

Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ACO UP CLOSE

SATU
VÄNSKÄ

SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 2.30PM
THE NEILSON, ACO PIER 2/3



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ACO UP CLOSE: SATU VÄNSKÄ

The lighter music of Jean Sibelius is often lost to the listener who may be more familiar with Sibelius the symphonist. However, Finland's national composer wrote dozens of salon pieces shaped by the decadence of early 20th century continental Europe. I first started playing this music during my childhood in Japan, where Sibelius is extremely popular. My parents would cart me around various settings, from church-services to Rotary-club meetings, to play the *Rondino* or the *Romance* to promote the cultural exchange between Finland and Japan.

While Sibelius yearned to belong to the establishment of the Continent, Vienna-born Wilhelm Grosz was, in his youth during the early 20th century, tipped to be the successor to Gustav Mahler – that is, until the Nazis took control of the region and the Jewish composer's music was deemed *Entartete*, or “degenerate”. Talented composers in the 1920s prized versatility and open-mindedness, with many of them still working in Berlin and Weimar. In the spirit of curiosity, Grosz experimented with the new craze from across the Atlantic: jazz. I first came across piece *Jazzband* (1923) in Barry Humphries' *Weimar Cabaret*, a show that re-introduced us to the music of tragically forgotten composers from the era.

Grosz ended up emigrating to London, and spent time in the US in hope of establishing a lucrative career as a Hollywood film-composer. In the US he wrote all kinds of music for cash, including the popular songs *Red Sails in the Sunset* and *Isle of Capri* under pseudonyms like “Hugh Williams” or “Hugh Grant”. He is said to have died from a heart attack in 1939 in New York City, caused by worry for his family back in Europe, who he was desperately trying to help immigrate to the US from the evil regime.

Wenn ich mir was wünsche dürfte by Friedrich Holländer is another Weimar-era song, summing up the melancholy in the condition of the conscious: “If I could wish for something, would I want happiness or sadness? ...if I were too happy I would long for the sadness”.

Even for a lapsed Lutheran, a Sunday isn't complete without the music of Bach. His *Chaconne* from the D-minor Partita needs no introduction; how fortunate are we violinists to have this monumental work written especially for us? What could have inspired JS to write this one-of-a-kind piece, which has been re-arranged by composers such as Brahms, Busoni and Stokowski?

Franz Schubert is one of the greatest songwriters in the history of music, something which was only partly recognised during his lifetime. Less known was his chamber music – even the now-famous String Quintet in C major. This Sonata, known as the “Grand Duo”, is Schubert's only full-scale sonata for violin and piano. The deep melancholy that is disguised in a seemingly light and selfless coating defies our contemporary trends; it's hard to imagine Franz mulling over his short life in an episode of a reality TV show. Still, the Sonata's beauty and early romanticism touches something eternal in our collective sense of intimate gatherings.

Satu Vänskä

PROGRAM

Satu Vänskä Violin & Vocals
Tamara-Anna Cislowska Piano

Kumi Taguchi Host

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Mazurka, Op.81, No.1

WILHELM GROSZ (1894–1939)

Jazzband

FRIEDRICH HOLLAENDER (1896–1976)

Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Partita for Solo Violin No.2 in D minor:
V. Chaconne

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Violin Sonata in A major, D.574 'Grand Duo'
I. Allegro moderato
II. Scherzo. Presto
III. Andantino
IV. Allegro vivace

SATU VÄNSKÄ

Satu Vänskä is Principal Violin of the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Born to a Finnish family in Japan, Satu began violin lessons at the age of three. Upon her family's relocation to Finland, she studied with Pertti Sutinen at the Lahti Conservatorium and the Sibelius Academy in Finland, and later at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich as a pupil of Ana Chumachenco.

Satu was named 'Young Soloist of the Year' by Sinfonia Lahti in 1998, and a few years later was prize winner of the 'Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben'. From 2001 Satu played under the auspices of Lord Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now Foundation which gave her the opportunity to perform with musicians including Radu Lupu and Heinrich Schiff.

Satu performed as orchestra leader and soloist in the 2018 London production of *Barry Humphries' Weimar Cabaret* with the Aurora Orchestra at the Barbican Centre. She has appeared as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Arctic Chamber Orchestra and in recital at the Sydney Opera House and the Melbourne Recital Centre, opening their Great Performers Series in 2019.

She is the director and vocalist of electro-acoustic ensemble ACO Underground, and as a violinist and singer has collaborated with artists that include Barry Humphries, Meow Meow, Jonny Greenwood, The Presets, Jim Moginie and Brian Ritchie in settings ranging from New York's Le Poisson Rouge to Slovenia's Maribor Festival. Satu also performed as vocalist in the soundtracks and live performances of *Mountain* and *River*, the ACO's acclaimed cinematic collaborations with director Jennifer Peedom.

Satu plays the 1726 'Belgiorno' Stradivarius violin, kindly on loan from ACO Chairman Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM and Michelle Belgiorno-Nettis.

Satu Vänskä's Chair is sponsored by David Thomas AM

TAMARA-ANNA CISLOWSKA

Tamara-Anna Cisłowska is one of Australia's most astonishing and renowned pianists, performing and recording in Australia and internationally to critical and public acclaim. Earning international prizes in London, Italy and Greece and touring Japan and the USA as cultural ambassador for Australia, Tamara's accolades include ABC Young Performer of the Year, the Freedman Fellowship, an Art Music Award for 'Performance of the Year' (ACT) and the 2015 ARIA award for 'Best Classical Album'.

Tamara has performed recitals at London's Purcell Room, the Kleine Zaal of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and New York's Frick Collection, and as soloist with the London Philharmonic, Puerto Rico Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestra, and all major Australian and New Zealand symphony orchestras. She has toured to the USA with CIRCA for the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival, to the Barbican with ACO for *Mountain* and given solo and chamber recitals in almost all the major venues, and arts and classical music festivals in Australia.

With nine ARIA no.1 albums including *One Summer's Day*, *Into Silence* with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and *Unsent Love Letters* (also available on Deutsche Grammophon), Tamara also broadcasts weekly program 'Duet' for ABC Classic FM.

KUMI TAGUCHI

Kumi Taguchi is the host of Australia's leading forum show, *Insight* on SBS. She has 25 years' experience in the media industry in Australia and Hong Kong.

Kumi trained as a classical violinist but shifted to journalism after university. Her first job included picking up dry cleaning and answering phones for the ABC's *7.30 Report*. Since then, Kumi has worked across radio, television, current affairs, and long-form documentaries, more recently as the host of ABC's *Compass* and as a presenter for the ABC News Channel. Kumi is also known for hosting major live broadcast events, including the Invictus Games Sydney with a global audience of 60 million, *Stargazing Live* with Professor Brian Cox, the *Australian of the Year Awards*, and Sydney's *Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo*.

A keen adventurer, Kumi has run two half marathons, a marathon in the centre of Australia and sailed the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.