar with the work of this ensemble will know, even the most familiar music comes up new thanks to the sheer imagination and daring of these players.

The last time the ACO and Richard were in residence, in 2016–17, they presented *The Reef*, a mesmerising audio-visual experience that combined imagery of north-western Australia with a soundtrack that drew on music of many styles and eras. This time, the subject is mountains: their danger, their beauty and their relationship with mankind.

The film *Mountain*, written and directed by Jennifer Peedom, with cinematography by Renan Ozturk and music selected and written by Richard himself, promises to be every bit as compelling as *The Reef*.

For the final concert, the ACO and Richard are joined by the acclaimed Australian soprano Nicole Car, who sings arias by Beethoven and Verdi. The orchestra is also joined by musicians from the Guildhall School, in a follow-up to the highly successful side-by-side collaboration in 2017. The concert ends with Bartók's *Divertimento*, a work closely associated with the ACO, having featured in its very first concert back in 1975.

I hope you enjoy the residency.

Huw Humphreys
Head of Music

Jonathan Vaughan, Vice-Principal of the Guildhall School, writes:

It's hard to imagine the sheer spine-tingling thrill for students of the Guildhall School working side by side with the players of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. To be warmly welcomed into the band and to sit within the pulsing heart of an ensemble possessing such vibrant energy and drive is nothing short of game changing for them. It's a truly visceral experience – there's a fresh passion and physicality to the ACO rarely encountered in the UK and for students to inhabit this very direct, heart-on-the-sleeve, sound world is a thrilling ride like no other. Leading it all is the charismatic and inspiring figure of Richard Tognetti; at once warm and welcoming, he has a directness and passion to his music-making that leaves you with the uncanny sense that he has stared into the soul of every composer he plays. If you don't believe me come and see for yourself!

It's a real joy for the Guildhall School to work alongside the Barbican and the ACO's residency as a prime example of a partnership working at

the very highest level. It's a project that combines artistic ideals and the educational ambitions of both institutions.

Violinist Juliette Roos, currently a Fellow at the Guildhall School, participated in the ACO's previous collaboration with the School during their 2016–17 residency:

It was an absolute pleasure participating in the ACO/Guildhall side-by-side project in 2017. The atmosphere in this chamber orchestra is very special; they maintain a relaxed atmosphere while demanding the very best quality from one another and it is a joy to be part of such an inspiring collective of instrumentalists. Their attention to detail set a great example to all of us students. The energy we all felt on stage was electrifying, and something we all took away with us. A thrilling experience!

Monday 22 October 7.30pm

Milton Court Concert Hall

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Symphony No 39 in E flat major, K543

1 Adagio – Allegro · 2 Andante con moto

3 Menuetto and Trio: Allegretto · 4 Finale: Allegro

Symphony No 40 in G minor, K550

1 Molto allegro · 2 Andante

3 Menuetto and Trio: Allegretto · 4 Allegro assai

Symphony No 41 in C major, K551, 'Jupiter'

1 Allegro vivace · 2 Andante cantabile

3 Menuetto and Trio: Allegretto · 4 Molto allegro

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti director & violin

Soon after his arrival in Vienna in 1781, Mozart wrote to his father asking him to stop writing unpleasant and unhelpful letters. Worse than that, from Leopold's perspective, he moved in with the Weber family whose various daughters offered him plenty of amorous interest and whose very presence in the younger Mozart's life made Mozart senior apoplectic. When Mozart married Constanze Weber, Leopold's reaction was predictable – blind fury – and there was an increasing estrangement between father and son that would last until Leopold's death in 1787.

Not only was Constanze penniless and – in Leopold's eyes – from a disreputable family, but as time was to prove, she was as hopeless at handling money as Mozart himself. But she and Mozart loved each other and she certainly must have been an inspiration to him, because from the time of their marriage onwards, Mozart turned

out masterpiece after masterpiece, enjoying particular success in the fields of opera and the piano concerto. And then, for no apparent reason, during the summer of 1788 he turned his attention back to the symphony, composing his three greatest works in the form – now known as Nos 39, 40 and 41 – in the space of little more than six weeks. No-one knows for whom he wrote them or whether performances were planned, but perhaps it was simply one of those rare instances when Mozart actually found the time to write what he himself wanted to write – rather than having to satisfy commissions.

Much has been written about the suffering which Mozart supposedly endured while he was composing these great symphonies. While the stories of near-starvation and lack of appreciation make for compelling reading, they are somewhat exaggerated. The later Viennese years, from 1787

onwards, were in fact a period of artistic and in some ways personal triumph for him. The death of his father in 1787 had, curiously, lifted a great weight from his shoulders, his operatic success in Prague had made him happier on a professional level than he had ever been before, he was contentedly married to a woman who returned his love, and his appointment as a composer at the Viennese imperial court involved little work for a modest but reliable income.

Contrary to what he wrote to his friends, even before the appointment to the court, Mozart was doing very well financially. He and Constanze had a permanent servant and various other household helpers. From time to time Mozart even owned his own horse and carriage. He had plenty of room to work, he owned his own billiard table and had lots of high-quality furniture.

But while the exact causes of Mozart's financial problems are difficult to assess, what we do know is that by the time he composed his final three symphonies, Mozart was sending letter after letter to his friends begging for money. There were 20 in all between 1788 and 1791, each more desperate than the last.

The first was sent to fellow mason Michael Puchberg in June 1788. 'Unfortunately,' it read in part, 'Fate is so hostile to me, but only in Vienna, that even when I want to, I cannot make any money.' Three more similar letters followed in quick succession. But there was no similar impoverishment within Mozart's creative resources and the period of June to August 1788 saw the composition of three symphonies which, even today, remain at the pinnacle of artistic achievement.

Speculation over the origins and meaning of the first of the three final symphonies, in E flat major, K543, is particularly intense, in part because of the enigmatic mood of the work as a whole. From the very first bars – only the third time that Mozart's symphonies follow the Haydnesque convention of a slow introduction – it's hard to tell if this is drama or play. Grave chords announce portent, but then, like sunlight breaking through clouds, a radiant shimmer of strings fills the scene with the promise of typically Mozartian elation, only to be juxtaposed once more with the kind of ominous orchestral thundering that might greet the Stone Guest in *Don Giovanni*.

There's a foreboding here at the outset, made all the more intense, post factum, by the knowledge

that Mozart's beloved six-month-old daughter Theresia died from intestinal cramps just three days after the manuscript was signed off on 26 June 1788.

So what does this first instalment in the near-miraculous trilogy 'mean'? For some, there is an association with Freemasonry, its strange 6/4 chords, horn echoes in the main theme, key signature of E flat major and rapid mood changes suggesting the kinds of secret Masonic codes more often linked with *The Magic Flute*. Autobiographically it's possible to align the prevailing mood of happiness-within-high-drama with a letter Mozart had written in the previous year, where he described death as 'that best and truest friend of man ... [the thought of which] ... is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling'. Certainly we know from his correspondence that around this time he was fighting a battle against 'dismal thoughts' which were intruding on his creative process, despite his living, in another contradictory account in his pleading letters, 'agreeably and comfortably'.

But right from the start, it's clear that this is a work of the highest creative inspiration. As Eric Blom wrote, 'if one were asked to consider which work by any composer is the most serenely, the most consistently and continuously beautiful ... I think that one could not possibly fail to arrive at this one.'

Tension is created at the outset through the use of timpani and a certain harmonic ambiguity, but as the Allegro proper enters, this resolves into the noble key of E flat major, its typically boisterous Mozartian mood now tinged with autumnal shades, as if ever-conscious of the transience of beauty – indeed of that very transience itself being the source of the beauty. The main theme is essentially a cantilena emerging from stillness but embellished throughout by trumpets and timpani, and descending scale passages in the violins. The second subject is more muted, with Mozart making particularly plaintive use of the clarinets which here in this symphony take the place of the more usual oboes. A brief development then leads to an elaborated version of the first theme, before the movement concludes, fanfare-style, with a rousing *tutti* flourish.

A hesitant but nevertheless determined little rising figure then begins the slow movement – one almost imagines some animated creature emerging from the earth to sniff around the

surroundings, gradually growing in confidence as it proceeds beyond its immediate locale. Then the movement proper, predominantly in A flat major, gets underway, its three key thematic groups tossed back and forth between strings and wind, with the muted instrumental colours of bassoon and clarinet particularly to the fore.

The melody of the famous Minuet – essentially a rustic dance – is instantly recognisable, as is the glorious theme shared between the two clarinets in the Trio.

It is only in the Allegro finale of this most emotionally equivocal of Mozart's symphonies that unbridled joy is finally released for the first time, the gaiety transcending whatever circumstances of the everyday that fought in vain to restrain and oppress Mozart's indomitable creative spirit.

Among Mozart's symphonies, only two are in minor keys, both of them (Nos 25 and 40) in G minor, a key that always brought from him music of profound emotional turbulence – just think of the String Quintet, K516, or the Piano Quartet, K478. But the 40th Symphony is arguably the finest of them all.

It is filled with a tempestuous passion which made it appeal to the Romantics more than any of his other symphonies (even more than the so-called 'Romantic' 39th). Mozart wrote two different versions of the symphony, one with clarinets and one without. It has been suggested that the clarinets may have been added in April 1791 when an orchestra under Salieri, and featuring the great clarinetists Johann and Anton Stadler, performed an unidentified 'grand symphony' by Mozart. In any case, nowadays it tends to be performed with the clarinets – the instrument whose haunting beauty dominated Mozart's later instrumental works.

Over a pulsating viola accompaniment, the violins in octaves state one of the most famous opening themes in all music. It's no less tragic for being so elegant. Indeed, this extraordinary balance between passion and a refined sense of style is a vital aspect of the work's enduring appeal.

Everyone, it seemed, had their own private interpretation of this theme's meaning. Richard Wagner commented on its 'indestructible beauty';

Robert Schumann wrote of its 'floating Grecian grace'; while, for Mendelssohn, it offered a stern rebuke to Liszt, who had proclaimed that the piano could reproduce any orchestral sound. 'I'd just like to hear the first eight bars of Mozart's G minor Symphony, with that delicate figure on the violas, played on the piano as they sound in the orchestra, and then I'd believe it,' Mendelssohn is reported to have said.

While there is an authentic second subject in the major, the distinctive two-quaver one-crotchet rhythm dominates this opening movement. Even at its most elegant, this opening idea continually threatens to – and frequently does – break out once again in a passion which provides a salutary reminder that at the time of its composition the beginnings of the French Revolution were just a year away. The modulations do a similar thing. It's one of the most chromatic movements in all Mozart – but in that it will be outdone by the work's finale.

It's the violas that get the Andante underway too. In E flat major, it would perhaps be serene if it weren't for the unsettling effects which Mozart continually introduces. The movement is built around clashes of a semitone, and, as in some of Haydn's most challenging later symphonies, the rhythm is disrupted by displaced accents. It has a kind of throbbing effect, with little twitches and flutters punctuating its onward progress.

The Minuet is scarcely innocent either. Created from three-bar phrases and again with a pronounced dissonance, it encloses a Trio in G major which is like a ray of sunlight through dark clouds.

The agitation which has characterised so much of the symphony returns in the final movement. From an eight-note ascending figure known as a 'Mannheim rocket' (not unlike that which Beethoven would employ in the Scherzo of his Fifth Symphony), the movement lurches into life with speed and intensity. Here the modulations of the first movement become even more pronounced and chromatic – before the main theme is done it will have touched all 12 notes. How bizarre this must have sounded to Mozart's contemporaries! And yet, amid all the disturbing emotion there remains that characteristic Mozartian grace and fluency. No other composer could have achieved so much beauty out of so much apparent pain.

interval 20 minutes

In early 1788, Mozart composed a comic aria to the words 'You've but a sluggish wit, Dear Signor Pompeo! Go learn a bit of the ways of the world.' It was tossed off without much thought or care for use in some forgotten *opera buffa* by Albertarelli playing in Vienna at the time. The aria too might have been forgotten by history had not, a few months later, Mozart re-appropriated it for use in a prominent place in his final symphony.

A spoof on Signor Pompeo's ignorance is hardly the stately or god-like sentiment which one might normally anticipate when encountering the celestially titled 'Jupiter', Mozart's Symphony No 41. But then Mozart was never one to aggrandise his own musical accomplishments. Here in the manuscript of his final symphony he used this frankly silly little inscription to round out the otherwise solemn and splendid main theme of the first movement. It's a measure of his genius that the theme's use in the symphony is somehow perfectly appropriate.

But in fact Mozart never called this symphony the 'Jupiter' at all – he simply headed the score 'Sinfonia'. The work remained virtually unknown and quite possibly unperformed during Mozart's lifetime, only gaining popularity in a piano arrangement by Muzio Clementi in 1823, as England embraced Mozart's later music. Whatever its origin, the nickname stuck, despite the absence of any internal or external evidence to support its suitability.

The 41st Symphony is scored for flute, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani and strings – but interestingly with no clarinets – and forms a fitting conclusion to the majestic sequence of symphonies of Mozart's maturity. It is so rich in invention, and so complete in structure, that one can almost imagine that in it and its two illustrious predecessors, Mozart had said all he needed to say in the form – hence the appearance of no subsequent symphonies in the three years that remained before the composer's premature death in 1791.

The abrupt fanfare and grand Allegro vivace which open the symphony establish an imperial mood which is quite typical of Mozart's orchestral works in this key, but the intrusion of the comic aria as the second of two subsidiary themes

provides the necessary contrast. Indeed, that comic theme provides the basis for much of the development which follows – including setting up a 'false recapitulation' halfway through. A series of audacious modulations based on the opening fanfare then lead into the recapitulation proper and a return of the vaguely military feel which permeated the early part of the movement.

The Andante cantabile in F major is one of Mozart's most eloquent slow movements. From the outset on muted violins – melodic and untroubled in mood – this movement proceeds towards a C minor in which expressive figures for strings are punctuated by strident chords. The effect is oddly unsettling and the syncopations and occasional chromaticism make this one of the greatest of Mozart's slow movements. Haydn thought so too. He quoted this movement in his own Symphony No 98, which he was in the midst of writing when he heard of Mozart's death.

Haydn also admired the Minuet, which is perhaps this great symphony's least understood movement. Amid the heroism which surrounds it, this emerges with superficial simplicity. But it is scored with such subtlety (listen in particular to the gently arching string figures at the opening), its Trio is so closely integrated into the fabric of the symphony as a whole, and its chromaticism is so far-reaching, that its apparent modesty is deceptive. Perhaps most of all, it provides a fascinating context from which the *tour de force* finale can emerge.

Whereas in Mozart's earlier symphonies the weightiest movement – as was traditional – was the first one, in this final work he shifts the dramatic weight to the end. There are five themes in the finale and Mozart puts them through all manner of contrapuntal inventions. In fact there is such structural complexity that 19th-century Germans knew this work as 'the Symphony with the fugal finale', although strictly speaking the movement is in sonata form with fugato episodes. Mozart probably found the model in the work of his friend Michael Haydn, but he makes this concluding movement distinctly his own. It's a masterpiece in which the astonishing technical facility of the composing never gets in the way of the listener's enjoyment – perhaps after all a truly Olympian achievement.

Programme note © Martin Buzacott

Tuesday 23 October 8pm
Barbican Hall

**Mountain: a cinematic
and musical odyssey**

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti artistic director & lead violin

Tamara-Anna Cislowska piano

Satu Vänskä violin & voice

Helena Rathbone violin

Ike See violin

Timo-Veikko Valve cello

Nigel Jamieson staging director

Damien Cooper lighting design

Creative Team

Jennifer Peedom writer, director & producer

Richard Tognetti musical director & composer

Renan Ozturk principal cinematography

Robert Macfarlane narration scriptwriter

Willem Dafoe narrator

Christian Gazal, Scott Gray ASE editors

David White sound designer

Robert Mackenzie sound mixer

Jo-anne McGowan producer

Joseph Nizeti music editor & music supervisor

Paul Wiegard, David Gross, Stephen Boyle, Martyn Myer AO executive producers

Presented by Screen Australia and the Australian Chamber Orchestra; a Stranger Than Fiction Films Production, in association with Camp 4 Collective & Sherpas Cinema



Maria Boyadgjis

To those who are enthralled by mountains, their wonder is beyond all dispute. To those who are not, their allure is a kind of madness.

What is this strange force that draws us upwards – this siren-song of the summit?

Only three centuries ago, setting out to climb a mountain would have been considered an act of lunacy.

The idea scarcely existed that wild landscapes might hold any sort of attraction.

Mountains were places of peril, not beauty. An upper world to be shunned, not sought out.

How then have mountains now come to hold us spellbound, drawing us into their dominion ... often at the cost of our lives?

The mountains we climb, are not made only of rock and ice, but also of dreams, and desire.

The mountains we climb, are mountains of the mind.

Robert Macfarlane

About the project



Marie Boyadjis

Jennifer Peedom

Jennifer Peedom, director of *Mountain*, writes:

It was over three years ago when Richard Tognetti approached me with the idea of this collaboration. The notion of expressing musically and visually the nature of human relationships with mountains was an opportunity that immediately excited me, as did the chance to work with this incredible orchestra of which I had been a fan for many years.

The creative challenge was to make something that married music, images and words, not only for live performance but also as a standalone film. Film-making is always about collaboration but I knew that, in this case, the collaboration was the most important aspect of the project. And so it has proved.

Our process was very organic from the start. Richard had a very visceral reaction to Renan Ozturk's amazing cinematography and started responding musically to those ideas. Meanwhile, I would listen and respond to existing ACO recordings in the edit, and craft images around those masterpieces. In other cases, Richard and I would talk about what we were trying to express in a scene, and he would write something bespoke.

Robert Macfarlane's words were then an essential part in bringing the whole narrative together. This was completed by Willem Dafoe's brilliant performance of the text.

One of the interesting revelations in this process was that Richard and I would watch the same sequence of images, yet respond to them in very different ways. Where I'd see majesty and beauty, Richard would see horror and terror. I believe that this has ultimately made the film a more interesting, complex exploration of our relationships to mountains. The fact that Richard was able to somehow incorporate both these elements into his wonderful score was one of the great joys of this collaboration.'

Richard Tognetti, musical director of *Mountain*, writes:

Being in a pitch-dark room can make your thoughts brighter, and being alone atop a mountain can bring you closer to humanity.

'Mountain' draws you into this world. Through the stunning images curated by Jen Peedom, and for the most part shot by Renan Ozturk, the abstraction of music underscores and captivates, opening a portal through which we concoct an experience that beckons the viewer to the majesty and horror that is the allure and portent of mountains.

Whether it be the goons' rodeo of going downhill at speed (in wingsuits or skis or whatever your poison) or ascending rock-faces in slow-mo that only a generation ago seemed unassailable, the original music attempts to inhabit this physical and geographical drama. The Beethoven, on the other hand, transcends it all.

Renan, the cinematographer for 'Mountain', isn't just a man with a camera; he lives in actuality on the rock face, as a fellow climber with the likes of Alex Honnold – who only last year summited El Capitan, free soloing. Incidentally Renan's wife's name is (seriously) Taylor Freesolo Rees. I trust you are sitting down when you're reading this: free soloing is the art of climbing with no ropes or aids of any kind.

'Mountain' attempts to bring you into these spaces which sane people would not otherwise dwell.

The music

Richard Tognetti

Prelude; Majesty; Sublime; Gods and Monsters

Peter Sculthorpe

Djilile (for strings)*

Fryderyk Chopin

Nocturne in D flat major, Op 27 No 2*

Edvard Grieg

Holberg Suite, Op 40 – Prelude

Peter Sculthorpe

Djilile (arr piano & strings)*

Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto for four violins and cello in B minor, RV580 – Allegro

The Four Seasons – ‘Winter’, RV297: Allegro non molto

Concerto for four violins and cello in B minor, RV580 – Larghetto* ; Allegro

The Four Seasons – ‘Summer’, RV315: Presto

Arvo Pärt

Für Alina

Richard Tognetti

Flying

Richard Tognetti/Joseph Nizeti

Madness Bites

Richard Tognetti

On High

Joseph Nizeti

Grief

Arvo Pärt

Fratres*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Violin Concerto in D major, Op 61** – Larghetto

Richard Tognetti

A Final Bridge

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Concerto No 5 in E flat major, Op 73, ‘Emperor’ – Adagio un poco mosso

* abridged

** Winter Snowfall footage presented alongside Beethoven Violin Concerto is used under licence from Shutterstock.com

Conceived as both a live performance piece and a work of cinema, *Mountain* has its musical roots in the traditions of both formats. In the European Romantic tradition, music paints the beauty and terror of sublime natural environments, mountains included, and highlights the struggle of the individual within them. In the tradition of the American non-narrative film essay, music highlights a world out of balance: the rhythms and character of human cities, urban routines, military conflict and social discord coming into conflict with nature. Bringing together an original score with musical works drawn from Baroque (Vivaldi), Classical (Beethoven), Romantic (Chopin, Grieg) and 20th/21st-century (Sculthorpe, Arvo Pärt) composers, *Mountain's* musical programme draws on the rich history of both forms to illustrate and enhance Jen Peedom's penetrating look at humanity's relationship with high places.

The Sublime

'Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these? ...'

Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18)

'One should live on mountains. With blessed
nostrils do I again breathe mountain-freedom.
Freed at last is my nose from the smell of all
human hubbub!'

Friedrich Nietzsche,
Also sprach Zarathustra (1883–5)

The Romantics adored their mountains. In the visual arts, the 19th-century Romantic landscape tradition split in two. The Pastoral tradition sought out reflection and divine beauty in nature, with a forensic eye for light, weather and the calm, meditative aspect of country life. By sharp contrast, a parallel body of artwork exploring the Sublime presented the wild environment as a necessarily hazardous, terrifying crucible for wonder and enlightenment – a complicated realm of spiritual experience to be sought out, documented and creatively amplified.

The experience of the Sublime was applied to ideas of both human spiritual freedom and bodily constraints. Across art, music and literature – and particularly where these art forms alchemically intersect – we find transcendent Romantic narratives of existential challenge and fierce

independence against the strange magical might of gods, monsters and the abyss. As European artists fell in love with the noble sting of terror, composers were entirely along for the ride. While the most iconic works of Baroque and Classical opera take us via the Underworld for moral cleansing – as in Claudio Monteverdi's dive to Hades in *L'Orfeo* (1607) and Mozart's Masonic trials in *The Magic Flute* (1791) – high places became iconic environmental inspirations for 19th-century artists.

As the hearts and minds of composers swung from the gaiety and reason of Enlightened Classicism to the stormy, biographical philosophies of Romanticism, mountain environments proved a stronger sounding-board than the shadowy hells of centuries past for indulging subjective and intense explorations of self-actualisation, destiny, anxiety and awe. It is easy to comprehend visually the depth of investment in the mountains Sublime, given their vast proportions. Robert Schumann's 1852 melodrama *Manfred* (based on Lord Byron's metaphysical 'closet' drama, written during his retreat to the Swiss Alps as his private life fell under crippling public scrutiny) sees our lone hero guilt-stricken, seeking forgetfulness from distress, and debating suicide with elemental spirits among the misty peaks. Wagner's fire-brimmed mountains in his *Ring* cycle (first performed 1876) stage the imprisonment and release of Brünnhilde amid magical fire and Norse destiny, and in his final music drama *Parsifal* supernatural Christian mysticism plays out in an inaccessible mountain temple.

Moving through to the late-Romantic works of Richard Strauss, we see representations of mountain worship reaching extremes of both philosophical abstraction and pictorial representation. Friedrich Nietzsche's iconoclastic philosophical novel *Also sprach Zarathustra* begins with the hermit prophet Zarathustra emerging from years of mountain meditation to share his eccentric wisdom with humanity. Strauss's epiphanic setting of this moment when Zarathustra speaks to the sunrise is perhaps the ultimate musical expression of The Sublime terror and awe the Romantic poets described.

Richard Tognetti and I tried, as early on as 2013, to pair such *bona fide* 'Mountain music' with cinematographer Renan Ozturk's stunning

imagery, but the results were contrived or suspicious at best. Strauss's *Eine Alpensinfonie* tone poem (1915) takes the experience of ascending a mountain in the most literal programmatic terms and acoustic impressions. This is richly illustrative music, and, while it is conceptually apposite, there is nothing appropriately ambiguous or athletic in Strauss's snowstorms, where the excitement is found in the acoustic painting of environmental effects, the marvels of which were already well and truly spoken for by Renan's footage. Rather, for a film about people, howling percussion did little to illuminate the extreme fascination of the men and women who put their lives at risk to live and work among the mountains. Strauss's music also did far too little in engaging with the remarkably shot athleticism of the ski, snowboard, BMX and countless other 'extreme' sports practitioners of whom Jen Peedom had encountered rich troves.

For all of these pictorially thrilling aspects of mountains – their overwhelming physical size, their magical pull (both holy and profane) – their European musical representation remained constrained by reality. We had not yet conquered their highest peaks, let alone invented the oxygen tanks and aeroplanes necessary to do so. We had not riddled the world's mountainsides with ski-lifts and lodges, nor harnessed the electricity essential to power and warm them. More importantly, we had not made sport of leaping off of them in nothing but fabric wingsuits. To support the cinematic narrative and pacing of *Mountain*, the musical net was cast much wider.

Experimental Cinema

For a cinema audience, *Mountain* has a clear heritage in the American experimental director/composer collaborations of Godfrey Reggio and Philip Glass (*Koyaanisqatsi*, *Powaqqatsi* and *Naqoyqatsi*) and the collaborations of Ron Fricke and Michael Stearns (*Chronos*, *Baraka* and *Samsara*).

These cult films feature scores stylistically rooted in Minimalism and ambient music, and routinely contrast the rhythm and design of built environments with the vaster natural world. As cinematic essays, they investigate the world in crisis, at war and through time. By dispensing with narration, they communicate primarily via their juxtaposition of music and image – with a political and poetic agenda which was absent in earlier audio-visual cinematic experiments such as Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

Synaesthesia, the perceptual cross-triggering of senses, has been a core concept in Richard Tognetti's artistic direction of the Australian Chamber Orchestra for almost 20 years now. Across more than a dozen programmes, he has invited audiences to 'see more in the music' through, among many others, the lens of Jon Frank's ocean and urban cinematography, Michael Leunig's transcendent words and images, Bill Henson's luminous and aching photography and Barry Humphries' shape-shifting visage. Having music meet with cousin art forms in the hallowed temple of a concert hall has the unique potential to challenge and enrich by upsetting the usual context of classical music consumption, and by introducing entirely new philosophical, emotional or conceptual frameworks for unlocking the layered greatness of new or familiar works. Film is a synaesthetic form, perhaps – as the scale, longevity and cultural pre-eminence of the film industry attest – the most potent of such possible forms. Or, as sound designer David White has it: *Mountain* is a poem.

The telling of *Mountain* demanded its own set of musical tools, quite different from those used on another ACO film project: *The Reef*. The film includes visuals with a broad international sweep – having been shot on every continent – and likewise features musical points of reference with a similarly broad scope. Richard Tognetti's original score stylistically draws on a wide range of performance traditions, gestures and ideas. Minimalism, electronica, pop music and the trope-rich world of film music itself are mined for their sounds, rhythms and harmonic manoeuvres as much as they are for their contemporary cultural associations.

Original Score

Nietzsche wrote in *Zarathustra* that 'He who climbeth on the highest mountains, laugheth at all tragic plays and tragic realities'. Free solo climber Alex Honnold smiles madly to himself in the Prelude, hundreds of feet above the ground without ropes or a harness, proving Nietzsche more vividly correct than he could have ever conceived. The music here is not for Alex: scans of his brain have demonstrated that his inner wiring is highly atypical – he does not experience fear like the rest of us. The music is here for those viewers with their self-preservation instincts intact. The lone mid-range piano melody is focused and serious. It points toward the rubato piano entries of Arvo Pärt's crystalline *Für Alina*, which chime for effortless

(though thankfully, tethered) slack-line walkers above America's gorgeous canyons. The flecks of sweat and dust in the buzzing string ensemble tremolo keep us leaning forward into the picture, while the glowing woodwind chords argue the allure of this absurd challenge, and the unique opportunity it presents Alex for transcendent mental and physical achievement.

Just as the Prelude introduces Willem Dafeo's narration as a character in the film, the Bartók-inspired *Majesty* brings the solo violin to the fore as a primary storyteller. Crossfading out of the opening cue, violin and piano arpeggios bubble into focus, beckoned onward by horn calls and warping string accompaniment. As we rise alongside the monochromatic profile of an enormous mountainside, Richard Tognetti's solo violin swells and tests the chromatic edges of a bold, tenacious melody. After the full ensemble takes over this theme and the piece dissipates in a wash of bowed percussion, the camera lifts up and over the mountain range preparing our bird's-eye view for *Sublime*.

Sublime was originally conceived during a 2013 retreat to Banff in which Tognetti developed an itch to explore total existential terror and dread in *Mountain*. The working title for this cue was indeed 'Air of Another Planet', a suggestion I put to Richard from Stefan George's text to Schoenberg's String Quartet No 2:

*I feel air from another planet ...
Then I see a filmy mist rising
In a sun-filled, open expanse
That includes only the farthest mountain crags.
The land looks white and smooth like whey,
I climb over enormous canyons.
I feel as if I am swimming above the last cloud
In a sea of crystal radiance ...*

These are Renan Ozturk's gorgeous aerial visuals; astral projections predicted by a Symbolist poet a century before their time. Jen's recommendation to make the scoring here more alluring led to the interpolation of the late Danny Spooner intoning the 'Call of the Seals', a traditional Outer Hebrides folk song, blending fantastic yearning with traumatic anxiety. In this emotional cocktail we find the questions at the heart of the film: why do humans find high places alluring, and are the risks we take to explore and enjoy them defensible? The final result is bold, searing and strange. After the frenetic emotion boils over we find repose with

our two distant figures embracing on the summit, and earn the striking arrival of the title.

After the massive weight of these cues, the original score simmers down into leaner textures. *Gods and Monsters* opens with an unusual triple solo for cello, bass and piano. The exotic, searching B minor harmonic progression featured in the middle movement of Vivaldi's Concerto for four violins and cello forms the chordal basis for this section, supporting the soloists who tussle as the ancient creatures which once dwelt on high within our collective unconscious. The soaring cello solos which appear in *Gods and Monsters* (and later on too in *Flying* and *Grief*) were as inspired by their filmic contexts as they were by director Jen Peedom's love of that instrument – three little reciprocal gifts from composer to director. As we leave the misty gods behind us, images of the spiritual culture of daily life among the mountains of Nepal are accompanied by a duet for clarinet and bassoon, which is taken up by strings to segue seamlessly into Peter Sculthorpe's *Djilile*.

Flying, the first of two contrasting songs written for the film, is vulnerable and vast. At its heart is an extended shot of a wingsuiter flying towards a town over a cliff face as the ensemble swells and shifts around vocalist Satu Vänskä, inviting the viewer into the film's mesmerising detail. When we are left adrift after the song's climax, discordant synthetic effects begin to creep in and the rug is aggressively pulled out from beneath our feet.

Madness Bites spews arrogance with its crashing drums, detuned synths and guitar-thickened surges of strings – invoking the dime-a-dozen extreme-ski-crash-reel montages of the YouTube generation alongside dissonant 20th-century Expressionism. To function, the musicians and vocalist fully commit to its bombast, so we lean on the narration to deconstruct and challenge the persuasive adrenaline of the sequence: 'Those who travel to mountain tops are half in love with themselves, and half in love with oblivion.'

The score then switches to the steadier, percussion-rich *On High*. This sequence, visually assembled from footage acquired during the shoot for Jen Peedom's 2015 documentary *Sherpa*, contrasts the tireless efforts of the Nepalese Sherpa guides with an overcrowded and increasingly polluted Everest. The looping, layered drums are met with an impassioned minor-key melody, first stoically from the full string ensemble, and then

as a more anxious duet for solo violin and cello. Accompanying unsettling visuals of the emotional aftermath of the deadly 2014 Mount Everest ice avalanche, *Grief* sees this anxiety unravel as risk is finally met with devastating loss.

During the initial editing of the film, there was concern that concluding the film with two middle-period Beethoven slow movements would be indulgent, or worse, luxurious. However, after the composition of *A Final Bridge* to link and modulate between them, the creative team were satisfied that sufficient space and contrast was achieved to maintain the smooth flow of the film's structure. As the gongs and string ambience of *Bridge* die out, the first glowing chord of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto comes as a revelation, and as consolation for the cold warning given last in the narration: 'Anyone who has been around mountains knows their indifference, has felt a brief, blazing sense of the world's disinterest in us.'

Musical Selections

Arvo Pärt and the late Peter Sculthorpe are the national musical prides of their native Estonia and Australia. Both were trained in the cerebral mid-century European tradition, in spite of which they created their own highly personal and spiritual forms of stylistic expression through the 1960s and 1970s. Both composers also share a habit of reversioning works for different ensembles – just think of the different instrumental realisations of *Fratres* or the half-dozen realisations of *Djilile*. For this performance, *Djilile* appears at two points. Firstly, in an extract for strings only (created by Peter for Richard and the ACO in 2001) and then in a newly approved abridged arrangement for piano and strings.

Sculthorpe based his *Djilile* (which translates as 'whistling-duck on a billabong') on an Indigenous Australian melody, in this case one recorded by ethnomusicologists in Arnhem Land in the 1950s. During Richard Tognetti and Jen Peedom's three-year process of melding music and image, the inclusion of *Djilile* was the most quickly and rapturously received proposal. Sculthorpe's music forms the perfect bridge for the imagery here, rolling and breathing with restrained gorgeousness to the rituals of daily life among the sublime Nepalese peaks. Pictorially, it is fitting as a sequel to the ancient strangeness of *Gods and Monsters* and as an invocation of the Asian aesthetics which the composer found so personally resonant.

Für Alina and *Fratres* are representative of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style, in which minimal musical motifs are juxtaposed with recurring cycles of chords (*Fratres*), or the contents of a single chord (*Für Alina*). Unlike the late 20th-century American school of Minimalism, however, these related techniques are not mathematically rigged to spin out in pointillistic stacks of ambiguously modal 'white piano key' notes. Pärt's compositions are structurally sharp and texturally sparse, inviting the listener to engage with clear patterns of tension and release, and inviting the ear to hear consonances and dissonances within the framework of familiar harmonic functions. Taking extreme advantage of compositional negative space, much of *Für Alina* is silence – held breath. Lone figures walk across an immense slack line between two rock towers, slipping in and out of visual synchronisation with the horizon just as the left and right hands of the piano drift in and out of harmonic conflict and resolution. *Fratres* likewise locks onto the images of Hawaiian lava spewing into the ocean. The solo violin urges the flecks of deep orange lava from the ground above a rich drone of strings which embodies the miasmic steam. Occasionally, the piece pauses for claves and bass drum to ring out ceremonially, speeding us through time-lapse photography of the lava as it cools, cracks and hardens into fresh terrain.

The pair of works which complement the grainy, cropped film footage of the 'archival' section of the film are nostalgic, stirring and sincere. Stylistically, Chopin's Nocturne, Op 27 No 2 may come from the domestic salons of the 19th century, but his contributions to this light musical genre have an intensity and genuineness of feeling that have assured their continued popularity. In looking for a piece which was both naive and sumptuous, editor Christian Gazal and I sifted through no fewer than 60 alternatives but kept coming back to this piece. It turns bold emotional corners and hints at the emotional risk and reward of mountaineering beyond whimsical day walks.

Grieg's *Holberg Suite* proved ideal to sustain this impression of nostalgia for the pioneers of mountaineering, while ramping up in intensity to showcase the ambition of the mid-century quest to summit Everest in particular. Grieg wrote the *Holberg Suite* in an intentionally quaint and anachronistic style. To modern ears it's even harder to place in time, which is exactly what the dynamic sequence called for. While the Chopin yearns with dreamy, searching chromaticism, the Grieg is all wide-eyed diatonicism and blissful

galloping confidence. Exultant success in the iconic images of Tenzing and Hilary reaching the summit of Everest arrives at last and the music is given permission to ease up, blooming into a grand chorale-like cadence to complete the movement.

It wasn't the original intention to have Vivaldi as the sole representative of Baroque chamber music. Among the roads not taken was a string setting of Bach's exquisite chorale prelude *Ich ruf' zu dir* – ultimately, though, Jen Peedom's vision for this middle act was one of human athletic conquest and challenge among mountains, as well as our gradual technological taming of their harsher aspects for means of ski tourism and commercial exploitation. But while there was no place for Bach's clear-minded Lutheran offerings, the explosively dynamic string works of Vivaldi spoke strongly to the form and content of this sequence. On paper, Vivaldi's music is geometric perfection, but in the hands of a crack ensemble such as the ACO it spills fire and energy from the fingerboard and demands fearless athleticism and focus (not unlike those seen up on the screen).

These five continuous Vivaldi movements (the Concerto in B minor for four violins and cello interspersed with a movement each from 'Winter' and 'Summer' from the *Four Seasons*) were among the first to be added to the soundtrack. They take us from the daily routines of those who live among mountains, through the physical pain and harsh risk endured by climbers, to the tamed and modified mountainsides embraced for the comfortable-yet-crowded modern ritual of the ski season.

If there appears to be a whiff of judgement or condescension in this trajectory towards ease and comfort, *Mountain* obliterates it with the bracing Presto of 'Summer'. Edited with musical intensity to the bold rhythms of violin soloist and ensemble, it takes us beyond the hordes of children and casual snowboarders crowding the slopes to a stunning sequence of downhill skiing, culminating in an aerial ballet.

After the athletic displays that dominate the middle of the film, *Mountain* turns to Beethoven for its final act.

As in *Fratres*, where the solo violin arpeggiations convey the spewing lava and steam which give birth to land, the soloist in the Violin Concerto guides us along those mountain ranges born of tectonic 'waves of stone', and down the trickles of water from the great peaks which freeze, thaw, melt and build in volume. At last, when we reach the waterfalls, rivers and vast lakes of the world the soloist passes the torch to resplendent horns, and flora and fauna crowd onto the screen. In a moment of editorial crisis around the duration of the Violin Concerto movement, we went through a number of alternative Romantic violin concerto slow movements, but even superficially similar options did not convey the same feeling of transcendent beauty, let alone the same narrative concepts of deep time and nature's vast physical interconnectedness. The Bruch G minor Concerto's Adagio came the closest, but side by side with the Beethoven fell short in its intimation of the eternal. As Willem Dafoe's sonorous narration ceases, the declamatory presence of the Beethoven's masterful solo violin asserts itself for the final time, proving it to be an equally persuasive storyteller.

The torch passes lastly to the pianist for the sublime middle movement of the 'Emperor' Piano Concerto, concluding the film with delicacy, confidence and hope. In a bold editorial move, the final moving shot of the film runs for a full 90 seconds: time to be fully persuaded by the music, and to reflect on the majesty and wildness of these natural giants. Ending the film on a fittingly personal image, Jen Peedom has also told me that the featured Himalayan mountain – Ama Dablam – is her favourite of all and that she hopes to return to it some day soon. Her fondness for and fascination with mountains is, it seems, unquenchable.

Programme note © Joseph Nizeti

Wednesday 24 October 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750),
arr. Richard Tognetti

The Musical Offering, BWV1079 – Ricercar a 6

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–88)

Sinfonia in B minor, Wq182/5

Sufjan Stevens (born 1975), arr. Michael

**Atkinson Run Rabbit Run – Suite: Year of the
Ox; Year of Our Lord; Year of the Boar**

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Scene and Aria, 'Ah! perfido'

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

La traviata – Prelude to Act 3

Otello – Ave Maria

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Divertimento

Australian Chamber Orchestra
Richard Tognetti director & violin
Nicole Car soprano
Guildhall musicians

For texts, please see page 20

In 1747 Bach visited his son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, who was working in the Potsdam court of Frederick the Great, a model philosopher king with a deep interest in music (being a fine flautist himself) and ideas. The king was also responsible for bringing Prussia into the 18th century, modernising its economy, politics and industry. Accordingly, his palace housed the latest inventions of his day, including 15 fortepianos. He had often hoped to meet Carl Philipp Emanuel's father and ask what he thought of these instruments, but did not get the chance until Bach's visit in 1747.

At this meeting of great minds, Bach was ushered around the palace to perform on the various keyboards. The king also provided Bach with a theme on which to improvise a six-part fugue. Bach found that the theme wouldn't work, but upon returning home he turned the theme into an assortment of canons and fugues that he sent to the king as a 'Musical Offering'. The front page bears the motto 'Regis Iussu Cantio Et Reliqua Canonica Arte Resoluta' (At the king's demand, the song [fugue] and the remainder [canons] resolved with canonic art). The first letters spell 'Ricer-car', an Italian term meaning 'to search'. The Ricer-car a 6 is the highpoint of Bach's offering – it is arguably his finest fugue, which Charles Rosen called 'the most significant piano work of the millennium'.

Richard Tognetti's arrangement begins with a vivid depiction of a scene from Frederick's early years, in which his friend (and rumoured lover), Hans Hermann von Katte, was beheaded on his father's orders. In this striking introduction, each note of the King's theme is stated, one by one, as the players walk on stage, resulting in a wash of dissonance from which Bach's fugue emerges. Tognetti's treatment of the fugue incorporates a solo flute that represents Frederick himself, and utilises a wide spectrum of string orchestra colour and stylistic influences that range from the *inégalité* of the French Baroque, to the jazzy, rhythmic vitality of Jacques Loussier and the bold orchestrations of Leopold Stokowski.

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach spent the last 20 years of his life in Hamburg, where he succeeded his godfather, Georg Philipp Telemann, as Kapellmeister of the city's churches. Known to his contemporaries

simply as Emanuel, he was active during an important time of transition from the Baroque to the Classical styles. But, in stark contrast to the elegant and mannered *galant* style of his contemporaries, Carl Philipp Emanuel favoured a more dynamic, dramatic approach. Consequently, he earned a reputation for his 'singular taste, verging on the bizarre'.

He would have been pleased then, while in Hamburg, to be commissioned by the Dutch-Austrian diplomat Gottfried van Swieten – a patron of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – to write six string symphonies, in which he was required to 'give himself free rein, without regard to difficulty'. These symphonies are like Frankenstein monsters of string-orchestra writing: managing to be at once graceful and spirited, fiendishly virtuosic and decidedly avant-garde, pushing every musical boundary of the era.

The project of arranging tracks from Sufjan Stevens' 2001 album *Enjoy Your Rabbit* was originally a commission from the Music Now festival in Cincinnati, where it was premiered by the Osso String Quartet. Not long after, these movements became a point of departure for many other projects and collaborations with other arrangers including, among others, Rob Moose, Nico Muhly and Gabriel Kahane, culminating in the album *Run Rabbit Run* for string quartet. This expanded version for string ensemble is based on Michael Atkinson's original suite. In a programme note for the premiere in 2007, Sufjan Stevens shared his thoughts:

'This arrangement draws upon the material of the original suite, including colourful extended techniques and textural improvisations in tandem with more conventional-sounding music. They are uncomplicated impressions of theme and variation that bring to light, through careful condensation, a project previously heavy laden with conceit. Atkinson's scores do not, however, ignore the experiments of sound and improvisation that inspired many of the original recordings. His arrangements paint abstract sequences, odd shapes and angular arches on the staff, open to interpretation. The strings are forced to mimic gestures previously generated by the computer: sampled beats, digital glitches and mechanical guffaws. At one point, for example, the players are cued for a few bars of shushing, imitating the sound of rain.

These songs have become, to my ears, more alive, more capable, more fully realised than their original recordings. It's as if, in initially piecing them together years ago in the solitude of my computer, I was constructing Frankenstein's monster, with the wit and wildness of a mad scientist. Atkinson's arrangements distill these vulgarities in vinegar, pulling away all the ugly skin lesions, the moles, the gimmicks, the stitching and the layers of gauze. What is revealed is a full-grown man, with consciousness, hair parted to the side, a tracksuit, running shoes, a baseball cap. It's alive! It's alive! Of course this is where the analogy breaks down, for these songs are more animal than human.'

Ah! perfido probably dates from the period of Beethoven's study with Salieri, and it may well have been the older man who encouraged him to compose it, knowing that a formal concert piece on an Italian text, a self-contained concert aria, would stand Beethoven in good stead. The theme of the text, partly by Metastasio, is thwarted, unfulfilled love, which is a constantly recurring theme in Beethoven's songs.

A quickly shifting series of recitatives portrays, first, rage at the beloved's departure. A kaleidoscope of emotions follows: self-pity for the pain this is causing, then defiance and the threat of divine punishment, a dramatic reflection on the heavenly punishment that grows in intensity then, in fast tempo, excited thoughts of lightning striking the faithless beloved. Suddenly, the woman's thoughts turn on herself, and the clarinet leads an adagio preparing lyrically the first part of the aria – a prayer to the beloved not to leave.

As in many of Beethoven's songs, the instruments state the melodic material before the voice takes it up. The idea of dying of grief is drawn out, at the end of this section, over pizzicato strings, which seems to suggest the ebbing away of life. The remainder of the *scena* is an allegro assai in which agitated passages alternate with slower, pathetic ones, though this material is heard in both slow and fast tempos, suggesting that the words are less important to Beethoven than the musical idea.

interval 20 minutes

The arias on this programme represent the lamentations and reproaches of women throughout history: abandoned and betrayed, calling out, bemoaning their desolation. 'Do you have the heart to betray me?' they sigh. 'I will die of grief.' But, far from oppressed, these women lift their voices to share with us their pain and their philosophy. And their resilience.

Verdi's Prelude to Act 3 of *La traviata* serves both as a tribute to Nicole Car's acclaimed 2018 performances as Violetta and as a prelude to the aria that follows. In this most exquisite 'Hail Mary', the soprano assumes the role of Desdemona in *Otello*, Verdi's penultimate opera, first staged in 1887. 'Pray for the sinner, for the one who is innocent, and for the weak and oppressed ... show thy mercy', sings Desdemona, for she has been hurled to the ground by her beloved, 'fallen', as she sings earlier in the opera, 'in the foul mud'. She has recalled an abandoned woman who too sang sadly. She knows that Otello will kill her soon, and she has laid out her bridal dress in which to be buried. Now she sings her last moments of peace in an 'Ave Maria', and sleeps.

The Swiss conductor Paul Sacher was responsible for commissioning a number of important 20th-century string orchestra pieces for his Basle Chamber Orchestra, including works by Honegger, Hindemith and Stravinsky. He also commissioned some of Bartók's greatest pieces, including *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936), the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) and this *Divertimento* (1939).

Divertimentos were popular in the 18th century, with Mozart and Haydn penning notable examples. In the early 20th century the genre made a comeback as part of the Neo-classical trend to which even folk-music devotee Bartók was not immune. The term itself comes from the Italian *divertire* – 'to amuse'. Perhaps Bartók had hoped for some lighthearted respite from the gloom of pre-war Europe.

While the *Divertimento*'s outer movements may bustle with a sunny, folk-inspired optimism, they frame darker territory. This optimism is entirely absent from the brooding middle movement, which, with its twists and turns, seems to foreshadow impending terrors: Bartók completed his *Divertimento* in a mere 15 days, only a month before the outbreak of the Second World War.

The piece was part of the programme for the ACO's inaugural concert in 1975 and remains a favourite of its musicians and audiences alike.

Programme notes © Bernard Rofe (J S Bach, C P E Bach, Bartók), Michael Atkinson (Stevens), David Garrett (Beethoven) and Kate Holden (Verdi)

Ludwig van Beethoven Ah! perfido

Ah! perfido, spergiuoro,
Barbaro traditor, tu parti?
E son questi gl'ultimi tuoi congedi?
Ove s'intese tirannia più crudel?
Va, scellerato! va, pur fuggi da me,
L'ira de' Numi non fuggirai.
Se v'è giustizia in ciel, se v'è pietà,
Congiureranno a gara tutti a punirti!
Ombra seguace, presente, ovunque vai,
Vedrò le mie vendette;
Io già le godo immaginando;
I fulmini ti veggio già balenar d'intorno.

Ah no! fermate, vindici Dei!
Risparmiate quel cor, ferite il mio!
S'ei non è più qual era, son io qual fui;
Per lui vivea, voglio morir per lui!
Per pietà, non dirmi addio,
Di te priva che farò?
Tu lo sai, bell'idol mio!
Io d'affanno morirò.
Ah crudel! Tu vuoi ch'io mora!
Tu non hai pietà di me?
Perchè rendi a chi t'adora
Così barbara mercè?
Dite voi, se in tanto affanno
Non son degna di pietà?

Ah! You treacherous, faithless,
barbaric traitor, you leave?
And is this your last farewell?
Where did one hear of a crueller tyranny?
Go, despicable man! Go, flee from me!
You won't flee from the wrath of the gods.
If there is justice in heaven, if there is pity,
All will join forces in a contest to punish you!
I follow your trail. I am wherever you go,
I will live to see my revenge;
I already take my delight in it in my imagination;
I already see you surrounded by flashes of
lightning.
Alas! Pause, avenging gods!
Spare that heart, wound mine!
If he is not what he was, I am still what I was;
For him I lived, for him I want to die!
Have mercy, don't bid me farewell,
What shall I do without you?
You know it, my beloved idol!
I will die of grief.
Ah, cruel man! You want me to die!
Don't you have pity on me?
Why do you reward the one who adores you
In such a barbaric way?
Tell me, if in such a grief
I do not deserve pity?

Translation © Raff Wilson, Symphony Australia 2005

Giuseppe Verdi
Otello – Ave Maria

Ave Maria piena di grazia, eletta
Fra le spose e le vergini sei tu,
Sia benedetto il frutto, o benedetta,
Di tue materne viscere, Gesù.
Prega per chi adorando a te si prostra,
Prega pel peccator, per l'innocente,
E pel debole oppresso e pel possente,

Misero anch'esso, tua pietà dimostra.
Prega per chi sotto l'oltraggio piega
La fronte e sotto la malvagia sorte;
Per noi, per noi tu prega, prega,
Sempre e nell'ora della morte nostra,
Prega per noi, prega per noi, prega.
Ave Maria ...
Nell'ora della morte.
Ave! ... Amen!

Hail Mary full of grace, chosen
among wives and maidens art thou,
blessed be the fruit, o blessed one,
of thy womb, Jesus.
Pray for the one who kneels in prayer before you,
pray for the sinner, for the one who is innocent,
and for the weak and oppressed, and for the
mighty,
also wretched, show thy mercy.
Pray for the one who bows his head
under injustice and under misfortune;
for us, pray thou for us, pray,
ever and in the hour of our death,
pray for us, pray for us, pray.
Hail Mary ...
in the hour of our death.
Hail! ... Amen!

Translation © Rebecca Burstein

About the performers



Daniel Boud

Richard Tognetti

Richard Tognetti director & violin

Richard Tognetti is Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

He began his studies in his hometown of Wollongong with William Primrose, then continued with Alice Waten at the Sydney Conservatorium, and Igor Ozim at the Bern Conservatory, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he led several performances of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and that November was appointed as the Orchestra's lead violin and, subsequently, Artistic Director.

He performs on period, modern and electric instruments and his numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been

performed throughout the world. As director and/or soloist, he has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Hong Kong, Luxembourg and Slovenian Philharmonic orchestras, Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra and the Nordic Chamber Orchestra, as well as all of the Australian symphony orchestras, most recently as soloist/director with the Melbourne and Tasmanian Symphony orchestras. He also gave the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutosławski's *Partita*. In November 2016 he became the Barbican Centre's first Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall. He created the Huntington Festival in Mudgee, New South Wales, and was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

He was co-composer of the score for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*; he co-composed the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's surf film *Storm Surfers 3D*; and created *The Red Tree*, inspired by Shaun Tan's book. He also created the documentary film *Musica Surfica*, as well as *The Glide*, *The Reef* and *The Crowd*. Most recently, he collaborated with director Jennifer Peedom and Stranger Than Fiction Films to create the film *Mountain* for the ACO.

Richard Tognetti was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010. He holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. He performs on the 1743 'Carrodus' Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian benefactor.

Georges Antoni



Nicole Car

Nicole Car soprano

Nicole Car is one of the most outstanding singers to have emerged from Australia in recent years. In 2015, she made her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, singing Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) and Micaëla (*Carmen*). Since then she has sung Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Semperoper Dresden and Opera Australia, Mimì (*La bohème*) for Covent Garden, Tatyana for the Paris Opéra and the title-roles in *Thaïs* and *Luisa Miller* for Opera Australia (winning her first Helpmann Award for the latter).

Engagements this year include Violetta (*La traviata*) in Sydney, Mimì in Paris and Dresden, Marguerite (*Faust*) in Berlin and a national tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra; Nicole also makes her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, as Mimì.

After completing her Bachelor of Music at the Victorian College of the Arts, she won the 2007 Herald-Sun Aria, and was the 2012 winner of the ASC Opera Awards and the 2013 winner of the international Neue Stimmen competition in Germany. Her major role debut occurred in 2009, when she sang Donna Anna in Victorian Opera's *Don Giovanni*.

For Opera Australia, she has sung Tatyana, Micaëla, Mimì, Marguerite, Pamina (*The Magic Flute*) Leïla (*The Pearl Fishers*), the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and both Donna Anna and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*). She has also sung Donna Anna for West Australian Opera and Adalgisa (*Norma*) for Victorian Opera.

Concert engagements have included Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony orchestras; Mahler's *Das klagende Lied* with the Queensland SO; the Last Night of the Proms with the Tasmanian SO; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Auckland Philharmonia; Bach's *St John Passion* with the Sydney Philharmonia and a programme of Richard Strauss and Mozart with the Melbourne Symphony.

She has recorded *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Melbourne SO, *Rule Britannia!* with the Tasmanian SO, *The Kiss*, a disc of operatic arias, and *Carmen* on DVD.

Nicole Car made her American debut in 2014 as the Countess for Dallas Opera, and her European debut the following year as Tatyana for Deutsche Oper Berlin.



Australian Chamber Orchestra

The Australian Chamber Orchestra was founded by cellist John Painter in November 1975. This 17-piece string orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for its combination of explosive performances and brave interpretations. The ACO's programmes are steeped in history but always looking to the future, juxtaposing celebrated classics with new commissions, and adventurous cross-artform collaborations.

Since 1990 it has been led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti and together they give more than 100 concerts across Australia each year. The orchestra also maintains an international touring schedule that takes it to many of the world's greatest concert halls, including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Barbican Centre, Royal Festival Hall, Vienna's Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, New York, Birmingham Symphony Hall and Frankfurt's Alte Oper. This year the ACO began a three-year London residency as International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court in partnership with the Barbican Centre, with which they share a commitment to present concerts that inspire, embolden and challenge audiences. Whether performing in Manhattan,

New York, or Wollongong, New South Wales, the ACO is unwavering in its commitment to creating transformative musical experiences.

The orchestra regularly collaborates with artists and musicians who share its ideology: from Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Olli Mustonen, Brett Dean and Ivry Gitlis to Neil Finn, Jonny Greenwood, Barry Humphries and Meow Meow; and to visual artists and film makers such as Michael Leunig, Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jon Frank and Jennifer Peedom, who have co-created unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the ACO has an active recording programme across CD, vinyl and digital formats. Its recordings of Bach's violin works won three consecutive ARIA Awards. Recent releases include *Water | Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, and the soundtrack to the acclaimed cinematic collaboration *Mountain*. Documentaries featuring the ACO have been shown on television worldwide and have won awards at film festivals on four continents.

The ACO gratefully acknowledges its ACOUK Board, Friends and members of its Chairman's Council for their support of these performances.

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John Coles
John & Kate Corcoran
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The ACO is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts and the NSW Government through Create NSW.

ACO UK Board of Directors

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Australian Chamber Orchestra

Artistic Director/

Lead Violin

Richard Tognetti
Chair sponsored by Wendy Edwards, Peter & Ruth McMullin, Louise Myer & Martyn Myer AO, Andrew & Andrea Roberts

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Courtesy of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Cello

Timo-Veikko Valve*
Chair sponsored by Peter Weiss AO

Melissa Barnard
Chair sponsored by Dr & Mrs J Wenderoth

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Maxime Bibeau*
Chair sponsored by Darin Cooper Foundation

Touring Team

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Antonia Farrugia

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Luke Shaw

Tour Manager

Lisa Mullineux

Artistic Administrator

Anna Melville

Touring & Production Coordinator

Ross Chapman

Sound Engineer

Bob Scott

Sound Assistant

Felix Abrahams

Other Musicians

22 Oct

Violin

Victoria Sayles
Eva Thorarinsdottir

Viola

Florian Peelman#
Chair sponsored by peckvonhartel architects
Ian Rathbone

Flute

Sally Walker #
Courtesy of The Australian National University

Oboe

Karin Egardt #
Courtesy of Swedish Chamber Orchestra

Dmitry Malkin
Courtesy of Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra

Clarinet

Olli Leppäniemi #
Courtesy of Turku Philharmonic Orchestra
Alexei Dupressoir

Bassoon

Joost Bosdijk #
Courtesy of London Symphony Orchestra
Dominic Tyler

Horn

Alexander Edmundson #
Courtesy of London Symphony Orchestra

Angela Barnes
Courtesy of London Symphony Orchestra

Trumpet

David Elton #
Courtesy of London Symphony Orchestra

Richard Blake
Courtesy of City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Timpani

Brian Nixon #
Chair sponsored by Mr Robert Albert OA & Mrs Libby Albert

23 Oct

Violin

Victoria Sayles
Eva Thorarinsdottir

Viola

Ian Rathbone

Flute

Sally Walker #
*Courtesy of The Australian
National University*

Clarinet

Olli Leppäniemi #
*Courtesy of Turku
Philharmonic Orchestra*
Alexei Dupressoir

Bassoon

Otto Virtanen #
*Courtesy of Finnish Radio
Symphony Orchestra*
Llinos Owen

Horn

Timothy Jones #
Arianne Rooney

Keyboard

Tamara-Anna
Cisłowska #

Percussion

Evan Mannell #

Electronics/Guitar

Joseph Nizeti #

24 Oct

Violin

Victoria Sayles
Eva Thorarinsdottir

Viola

Florian Peelman#

Flute

Sally Walker #

Clarinet

Olli Leppäniemi #
Alexei Dupressoir

Bassoon

Otto Virtanen #
Dominic Tyler

Horn

Tim Ball
Arianne Rooney

* *principal*

guest principal

Musicians from Guildhall School of Music & Drama

24 Oct

Violin 1

Harriet Haynes
Greta Papa
Ragnhild Kyvik Bauge
Ruth Heney
Millie Ashton

Violin 2

Juliette Roos
Sabine Sergejeva
Samuel Staples
Dan-Julian Drutac
Berfin Aksu

Viola

Abby Bowen
Oscar Holch
Nicholas Hughes

Cello

Thomas Vidal
Julia Sompolinska
Pedro Silva

Double Bass

Cole Morrison
Miguel Pliego García

*The list of players was
correct at the time of
going to press*

barbican

Sat 26 Jan

Diana Damrau
sings Strauss's
Four Last Songs

with **Mariss Jansons** and the
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra