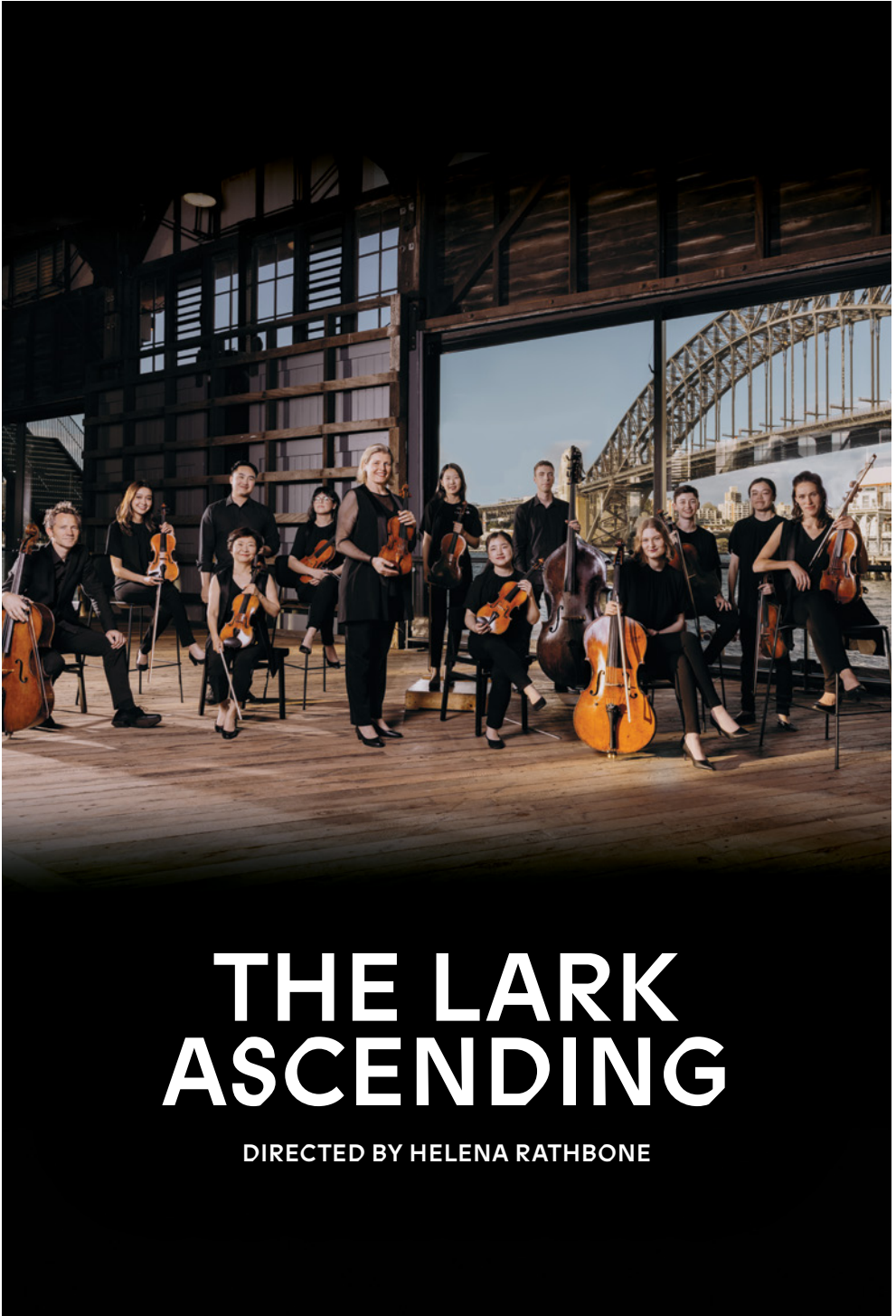


ACO Collective



THE LARK ASCENDING

DIRECTED BY HELENA RATHBONE



PRINCIPAL PARTNER
ACO COLLECTIVE





WELCOME

I am thrilled to welcome you to this performance by ACO Collective, the Australian Chamber Orchestra's critically acclaimed string ensemble that pairs our Emerging Artists – the best and brightest young musicians in the country – with the core musicians of the ACO.

Directing the ensemble for this performance is the ACO's own extraordinary Principal Violin Helena Rathbone. Helena has crafted a spectacular program for this concert, featuring music from the Baroque through to brand new music by Australian composer Anne Cawrse, commissioned by the ACO especially for ACO Collective. Also on the program is Vaughan William's soaring *The Lark Ascending*, a firm favourite with musicians and audiences alike, that will see Helena take to the stage as soloist on her precious Stradivarius violin in what promises to be an electrifying performance.

We are delighted to tour this program throughout metropolitan and regional centres in NSW and Victoria, some of which ACO Collective will be performing in for the very first time. I am proud to share that since ACO Collective was first formed in 2007, the ensemble has travelled to more than 85 regional centres in every state and territory.

I thank the Principal Partner of ACO Collective, Wesfarmers, for their invaluable support of this wonderful ensemble. Our partnership with Wesfarmers is integral to the success of this tour, and ACO Collective more broadly, and I thank them for their essential support over the past 25 years.

I hope you enjoy the performance.



Richard Evans
Managing Director

Join the conversation

#ACO24Season |     

@AustralianChamberOrchestra

WELCOME FROM WESFARMERS

As the Principal Partner of ACO Collective, it is our pleasure to welcome you to this performance featuring Australia's most talented emerging musicians. For more than a decade we have been proud to present this exceptional ensemble guided by ACO Principal Violin and ACO Collective Director Helena Rathbone.

Wesfarmers has supported the ACO for more than twenty-five years through a partnership founded on a commitment to bringing beautiful performances to communities across Australia.

Since its inception in 2007, ACO Collective has travelled to every state and territory and has graced the stage of more than 85 regional performing arts centres, and we are pleased to bring this sweeping program to audiences across New South Wales and Victoria.

We are especially proud to champion the ACO's commitment to new Australian works with the premiere of *Falling Upward* by award-winning Australian composer Anne Cawrse, commissioned for the ACO.

It is our privilege and joy to present this concert, and we hope you enjoy it as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.



Rob Scott

Managing Director Wesfarmers Limited



Wesfarmers Arts

PRINCIPAL PARTNER: ACO COLLECTIVE

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Helena Rathbone
Principal Violin, Australian Chamber Orchestra

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PROGRAM

Helena Rathbone Director and Violin
ACO Collective

HUGO WOLF (arr. strings)	Italian Serenade	8
MAX RICHTER	On the Nature of Daylight	6
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WOJCIECH KILAR	Orawa	8

* Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

The concert will last approximately one hour and 40 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.
The Australian Chamber Orchestra reserves the right to alter scheduled artists and programs as necessary.

MUSICIANS

The musicians on stage
for this performance.



Helena Rathbone
Director and Violin

Helena plays the 1732 'ex-Dollfus' Stradivarius violin, kindly on loan from an anonymous private benefactor.



Aiko Goto
ACO Violin

Aiko performs on a 1862 Jean-Baptiste violin made in Paris.



James Armstrong
Violin

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.



Beatrice Colombis
Violin

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.



Liam Freisberg
Violin

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.



Natalie Mavridis
Violin

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.



Harry Egerton
Violin

Guest Emerging Artist.



Amanda Chen
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist
Program Alumni.



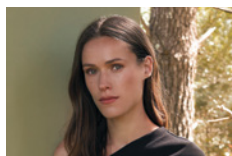
Lily Higson-Spence
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist
Program Alumni.



Riley Skevington
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist
Program Alumni.



Elizabeth Woolnough
ACO Viola

Elizabeth plays a 1968 Pierre M. Audinot viola made in Paris.
ACO Emerging Artist
Program Alumni.



Andrew Crothers
Viola

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.



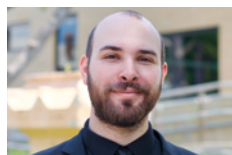
Harry Swainston
Viola

Guest Emerging Artist.



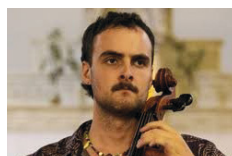
Julian Thompson
ACO Cello

Julian plays a 1729 Guarneri cello, kindly donated to the ACO by the late Peter Weiss AO.



Ariel Volovelsky
Cello

2024 ACO Emerging Artist



Hamish Jamieson
Cello

ACO Emerging Artist
Program Alumni.



Caroline Renn
Double Bass

2024 ACO Emerging Artist.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Directing an ACO Collective tour is always a highlight of the year for me. The young musicians of the Collective are the cream of the crop, and proof to me that the future of string playing in Australia is in good hands. It is my privilege to guide and mentor such talent.

The Lark Ascending tour will take us from Victoria to New South Wales, playing in capital cities as well as regional towns. We are thrilled to be back in regional Victoria, as it has been a few years since we have performed in its beautiful towns, and we are looking forward to reconnecting with some of our loyal ACO enthusiasts in Bendigo and Healesville. We also very much look forward to introducing ACO Collective to brand new audiences in Cowes, the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre, and The Pavilion in Sutherland.

The music in this concert is a mixture of old and new. We span nearly five centuries from Purcell to Cawrse, but such is the magic of music that we can play them alongside each other.

The program takes the listener on a journey of many different emotions. From the sheer joy of the Wolf Serenade, the calming Richter, the pure beauty of the Purcell, the perpetual movement of the Cawrse and of course, the exquisite sound world of *The Lark Ascending*.

Vaughan Williams' *Lark* resonates very much with my British violinist soul, and I am so thrilled to be playing what has forever been one of my favourite pieces.

I always like to include some luscious rich string music in the ACO Collective programs and that is exactly what the Suk Serenade brings to the mix. And, if the last movement of the Suk doesn't have you sitting on the edge of your seat, Kilar's *Orawa* certainly will!

Please allow us to take you on this musical journey and we hope you enjoy listening as much as we enjoy playing for you.

Helena Rathbone
Director and Violin

PROGRAM IN SHORT

Your five-minute read
before lights down.



Hugo Wolf

(1860–1903)

Italian Serenade *Arranged for strings*

Hugo Wolf's *Italian Serenade* is, in many ways, inspired by the operas of Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Bellini and Gioachino Rossini, whose music was so fundamental to his own musical upbringing. Originally written for string quartet, Wolf intended it as the first movement in a four-movement suite, but never completed the project. Instead, his *Serenade* exists as a standalone work arranged for string orchestra. In it, Wolf evokes the Italianate spirit by conjuring scenes of lively Italian song and dance, complete with strumming guitars.



Max Richter

(1966–)

On the Nature of Daylight

On the Nature of Daylight was originally written for Max Richter's second album *The Blue Notebooks*. Released in 2003, Richter describes the album as "a protest album about Iraq, a meditation on violence – both the violence that I had personally experienced around me as a child and the violence of war, at the utter futility of so much armed conflict." Interspersed between the music are readings from the writings of Franz Kafka and Czesław Miłosz, read by actress Tilda Swinton. *On the Nature of Daylight* has gone on to be used extensively in film and television, and has become instantly recognisable to audiences worldwide.



Henry Purcell

(1659– 1695)

Fantazia upon One Note, Z.745

Henry Purcell's fantasias are some of the finest examples of chamber music in the Baroque era, and were precursors to the quartets of Haydn and Mozart. His *Fantazia upon One Note* comes from a set of *Fantazias* and *In Nomines* for viol consort composed around 1680. In this *Fantazia*, four polyphonic voices are ingeniously woven around a single C pitch that is held for the entirety of the piece. Musicologists have speculated that Purcell had a friend who did not know how to play the viol, but still wanted to take part.



Anne Cawrse

(1981–)

Falling Upward

World Premiere

*How surely gravity's law,
strong as an ocean current,
takes hold of even the smallest thing
and pulls it toward the heart of the world...*

*This is what the things can teach us:
to fall,
patiently to trust our heaviness.
Even a bird has to do that
before he can fly.*

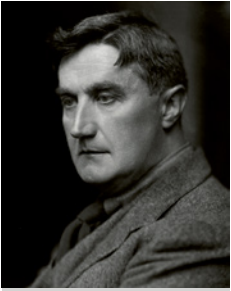
– Rainer Maria Rilke, from *The Book of Hours*

The composer writes:

The spark of inspiration for *Falling Upward* came from the book of the same name by Father Richard Rohr, in which the author explores the paradox of how challenge, mistakes, failure, and necessary suffering are the foundation for growth and discovery. As Joseph Campbell put it, “Where you stumble and fall, there you will find gold.”

Falling Upward revolves around a single musical motif that is repeated *moto perpetuum*, sitting right on the edge of some unseen barrier, ready to let go but at the same time holding back, resistant to falling. The goal of the motif is to ascend, but first, it must fall to the depths. To me, this is what “falling upward” might feel like. This is not the ecstatic, glorious lightness of a lark ascending: it is a slow, hard-fought ascent that embraces heaviness before rewarding us with the thrill of eventual flight.

Falling Upward was commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra for ACO Collective.



Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872–1958)

The Lark Ascending

Arranged for violin and strings by Adam Johnson

Vaughan Williams took up the violin at seven years of age, declaring it “my musical salvation” in comparison to his struggles with piano. As for his compositional influences, he worked out very early that his heart lay in England’s folkloric and musical history. Vaughan Williams and his friend Gustav Holst made numerous trips around the country to collect folk songs from old villagers, and the results of these trips are often heard in their music.

The Lark Ascending originally existed as a piece for violin and piano which Vaughan Williams had composed as a first draft in 1914. However, he had to put it away for several years so he could enlist in the British Army after the outbreak of the First World War. Borrowing the term from Beethoven, Vaughan Williams called the piece a *Romance for violin*, invoking Beethoven’s love for nature and allowing the piece to follow a form as free as its pastoral title suggests.

When Vaughan Williams returned to composing in 1919, *The Lark Ascending* was one of the first pieces he revised and orchestrated. He prefaced the score with George Meredith’s 1881 poem of the same name, which had inspired him to compose the work:

*He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.*

*For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
to lift us with him as he goes.*

*Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.*

— George Meredith

First performed in 1920, the piece is bookended by two extended violin cadenzas in which the violin mimics birdsong to represent the swooping, gliding and soaring of the lark. In the middle section, Vaughan Williams evokes folk song, gently at first, then with jaunty exuberance from the entire orchestra underneath solo violin figurations.

One hundred years on from that first performance, necessitated by current events, the ACO returns *The Lark Ascending* to its more intimate roots, performing an arrangement for string orchestra by British composer Adam Johnson.



Josef Suk

(1874–1935)

Serenade for Strings in E-flat major, Op.6

At the age of 11, the gifted Josef Suk left his Bohemian village and signed on at the Prague Conservatory. His teachers included the famous violinist Hanus Wihan, and the rather more famous composer Antonín Dvořák. Suk's was a remarkably successful musical career, chiefly as the second violin in the Czech (Bohemian) Quartet, with whom he played around 4,000 concerts in 40 years. He is also regarded as a major Czech composer, although interestingly this Serenade is probably his best-known work.

The Serenade was written in his final year at the Conservatory, where he had chosen to stay on for extra postgraduate study. He seems to have fallen into the earnestness that afflicts many young composers who want to be taken seriously, for Dvořák asked him to “produce something cheerful to give us a rest from all these eternal monuments in minor keys”. The Serenade, no doubt in part a tribute to Dvořák's own popular work, is gorgeously sunny and must surely have fulfilled the cheerfulness requirement. Certainly Brahms thought so; he urged his publishers to represent the work, which they did – a neat echo of Brahms's support of Dvořák many years before.

Suk went on to become Dvořák's son in law, and his natural successor at the Conservatory and in the historical ranks of Czech musicians.



Wojciech Kilar

(1932–2013)

Orawa

Wojciech Kilar is one of the most significant figures in 20th-century Polish music. He is also known for his scores for the films of Francis Ford Coppola and Roman Polanski. Initially part of the 1960s Polish avant-garde alongside Krzysztof Penderecki and Henryk Górecki, Kilar abandoned the movement for a more simplified musical language that combined large masses of sound with folk music references. *Orawa*, composed in 1988, is named for the region in the southern Tatra highlands that is home to the traditional Góral fiddlers. Kilar combines minimalism and folk elements to evoke a band of folk fiddlers who reach a stirring rhythmic frenzy in the broad expanse of the highlands.

HELENA RATHBONE



Director and Violin

Helena Rathbone grew up in North London in a family of musicians. She started playing the violin at the age of five with the London Suzuki group, and from the age of nine attended the 'Pro Corda' music camps on the Suffolk coast during the holiday season each year. It was here that Helena developed her lifelong love of chamber music and performing in chamber orchestras.

Helena went on to study at the Royal College of Music Junior department with Dona Lee Croft, and subsequently at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno. While in London she performed regularly with ensembles including the Academy of St Martin in the Fields before moving to Australia in 1994 to begin her first and only full-time job to date, as Principal Violin with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Helena regularly performs as soloist and guest leader with the ACO. She is also actively involved in the Orchestra's Learning & Engagement program, as an Orchestra Representative and Mentor with the ACO Emerging Artist program as well as being Director and Leader of ACO Collective, the ACO's regional touring and education ensemble.

In addition to performing with the ACO, Helena has been a tutor and chamber orchestra director for the Australian Youth Orchestra at National Music Camps. She has also appeared at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Four Winds Bermagui, Christchurch Arts Festival, Sangat Chamber Music Festival (Mumbai), Peasmarsh Festival (Sussex), and IMS Prussia Cove.

When she isn't onstage with the ACO, Helena adores her very busy family life with her husband and two young sons, Jack and Sam.

Helena plays the 1732 'ex-Dollfus' Stradivarius violin, kindly on loan from an anonymous private benefactor.

Helena Rathbone's Chair is sponsored by Margaret Gibbs & Rodney Cameron.

ACO COLLECTIVE



“The Australian Chamber Orchestra’s emerging talent arm, ACO Collective, is blazing a promising trail into the artform’s next era.”

– **The Age**

ACO Collective is the ACO’s critically acclaimed string ensemble that brings together musicians of the ACO with Australia’s most talented young professional string players to create a high-energy string orchestra.

ACO Collective commenced touring as ACO₂ in 2007, and has since performed in more than 85 regional centres in every state and territory, all of Australia’s state capitals, and has toured to Japan. The ensemble works with guest artists of the highest calibre, both international and Australian, including violinists Pekka Kuusisto (ACO Collective Artistic Director from 2016–2019), Matthew Truscott, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Benjamin Schmid, Henning Kraggerud, Malin Broman, Alexander Sitkovetsky and Thomas Gould; cellist Daniel Müller-Schott; the Meta4 quartet; classical accordionist James Crabb; harpist Alice Giles; recorder virtuoso Genevieve

Lacey; singer-songwriter Tim Freedman; clarinetist Matthew Hunt; oud virtuoso Joseph Tawadros; and the Gondwana Indigenous Children’s Choir.

In 2013, the ACO presented ACO Collective in a national subscription tour led by Richard Tognetti which was named by *The Australian* as “one of the year’s must-see concerts”. Biennially, ACO Collective is orchestra-in-residence at the Vasse Felix Festival in Western Australia and in 2014 was orchestra-in-residence at the Canberra International Music Festival. In 2015 ACO Collective performed with the Sydney Dance Company and Katie Noonan in the SDC’s season of *Triptych*, and gave the world premiere of Nico Muhly’s violin concerto *Shrink* with Pekka Kuusisto at Melbourne Recital Centre in 2019.

Under the direction of ACO Principal Violin Helena Rathbone, ACO Collective recorded the ABC Classic album *Collective Wisdom* for the Hush Foundation in 2018. Bringing together the artistry of six of Australia’s most established composers and six emerging composers in an ambitious project that engaged with adolescent patients at children’s hospitals around Australia, this beautiful album features 12 original Australian works written for hospitals, homes and shared spaces across the globe.

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Thank you to all the generous donors who contribute to our Learning & Engagement, Orchestra, Instruments, International and Regional Touring and Commissioning programs. We are extremely grateful for the support we receive to maintain these annual programs.

We would particularly like to acknowledge members of ACO Next who, by supporting ACO Collective, help shape the cultural landscape of Australia for the next generation.

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The ACO Next philanthropic program for young supporters engages with Australia's next generation of great musicians while offering unique musical and networking experiences in both Sydney and Melbourne. For more information please call Celeste Moore, Head of Philanthropy, on (02) 8274 3803.

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