

“Hypnotic and spectacular, *River* demands your surrender.”

– THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

“A must-see.”

– THE AUSTRALIAN

The ACO opens 2024 Season with awe-inspiring cinematic odyssey *River*

RIVER

1–16 February

Newcastle, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth



The **Australian Chamber Orchestra** will open its 2024 Season with AACTA and ARIA award-winning cinematic production, *River*, Artistic Director **Richard Tognetti**'s collaboration with director **Jennifer Peedom**, writer **Robert Macfarlane** and actor **Willem Dafoe**.

The sequel to the record-breaking *Mountain*, *River* is a profound cinematic and musical ode to rivers that explores how the planet's natural waterways have shaped landscapes, communities and humanity's very existence. Featuring footage captured by some of the world's great cinematographers from 39 countries across the globe, from India's Ganges to the UK's Thames and Australia's own Murray-Darling, *River* is an awe-inspiring homage to these 'arteries of the planet'.

Media Contact

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

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RIVER GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



FILM PARTNERS



Peedom says, “Humans love rivers. The number of films, books, and poems with “river” in their titles are impossible to count. And yet, the state of rivers around the world indicates that we seem to have lost sight of their importance to our existence. *River* takes a birds’-eye view of humanity’s relationship with our most precious resource through time.”

At the forefront of the film is a spectacular score curated by Tognetti, featuring music by composers and musicians including Bach, Ravel, Jonny Greenwood, Radiohead and Tognetti himself. This will be performed live by the ACO, alongside a screening of the film, making the astonishing impact of *River* even more powerful.

“*River* has been conceived as both a live performance experience and a theatrical film,” Tognetti explains. “You can turn existing films into bespoke concerts, but actually making a film like that, with the intention that it will be performed live, is a rare, if not unique, occurrence in the world of film and concert making. Creating the score for a film that will be performed live presents its own challenges and restrictions. However, I don’t mind restrictions; I actually find them liberating. The challenge makes you think differently.”

Joining the ACO onstage for these performances is Indigenous Australian didgeridoo virtuoso and vocalist **William Barton**, who, together with co-composers Tognetti and Piers Burbrook de Vere, contributed music to the *River* score, including the breathtaking improvisational track *Spirit Voice of the Enchanted Waters*. A regular ACO collaborator, Barton describes drawing upon his Kalkadunga heritage during the improvised performance, saying, “I was connecting to my ancestral ties, to the mother country, to my experiences of going out bush as a young kid on Kalkadunga country and seeing the little water holes out there connected to emu dreaming, and to the significance of songlines.”

Following acclaimed screenings of the film in theatres and film festivals across the globe, the ACO’s performance of *River* in London’s Barbican Centre in October 2022 was met with a rapturous standing ovation.

The ACO is famed around the world for its unique, cross-artform productions. In addition to *River*, these include surf films *Musica Surfica* and *The Reef* and boundary-pushing collaborations *Mountain*, *Luminous* and *The Crowd & I*.

Concert Details

RIVER 1–16 FEBRUARY

Richard Tognetti Musical Director, Composer & Violin
William Barton Composer, Vocals & Didgeridoo
Satu Vänskä Vocals & Violin
Australian Chamber Orchestra

Newcastle City Hall
Thu 1 Feb, 7.30pm

Canberra Theatre Centre
Wed 7 Feb, 8pm

**Brisbane · QPAC
Concert Hall**
Mon 12 Feb, 7pm

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

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

Perth Concert Hall
Fri 16 Feb, 7.30pm

**Melbourne · Arts Centre
Melbourne**
Sun 4 Feb, 2.30pm

Sydney Opera House
Sun 11 Feb, 2.30pm

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CREDITS

Screen Australia
and the
Australian Chamber Orchestra
in association with the
Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the BBC
present
A Stranger Than Fiction Production
in association with
Arrow Pictures

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Jennifer Peedom
WRITTEN BY Robert Macfarlane
PRODUCED BY Jo-anne McGowan, Jennifer Peedom
and John Smithson
CO-WRITTEN AND CO-DIRECTED BY Joseph Nizeti
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND COMPOSER Richard Tognetti
ADDITIONAL COMPOSITION BY William Barton and Piers Burbrook de Vere
FILM EDITOR Simon Njoo ASE
SOUND DESIGN Robert Mackenzie and Tara Webb
PRINCIPAL CINEMATOGRAPHY Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Ben Knight, Sherpas
Cinema, Renan Ozturk and Pete McBride
NARRATED BY Willem Dafoe

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