

ACO Collective



ECSTATIC DANCES

DIRECTED BY MATTHEW TRUSCOTT



PRINCIPAL PARTNER
ACO COLLECTIVE





Photo: Maria Boyadgjis

WELCOME

I'm thrilled to welcome back the dynamic British violinist Matthew Truscott. Matthew leads two of Europe's most renowned orchestras, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, so we are delighted to have him reunite with ACO Collective as guest director in this tour across Sydney, regional New South Wales and regional Queensland.

ACO Collective combines the core musicians of the ACO with current and alumni members of our Emerging Artist Program, including our seven Emerging Artists for 2023, and Matthew has crafted a spectacular program that perfectly showcases this vibrant ensemble. The concert celebrates spellbinding dances from across the ages, from the Baroque elegance of Purcell to the showstopping energy of Bartók and Stravinsky, and a new work by Australian composer Holly Harrison commissioned especially for the ACO.

I acknowledge Wesfarmers, the Principal Partner of ACO Collective, for their ongoing 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.

Thank you for joining us and I hope you enjoy the performance.



Richard Evans
Managing Director

Join the conversation

#ACO23Season |     

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WELCOME FROM WESFARMERS

Wesfarmers and the Australian Chamber Orchestra have a long and valued partnership, with the shared objective of making a positive contribution to the communities in which we operate.

Our partnership with the ACO spans 25 years and, as Principal Partner of ACO Collective, we're committed to supporting the tremendous work of this wonderful ensemble and the beautiful concerts they bring to regional communities.

ACO Collective has performed in more than 85 regional centres in every state and territory, and has an impressive history of working with great artists of the highest calibre. We're delighted that this concert features the acclaimed British violinist Matthew Truscott, who will direct ACO Collective through spectacular music by Purcell, Stravinsky, Bartók, and a powerful work by Australian composer Holly Harrison, commissioned especially for the ACO.

We're honoured to present tonight's thrilling program of iconic music from across the ages. We hope you enjoy the concert as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.



Rob Scott

Managing Director Wesfarmers Limited



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**AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA &
WESFARMERS ARTS:
BRINGING PEOPLE &
MUSIC TOGETHER**



Helena Rathbone
Principal Violin, Australian Chamber Orchestra

MUSICIANS

The musicians on stage
for this performance.



Matthew Truscott
Director and Violin

Matthew plays a 1723 Stradivarius violin kindly on loan from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra Foundation.



Liisa Pallandi
Violin

Liisa plays a 1759 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin kindly on loan from the ACO. Her Chair is sponsored by the Melbourne Medical Syndicate.

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Beatrice Colombis
Violin

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



Felix Pascoe
Violin

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



Donica Tran
Violin

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



Megan Yang
Violin

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



Josephine Chung
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Mia Stanton
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Janet Anderson
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Riley Skevington
Violin

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Jacqui Cronin
Viola



Ruby Shirres
Viola

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



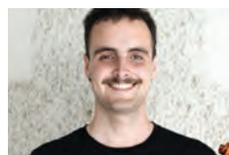
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Viola

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Sharon Grigoryan
Cello

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Hamish Jamieson
Cello

2023 ACO Emerging Artist.



Charlotte Miles
Cello

ACO Emerging Artist Program Alumni.



Adrian Whitehall
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2023 ACO Emerging Artist.

PROGRAM

Matthew Truscott Director and Violin
ACO Collective

ROSS EDWARDS	Chorale and Ecstatic Dance <i>I. Chorale. Sereno</i> <i>II. Ecstatic Dance. Molto animato</i>	11
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With thanks to the generous supporters of this tour:
Dr Ian Frazer AC and Mrs Caroline Frazer, and Mrs Cass and Mr Ian George.

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.

MATTHEW TRUSCOTT



Director and Violin

Matthew Truscott is a versatile violinist who shares his time between period-instrument music and 'modern' performance, appearing with some of the finest musicians in both fields. He is concertmaster of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In these roles he has directed orchestral performances from the violin in venues around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonie, Vienna Musikverein, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and at the Royal Festival Hall and BBC Proms in London.

In demand as a guest leader, his engagements in this capacity have included projects with ACO Collective, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera, Dutch National Opera and The English Concert.

As a chamber musician, recent recordings have included a set of Purcell Trio Sonatas with Retrospect Trio, a disc of Bach chamber music with Trevor Pinnock, Emmanuel Pahud and Jonathan Manson, and one of Haydn Piano Trios with Richard Lester and Simon Crawford-Phillips. As part of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra's 'Mozart Momentum' project, which this year won a Special Achievement Gramophone Award, Matthew toured and recorded Mozart chamber music with Leif Ove Andsnes.

Matthew teaches baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This is a tour on which I had hoped to embark with the wonderful ACO Collective in September 2020. That it has found new life for this season is a huge delight. My last visit in 2018 left such strong memories of a new musical community and landscape, and it is thrilling to be continuing that discovery.

Here we present music with energy and drive, the irresistible pulse of the dance.

We begin with music by one of Australia's best-known and most-performed composers, Ross Edwards. *Chorale and Ecstatic Dance* is both meditative and energised, true to Edwards' mission to reconnect music with elemental forces and restore its traditional association with ritual and dance.

Purcell's music is unique in its exoticism and sensuality, miraculously emerging as it did from the troubled times of late-17th-century England. *The Fairy Queen* is the epitome of his theatrical style. Here we play a suite of brief but very potent dances, which were originally mixed with arias that were by turns bawdy and passionate, referencing night, love, nature and mystery.

Stravinsky's *Three Movements from Petrushka* offers a new string arrangement of his celebrated and kaleidoscopic score, written for Diaghilev's 1911 Paris season with Ballets Russes. Charting the loves and jealousies of three puppets, this music remains a high-water mark for energy, clarity and invention.

Holly Harrison's music is full of "riotous energy, eclectic rhythmic complexity" and "inventive, witty and invested with thrilling dynamism and momentum". *Black Ice*, commissioned by the ACO, is a new work for strings by this exciting young Australian composer.

Bartók's *Divertimento*, his masterpiece for strings, bristles with rhythmic and harmonic energy, exploiting the tension between old forms and new language. Vigour and vitality burst from within Bartók's masterfully controlled writing. A totemic piece which is thrilling to experience live and a gift for the exuberance and virtuosity of this young group.

Matthew Truscott
Director and Violin

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 since then has 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 (who served as ACO Collective’s 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 Meta 4 quartet; harpist Alice Giles; recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey; singer/songwriter Tim Freedman; clarinetist Matthew Hunt; oud player 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 and it was named by *The Australian* as “one of the year’s must-see concerts”. Biennially, ACO Collective is the orchestra-in-residence at the Vasse Felix Festival in Western Australia and in 2014 it was the 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* 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.



Ross Edwards

(1943–)

Chorale and Ecstatic Dance

Ross Edwards is one of Australia's most important and best-loved composers, and celebrates his 80th birthday in 2023. *Chorale and Ecstatic Dance* presents an immediately attractive surface to the listener. The first movement – simple, austere and drone-based – inflects mediaeval European church modes with South East Asian colours. The second, *Ecstatic Dance*, originated as a flute duo contributed by Edwards in 1979 to a garland of miniatures by Australian composers in celebration of Peter Sculthorpe's 50th birthday. A revised and expanded version was later incorporated into *Ecstatic Dances* (1990), composed for the flautist Geoffrey Collins.

Ecstatic Dance has special significance for Edwards as the earliest manifestation of his “maninya” style – the extrovert antithesis of the contemplative music he had been writing throughout the 1970s. Radiant and insistently melodic, as befits its original celebratory function, *Ecstatic Dance* subtly blends pentatonic modes with sparkling cross rhythms and has become one of Edwards' most popular compositions. It exists in many versions, including many versions for instrumental duo, and preceded by a *Chorale* as heard here in versions for string quartet, string orchestra and full orchestra.



Henry Purcell

(1659–1695)

Suite from *The Fairy Queen*, Z.629

First as a choirboy, and later as an organist and composer, Henry Purcell worked in London's Chapel Royal, serving Charles II, James II, William III and his wife Mary. Busy though he was, looking after the Chapel's collection of instruments and performing for services, he found time to write an impressive amount of music, both sacred and secular. He is still widely regarded as England's greatest composer.

Purcell composed only one opera in the sung-through form we know today – *Dido and Aeneas*. In fact, all-sung opera did not catch on in England until after Purcell's death. Instead, Purcell regularly contributed incidental music, both instrumental and sung, to heighten the spoken plot of stage plays. One such “Restoration spectacular” was *The Fairy Queen*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Preludes set the scene before each act, while an assortment of dances (Hornpipe, Rondeau, Entry Dance) embellish the plot with jaunty movement. In Act II, when Titania calls for revelry to begin, the spirits of the night – Mystery, Secrecy, Sleep, and Night herself – come with their entourage to lend their gentle blessing to the festivities. To close Act V, Purcell crowns the mortal lovers' wedding with a glittering masque, which includes an exotic scene in a Chinese garden paradise set to a joyful Chaconne.



Igor Stravinsky

(1882–1971)

Three Movements from *Petrushka*

Arranged for string orchestra by Bernard Rofe

Despite becoming a modernist icon, it is Stravinsky's three earliest and most traditionally Russian ballets that have made him a household name worldwide. The second of these is *Petrushka*, composed for the iconic Ballets Russes of the impresario Sergei Diaghilev. Following the success of his first ballet, *The Firebird*, Stravinsky “had in mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life”. He named it *Petrushka*, after “the immortal and unhappy hero of every fair in all countries”. The premiere took place in Paris, with choreography by Michel Fokine and the legendary Vaslav Nijinsky in the title role.

The ballet portrays a love triangle between three puppets – Petrushka, a Ballerina and a Moor. The three are brought to life by a magician during a Shrovetide Fair, and to the astonishment of the crowd, they dance a Russian Dance based on two folk-tunes: “A Linden Tree Is in the Field” and “Song for St John’s Eve”. It quickly becomes apparent Petrushka is in love with the Ballerina; but she has eyes only for the Moor. After a scene in the troubled Petrushka’s room, we move to the Moor’s room, with whom the Ballerina dances a graceful waltz. Petrushka, enraged with jealousy, tries to fight the Moor, but is chased away. The final scene returns to the “real” world of the Shrovetide Fair, still abuzz with a series of colourful dances. Petrushka suddenly appears, being chased down and slain by the Moor. As night falls, Petrushka’s ghost taunts the onlookers.

Stravinsky arranged movements from the ballet as a concert piece for the great pianist Arthur Rubinstein. Here, three movements appear in a brand new arrangement for string orchestra.



Holly Harrison

(1988–)

Black Ice

The composer writes:

Black Ice explores two sides of an Australian Winter – the harsh and treacherous, and the delicate and fragile. Within this, the work is primarily concerned with a winter hazard: black ice. Common in the Blue Mountains, black ice is an often-invisible layer which forms after snow or sleet, creating dangerous driving conditions. This can lead to slipping, sliding, and skidding – all activities that are imagined in the work during a mountainous descent. Yet, not all is doom and gloom: *Black Ice* also pays homage to the thrill-seeking behaviour associated with the pursuit of Australian snow. Keep an ear out for the drama of metal and punk threaded throughout, along with the playfulness of blues and bluegrass.

Growing up, my family often referred to me as Safety Officer Harrison, due to my unparalleled ability to imagine a whirlwind of unforeseen hazards, so perhaps it's fitting that I'm finally able to explore this in musical form!



Béla Bartók

(1885–1941)

Divertimento

The Swiss conductor Paul Sacher was responsible for commissioning a number of important 20th-century string orchestra pieces for his Basel Chamber Orchestra, including works by Honegger, Hindemith and Stravinsky. He also commissioned some of Bartók's greatest pieces, including *Music for Percussion, Strings and Celeste* (1936), the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) and the *Divertimento* (1939).

Divertimenti were popular in the 18th century, with notable examples coming from Mozart and Haydn. In the early 20th century, the form made a comeback as part of the Neo-classical trend to which even the folk music devotee Bartók was not immune. "Divertimento" comes from the Italian "divertire" which means "to amuse". Perhaps Bartók had hoped for some light-hearted respite from the gloom of pre-war Europe.

The *Divertimento*'s outer movements certainly bustle with Bartók's usual sunny, folk-inspired optimism, but always lead to darker territory. This optimism is absent from the twists and turns of the brooding middle movement, which seems to foreshadow impending terrors: Bartók completed his *Divertimento* in 15 days, only one month before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Bartók's *Divertimento* was part of the program for the ACO's inaugural concert in 1975 and remains a favourite of both our musicians and audiences today.

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To discuss making a donation to the ACO, or if you would like to direct your support in other ways, please contact Jill Colvin, Director of Philanthropy & Partnerships, on (02) 8274 3835.

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