

# Cello sensation Abel Selaocoe to make Australian debut with the ACO



*“In a classical music industry that encourages performers to be either/or, Selaocoe has chosen both – and more.”*

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

*“Who else could make the cello sound like a hundred different instruments?”*

- THE TIMES UK

## **ABEL SELAOCOE**

**3–15 April**

National Tour

When **Abel Selaocoe** makes music, he gathers together an unbelievable harmony of classical cello, throat singing, percussion, improvisation and unbridled joy. The South African cellist, who makes his long-awaited Australian debut with the **Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO)** this April, is celebrated around the world for his dazzling originality and infectious exuberance paired with a mastery for his instrument that crosses genres and broadens musical horizons.

Born in Sebokeng, a township south of Johannesburg, Selaocoe first picked up the cello at the age of eight at the encouragement of his older brother. The pair travelled together to a music school nearly 50kms from home, where Selaocoe found he had an instant rapport with the instrument – so much so that by the age of 13 he was awarded a scholarship position to board and study at one of the most prestigious schools in South Africa, St John’s College in Johannesburg.

### **Media Contact**

For interview requests, images, media tickets or further information, please contact:

### **Caitlin Benetatos**

E [caitlin.benetatos@aco.com.au](mailto:caitlin.benetatos@aco.com.au)

M 0422 934 693

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



From there, Selaocoe’s talent and passion for the instrument only grew. Upon graduating high school, he was offered a coveted position at Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and dedicated himself to following the path of a ‘typical’ concert cellist, later telling *The Strad*, “When I arrived in Manchester, I was pretty sure my path was going to be that of a typical concert cellist, but as time went on my deep ancestral memory of other musics just wouldn’t go away. I couldn’t leave it behind.”

Selaocoe is now in demand as a soloist and musical director around the globe, performing at festivals from the BBC Proms to WOMAD, as artist-in-residence at London’s Southbank Centre, and at iconic club venues alongside revered concert halls.

The curiosity and calibre of the ACO is the perfect match for Selaocoe’s charisma. For his Australian debut, Selaocoe directs the ACO and his frequent guest collaborator, percussionist **Sidiki Dembélé**, as he performs his own original works alongside an expansive new commission from renowned Australian composer Nigel Westlake and excerpts from cellist and composer Giovanni Sollima’s electrifying double concerto *When We Were Trees*.

“I am looking forward to sharing in the communal power and the spirit of Ubuntu (humanity)!” says Selaocoe. “A palpable energy that I feel will live through this collaboration with ACO – there will be so much inspired rhythmic drive from Qhawe to Stravinsky’s Petrushka. I am excited for the environment of spontaneity we will create, bringing to life old and new music and to simply be in Australia for the first time.”

**ABEL SELAOCOE**

3-15 APRIL

**Artists**

Abel Selaocoe Director & Cello  
 Sidiki Dembélé African Percussion  
 Helena Rathbone Lead Violin  
 Timo-Veikko Valve Cello  
 Australian Chamber Orchestra

**Program**

ABEL SELAOCOE Qhawe, Tsepho, Lerato, Ka Bohaleng (Australian Premieres)  
 GIOVANNI BENEDETTO Platti Cello Concerto in D major, WD650 (Australian Premiere)  
 NIGEL WESTLAKE New work (World Premiere)\*  
 IGOR STRAVINSKY (ARR. BERNARD ROFE) Three Movements from Petrushka  
 GIOVANNI SOLLIMA When We Were Trees: Selections (Australian Premiere)

\*Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

**Wollongong Town Hall**  
 Thu 3 Apr, 7.30pm

**Sydney Opera House**  
 Sun 6 Apr, 2pm

**Arts Centre Melbourne**  
 Sun 13 Apr, 2.30pm

**Sydney • City Recital Hall**  
 Sat 5 Apr, 7pm  
 Tue 8 Apr, 8pm  
 Wed 9 Apr, 7pm

**Canberra • Llewellyn Hall**  
 Mon 7 Apr, 7.30pm

**Adelaide Town Hall**  
 Tue 15 Apr, 7.30pm

**Melbourne Recital Centre**  
 Sat 12 Apr, 7.30pm  
 Mon 14 Apr, 7.30pm

**Media Contact**  
 For interview requests, images, media tickets or further information, please contact:

**Caitlin Benetatos**  
 E [caitlin.benetatos@aco.com.au](mailto:caitlin.benetatos@aco.com.au)  
 M 0422 934 693

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

