

# ACO 2024

ACO Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

# MEDIA KIT

## THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA REVEALS BLOCKBUSTER 2024 SEASON

- > Seven national tours
- > A new **Sydney Dance Company** collaboration
- > The long-awaited national tour of ARIA and AACTA award-winning cinematic production *River*

The **Australian Chamber Orchestra** has announced its blockbuster 2024 Season. An explosive celebration of collaboration, artistry and unparalleled virtuosity, ACO 2024 is a season that showcases the ACO as an orchestra without limits.

From a brand-new collaboration with **Sydney Dance Company** that basks in the mesmerising music of JS Bach and Arvo Pärt, to the long-awaited national tour of **Richard Tognetti** and **Jennifer Peedom**'s cinematic and musical odyssey *River*, and performances featuring international stars including singers **Stuart Skelton**, **Catherine Carby** and **Iestyn Davies**, guitarist **Sean Shibe** and cellist **Nicolas Altstaedt**, the ACO's 2024 Season is a monumental adventure through extraordinary music.

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In 2024 ACO Artistic Director **Richard Tognetti** reunites with **Sydney Dance Company**'s **Rafael Bonachela** for an immersive and mesmerising collaboration that will bring together music, movement and evocative lighting to create something truly remarkable. Musicians from the ACO, dancers from **Sydney Dance Company** and Gramophone Award-winning countertenor **Iestyn Davies** come together to celebrate **JS Bach** and **Arvo Pärt**, two composers whose timeless music speaks to the very core of the human soul. *Silence & Rapture* promises to be a season highlight: a journey through hope and temptation, tragedy and passion, redemption and, finally, into silence.



The 2024 Season opens with *River*, Richard Tognetti and director **Jennifer Peedom**'s cinematic and musical odyssey that explores how waterways have shaped humanity's very existence. With the film receiving critical acclaim at screenings and major international film festivals in 2022, and soundtrack wins at the ARIA and AACTA awards, the long-anticipated live concert version of *River* weaves captivating cinematography with enthralling music, from **JS Bach** to **Jonny Greenwood**, **William Barton** and Tognetti himself, performed live by the ACO and Barton. The result is awe-inspiring, powerful and utterly captivating.

Guitarist **Sean Shibe**, one of the most electrifying musicians on the planet, makes his Australian debut in *Scotland Unbound*. A perfect match for the infectious energy for which the ACO is famed around the globe, Shibe is a chameleon of the new generation. In his ACO debut, he performs a virtuosic program, across electric and acoustic instruments, that celebrates his Scottish heritage, from **Julia Wolfe**'s frenetic *Lad* to the world premiere of a new commission by **Cassandra Miller**, a soul-stirring composer whose hypnotic music 'reminds us how to cry' (*The New Yorker*).

Joining Tognetti and the ACO in *Mahler's Song of the Earth* are Australian singers **Stuart Skelton**, one of the great heldentenors tenors of our time, and celebrated mezzo-soprano **Catherine Carby**. This is a rare chance to hear Skelton and Carby on their home stage, singing some of the most demanding music ever written for the human voice in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. This is music that unflinchingly delves into our deepest selves, from darkness, light, cruelty, love, beauty and at last, catharsis.

Sparks will fly in *Tognetti. Mendelssohn. Bach.*, a concert that sees Richard Tognetti return to the altar of JS Bach. Bach sought God in his music and has in turn become a god-like figure for musicians, a touchstone to which all other music is compared. Tognetti's recordings of Bach's music are ARIA-award winning, and hearing him perform the composer's Violin Concerto in A promises to be an electrifying experience. Also on the program is Mendelssohn's sunny Octet, alongside a new commission from trailblazing young Australian composer **Jakub Jankowski** and music from Icelandic composer **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**.

In 2023 Australia voted the cello as the country's favourite instrument in the ABC Classic 100 Instrument Countdown. In 2024 audiences will have the opportunity to experience a true master of the instrument, world-renowned cellist **Nicolas Altstaedt**, who will make his ACO debut with Haydn's beloved Cello Concerto in C major and Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations* in *Altstaedt Plays Haydn & Tchaikovsky*. It's been more than a decade since the young cellist burst onto the world stage as a BBC New Generation Artist, with his unruly curls, unorthodox concert attire and pure talent, and since then, he's piled up musical accolades from the stages of New York, London and beyond.

2024 will also see the return of star pianist **Kristian Bezuidenhout**, a longtime friend of the ACO, in *Beethoven's Emperor*. Bezuidenhout has a special affinity for historical instruments and this concert will see him direct the Orchestra from the fortepiano in a joyful celebration of one of Ludwig van Beethoven's most beloved works, the *Emperor Piano Concerto*.

# 2024 SEASON PREMIERES



**JAKUB JANKOWSKI**  
New Commission

World Premiere in *Tognetti. Mendelssohn. Bach.*  
Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra

Photo: Zuzanna-Juszczyn'ska



**ANNE CAWRSE**  
New Commission

World Premiere in *The Lark Ascending*  
Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra



**BRITTA BYSTRÖM**  
A Walk to Beethoven's First Symphony

Australian Premiere in *Beethoven's Emperor*

Photo: Arne Hyckenberg



**CASSANDRA MILLER**  
New Commission for solo guitar and strings

Australian Premiere in *Scotland Unbound*  
Co-commissioned by the Dunedin Consort (supported by John Ellerman Foundation), Barbican Centre, Saffron Hall, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Cheltenham Music Festival

Photo: Benjamin Ealovega



**DAVID FENNESSY**  
Hirta Rounds

Australian Premiere in *Scotland Unbound*

Photo: Alex South



**JULIA WOLFE**  
Lad

Australian Premiere in *Scotland Unbound*

Photo: Peter Serling

# 2024 SEASON GUEST ARTISTS & COLLABORATORS



**JENNIFER PEEDOM**  
DIRECTOR & WRITER  
*River*

Jennifer Peedom is a BAFTA-nominated director, known for her gripping, intimate portraits of people in extreme circumstances. Her credits include *Living the End*, *Solo*, *Sherpa*, *Mountain* and *River*.

Jennifer's films have played at multiple A-list international festivals, winning awards including the Grierson Award for Best Documentary at the BFI London Film Festival, an AFI Award, and a BAFTA nomination. Her film *Mountain*, created in collaboration with the ACO, became the highest grossing Australian documentary of all time.



**KRISTIAN BEZUIDENHOUT**  
FORTEPIANO & GUEST DIRECTOR  
*Beethoven's Emperor*

*"Bezuidenhout's recital captured, above all, a sense of music as an evolutionary art, reacting to technology in flux and history in motion."*

– Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*

Kristian Bezuidenhout is one of today's most notable and versatile keyboard artists. Born in South Africa, he spent much of his youth in Australia where he fell in love with keyboard instruments at an early age, leading to a move to New York to study at the Eastman School of Music. He is as at home playing on early-19th-century style fortepianos and harpsichords as he is on modern instruments, describing the former as giving the music of Mozart, Beethoven and other classical composers 'a completely different character; instead of restraint, there's a wonderful feeling of letting go'.

Photo: Marco Borggreve



**WILLIAM BARTON**  
DIDGERIDOO, VOCALS & COMPOSER  
*River*

William Barton is a composer, producer, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist.

For two decades, William has forged a peerless profile as a performer and composer in the classical music world, from performing with the Philharmonic Orchestras of London and Berlin to marking historic events at Westminster Abbey and Anzac Cove. With his prodigious musicality and the quiet conviction of his Kalkadunga heritage, he has vastly expanded the horizons of the didgeridoo and the culture and landscape that it represents.

Photo: Keith Saunders



**STUART SKELTON**  
TENOR  
*Mahler's Song of the Earth*

*"Skelton brings a skein of bright-dark shades to a role that makes almost impossible demands of stamina and emotional intensity; he met them, impressively."*

– *The Guardian*

Grammy-nominated Australian vocalist Stuart Skelton is one of the world's great heldentenors ('heroic tenors'), critically acclaimed for his outstanding musicianship, tonal beauty and intensely dramatic portrayals. He is in constant demand on concert stages around the world and has appeared with all the great orchestras and opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden. He is famed internationally for his interpretations of the notoriously demanding music of Wagner and Mahler.

Photo: Sim Canetty-Clarke



**CATHERINE CARBY**  
MEZZO-SOPRANO  
*Mahler's Song of the Earth*

*"Catherine Carby... navigates its range with a sound that is always musically mellifluous and shaped, whether in moments of exquisitely rounded softness or sharp-edged ferocity."*

– Sydney Morning Herald

Australian singer Catherine Carby is one of the country's leading mezzo-sopranos, and has sung roles across the globe, from London and Lisbon to every major Australian city, with major opera companies including the Royal Opera House, English National Opera and Opera Australia.

Photo: David Shoukry, English Photo Works



**NICOLAS ALTSTAEDT**  
CELLO & GUEST DIRECTOR  
*Altstaedt plays Haydn & Tchaikovsky*

ACO DEBUT

*"The compelling French-German cellist Nicolas Altstaedt gave a performance that thoroughly conveyed its audacious, even radical elements. This was his New York recital debut. It's about time."*

– New York Times

German-French cellist Nicolas Altstaedt burst onto the world stage as a BBC New Generation Artist, making his solo debut with the Vienna Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel. Since then, he's piled up musical accolades from the stages of New York, London and beyond as a sought-after soloist, conductor and artistic director, performing a staggeringly vast range of repertoire from early music to contemporary.

Photo: Marco Borggreve



**RAFAEL BONACHELA AND SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY**  
*Silence & Rapture*

Rafael Bonachela is a choreographer, artistic director and curator whose career has seen him successfully span high art and popular culture, working across a range of art forms, including contemporary dance, art installations, pop concerts, musicals, film, commercials and fashion. He has been Artistic Director of Sydney Dance Company since 2009.

From performances at the Joyce Theatre in New York, to the Shanghai Grand Theatre and the Sydney Opera House at home, Sydney Dance Company has proved that there are no passive observers in a contemporary dance audience.

The reward of truly moving audiences, and the raw pride of sharing Australian art with the world has driven the Sydney Dance Company's ensemble of 17 dancers to become one of the world's strongest forces in contemporary dance.

Photo: Georges Antoni



**IESTYN DAVIES**  
COUNTERTENOR  
*Silence & Rapture*

AUSTRALIAN DEBUT

*"Iestyn Davies reigns supreme among countertenors."*

– The Independent

Gramophone and Grammy award-winning countertenor Iestyn Davies has astounded audiences the world over with his vocal agility, intelligent and considered interpretations and versatility, performing music from Handel to collaborations with contemporary composers including Thomas Adès and Nico Muhly. He has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, New York and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as well as on Broadway, making his debut in a revival of the west-end theatre project, *Farinelli and the King*.

Photo: Chris Sorensen

**SEAN SHIBE**  
GUITAR, ELECTRIC GUITAR  
*Scotland Unbound*

AUSTRALIAN DEBUT

*"The best ever Bach guitar recording ... There seems to be no limit to Shibe's characterful melodic instincts."*

– Gramophone

Sean Shibe plays guitar without limits. He is a chameleon of the new generation: a player met with acclaim in the great recital halls of the world who also forges new horizons by ranging fearlessly beyond classical music.

Described by *Gramophone* as having 'the most discriminating ears in the business', Sean was the first guitarist ever to be selected for BBC's New Generation Artists program, to be awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and to receive the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Young Artists.

Photo: Iga Gozdowska



# 2024 SEASON



## River

1–16 FEB

### ARTISTS

Richard Tognetti · Musical Director, Composer & Violin  
William Barton · Composer, Vocals & Didgeridoo

Satu Vänskä · Vocals & Violin  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

Jennifer Peedom · Writer & Director

Robert Macfarlane · Writer

Jo-anne McGowan, Jennifer Peedom,  
John Smithson · Producers

Joseph Nizeti · Co-Writer & Co-Director

Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Ben Knight,  
Sherpas Cinema, Renan Ozturk  
and Pete McBride · Principal  
Cinematography

Willem Dafoe · Narrator

Nigel Jamieson · Staging Director

Damien Cooper · Lighting Design

### DATES

Newcastle City Hall  
Thu 1 Feb 7.30pm

Melbourne Recital Centre  
Sat 3 Feb 7.30pm  
Mon 5 Feb 7.30pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 4 Feb 2.30pm

Canberra Theatre Centre  
Wed 7 Feb 8pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Sat 10 Feb 7pm  
Tue 13 Feb 8pm  
Wed 14 Feb 7pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 11 Feb 2pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 12 Feb 7pm

Perth Concert Hall  
Fri 16 Feb 7.30pm

### PROGRAM

River: film live in concert featuring music by Bach, Vivaldi, Mahler, Sibelius, Ravel, Thomas Adès, Pe'teris Vasks, Richard Tognetti, Radiohead, Jonny Greenwood and William Barton.



## Beethoven's Emperor

9–24 MAR

### ARTISTS

Kristian Bezuidenhout · Director & Fortepiano

Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Wollongong Town Hall  
Sat 9 Mar 7.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall  
Tue 12 Mar 7.30pm

Perth Concert Hall  
Wed 13 Mar 7.30pm

Melbourne Recital Centre  
Sat 16 Mar 7.30pm  
Mon 18 Mar 7.30pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 17 Mar 2.30pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Tue 19 Mar 8pm  
Wed 20 Mar 7pm  
Fri 22 Mar 7pm  
Sat 23 Mar 7pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 24 Mar 2pm

### PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Piano  
Concerto No.5 "Emperor"

LOUISE FARRENC Symphony  
No.3: I. Adagio – Allegro

FRANZ SCHUBERT Impromptu in  
B-flat major

FRANZ SCHUBERT Rosamunde:  
Entr'acte No.3

BRITTA BYSTRÖM A Walk to  
Beethoven's First Symphony  
(Australian Premiere)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN  
(arr. Franz Liszt) Symphony No.1  
(excerpt)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART  
Piano Concerto No.20: III. Allegro  
assai (Cadenza by Beethoven)

National Tour Partner



## Mahler's Song of the Earth

12–26 MAY

### ARTISTS

Richard Tognetti · Director & Violin  
Catherine Carby · Mezzo-Soprano  
Stuart Skelton · Tenor  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 12 May 2pm

Melbourne Recital Centre  
Mon 13 May 7.30pm  
Wed 22 May 7.30pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Wed 15 May 7pm  
Fri 17 May 8pm  
Sat 18 May 7pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 20 May 7pm

Canberra · Llewellyn Hall  
Fri 24 May 8pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 26 May 2.30pm

### PROGRAM

RICHARD WAGNER Siegfried Idyll

ALMA MAHLER-WERFEL  
(arr. David Matthews) Laue  
Sommernacht; Die stille Stadt;  
Bei dir ist es traut (world premiere  
of new arrangements)\*

GUSTAV MAHLER (arr. Arnold  
Schoenberg & Rainer Riehn) Das  
Lied von der Erde

\*Arrangements commissioned by the  
Australian Chamber Orchestra



## Altstaedt Plays Haydn & Tchaikovsky

14–30 JUN

### ARTISTS

Nicolas Altstaedt · Director & Cello  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Canberra · Llewellyn Hall  
Fri 14 Jun 8pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 17 Jun 7pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Tue 18 Jun 8pm  
Thu 20 Jun 7pm  
Sat 29 Jun 7pm

Newcastle City Hall  
Fri 21 Jun 7.30pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 23 Jun 2.30pm  
Mon 24 Jun 7.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall  
Tue 25 Jun 7.30pm

Perth Concert Hall  
Wed 26 Jun 7.30pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 30 Jun 2pm

### PROGRAM

JOSEPH HAYDN (arr. strings)  
Seven Last Words of Christ  
(selections)

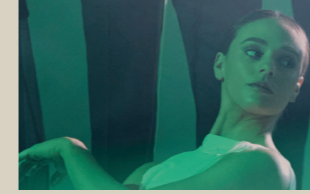
GYÖRGY KURTÁG (arr. strings)  
Officium breve in memoriam  
Andreae Szervánszky (selections)

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY  
(arr. strings) Rococo Variations  
SÁNDOR VERESS Four  
Transylvanian Dances

IANNIS XENAKIS Aroura

JOSEPH HAYDN (arr. strings)  
Cello Concerto in C major

National Tour Partner



## Silence & Rapture

2–19 AUG

### ARTISTS

Richard Tognetti · Director & Violin  
Iestyn Davies · Countertenor  
Rafael Bonachela · Choreography &  
Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director  
Stefanie Farrands · Viola  
Timo-Veikko Valve · Cello  
Chad Kelly · Organ & Harpsichord  
Artists from Sydney Dance Company  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Fri 2 Aug 7pm  
Sat 3 Aug 7pm  
Tue 6 Aug 8pm  
Wed 7 Aug 7pm

Melbourne Recital Centre  
Sat 10 Aug 7.30pm  
Mon 12 Aug 7.30pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 11 Aug 2.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall  
Tue 13 Aug 7.30pm

Perth Concert Hall  
Wed 14 Aug 7.30pm

Canberra · Llewellyn Hall  
Sat 17 Aug 8pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 18 Aug 2pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 19 Aug 7pm

### PROGRAM

Featuring music by JS Bach  
and Arvo Pärt.



## Tognetti. Mendelssohn. Bach.

5–23 SEP

### ARTISTS

Richard Tognetti · Director & Violin  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Newcastle City Hall  
Thu 5 Sep 7.30pm

Melbourne Recital Centre  
Sat 7 Sep 7.30pm  
Mon 9 Sep 7.30pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 8 Sep 2.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall  
Tue 10 Sep 7.30pm

Canberra · Llewellyn Hall  
Sat 14 Sep 8pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 16 Sep 7pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Tue 17 Sep 8pm  
Wed 18 Sep 7pm  
Fri 20 Sep 7pm  
Sat 21 Sep 7pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 22 Sep 2pm

Wollongong Town Hall  
Mon 23 Sep 7.30pm

### PROGRAM

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR  
Illumine  
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH  
Violin Concerto in A minor

JAKUB JANKOWSKI New  
Commission (World Premiere)\*

FELIX MENDELSSOHN Octet  
\*Commissioned by the Australian Chamber  
Orchestra.

National Tour Partner



## Scotland Unbound

7–20 NOV

### ARTISTS

Richard Tognetti · Director & Violin  
Sean Shibe · Classical & Electric Guitars  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Wollongong Town Hall  
Thu 7 Nov 7.30pm

Sydney · City Recital Hall  
Sat 9 Nov 7pm  
Tue 12 Nov 8pm  
Wed 13 Nov 7pm

Sydney Opera House  
Sun 10 Nov 2pm

Brisbane · QPAC Concert Hall  
Mon 11 Nov 7pm

Canberra · Llewellyn Hall  
Sat 16 Nov 8pm

Melbourne · Arts Centre Melbourne  
Sun 17 Nov 2.30pm  
Mon 18 Nov 7.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall  
Tue 19 Nov 7.30pm

Perth · Winthrop Hall  
Wed 20 Nov 7.30pm

### PROGRAM

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH  
Solo lute manuscripts compiled  
by Lady Margaret Wemyss

CASSANDRA MILLER New  
Commission for solo guitar and  
strings (Australian Premiere)\*

JAMES MACMILLAN (arr. George  
Duthie) From Galloway

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH Suite  
of folk songs

JULIA WOLFE (arr. electric guitar  
and strings) Lad (Australian  
Premiere)

DAVID FENNESSY Hirta Rounds  
(Australian Premiere)

MARTYN BENNETT (arr. electric  
guitar and strings) Bothy Culture:  
Selections

\* Co-commissioned by the Dunedin Consort  
(supported by John Elerman Foundation),  
Barbican Centre, Saffron Hall, Australian  
Chamber Orchestra, and Cheltenham  
Music Festival



## ACO Collective

9–18 MAY

### ARTISTS

Helena Rathbone · Director & Violin  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

### DATES

Bendigo · The Capital  
Thu 9 May 7pm

Healesville · The Memo  
Sat 11 May 7.30pm

Cowes Cultural and Community  
Centre  
Sun 12 May 2pm

Nowra · Shoalhaven Entertainment  
Centre  
Wed 15 May 8pm

Sydney · The Neilson, ACO Pier 2/3  
Fri 17 May 7pm

Sutherland · The Pavilion Performing  
Arts Centre  
Sat 18 May 7.30pm

### PROGRAM

ANNE CAWRSE New Commission  
for strings (World Premiere)\*

HUGO WOLF Italian Serenade  
MAX RICHTER On the Nature of  
Daylight

HENRY PURCELL Fantasia upon  
One Note

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
(arr. Adam Johnson) The Lark  
Ascending

JOSEF SUK Serenade for Strings  
\*Commissioned by the Australian Chamber  
Orchestra.

Principal Partner:  
ACO Collective



↳ RICHARD TOGNETTI  ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & LEAD VIOLIN. HELENA RATHBONE  PRINCIPAL VIOLIN. SATU VÄNSKÄ  PRINCIPAL VIOLIN. AIKO GOTO  VIOLIN. ILYA ISAKOVICH  VIOLIN. LIISA PALLANDI  VIOLIN. MAJA SAVNIK  VIOLIN. IKE SEE  VIOLIN. STEFANIE FARRANDS  PRINCIPAL VIOLA. ELIZABETH WOOLNOUGH  VIOLA. TIMO-VEIKKO VALVE  PRINCIPAL CELLO. MELISSA BARNARD  CELLO. JULIAN THOMPSON  CELLO. MAXIME BIBEAU  PRINCIPAL DOUBLE BASS :||

# THE MUSICIANS

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