

Australian Chamber Orchestra

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

ACO

A MUSICAL AWAKENING

Directed by Timo-Veikko Valve

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MOUNTAIN

27–30 October

Directed by Richard Tognetti

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1975 – 2025

Australian
Chamber
Orchestra **50** Years

INSIDE

Inside you'll find features and interviews that shine a spotlight on our players and the music you are about to hear. Enjoy the read.

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#ACO25Season



@AustralianChamberOrchestra

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WELCOME

As we emerge from winter into spring, I am delighted to welcome you to a concert infused with the spirit of resilience and renewal.

Curated and directed from the cello by our Principal Cello Timo-Veikko ‘Tipi’ Valve and featuring recorder virtuoso, and dear friend of the ACO’s, Genevieve Lacey, *A Musical Awakening* delves into music’s ability to nurture the human spirit. From the visionary hymns of 12th-century abbess Hildegard von Bingen and Beethoven’s *Holy Song of Thanksgiving* to Max Richter’s intimate *On the Nature of Daylight* and a world premiere from Pulitzer Prize-winning New York composer David Lang – commissioned by the ACO with generous support from Ulrike Klein AO – this is music that consoles, restores and awakens.

In exciting news, we have recently announced our 2026 Season. If you haven’t already, I encourage you to explore the full Season online or through our Season Brochure, and renew your ACO Subscription – or join the family by becoming a Subscriber, if you aren’t already.

I have found that there are very few paths to true happiness in this world. I do know, however, that having a suite of 2026 Subscriber-priced ACO concerts in your diary with a partner, friend or group of colleagues, is guaranteed to be one of them.

Thank you for joining us for this performance.



Richard Evans AM
Managing Director



Wesfarmers Arts



Australian Chamber Orchestra & Wesfarmers Arts
Bringing People & Music Together

WELCOME FROM MUTUAL TRUST

On behalf of Mutual Trust, I warmly welcome you to *A Musical Awakening*, which forms part of the Australian Chamber Orchestra's 2025 National Concert Season.

We are proud to continue our partnership as National Tour Partner in this milestone 50th Anniversary Season. Since 2022, it has been a privilege to support the ACO – an organisation whose excellence, integrity and creative vision deeply align with our own purpose and values.

At Mutual Trust, we exist to help families achieve what matters most. Like the ACO, we are guided by principles of care, connection and enduring excellence. We believe in the power of legacy, and in supporting meaningful experiences that uplift individuals and enrich communities.

A Musical Awakening reflects these shared values. Directed by Timo-Veikko Valve and featuring recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey, this program invites us to pause, reflect and reconnect – with ourselves, with one another, and with the things that matter most. It's a celebration of renewal, inspiration and the quiet strength of gratitude.

As you share in this special musical journey, we hope you leave feeling enriched and reawakened.



Phil Harkness

CEO and Managing Partner, Mutual Trust



MUTUAL TRUST

Build a Lasting Family Legacy

At Mutual Trust, our Purpose is to help families achieve what matters most. We do this by caring for our families, our people and communities, not just their finances.

Mutual Trust provides integrated wealth and professional services to some of Australia's most successful families, family businesses, trustees, not-for-profits and individuals. Through a collaborative approach, we empower families to create a lasting positive impact.

Scan the QR code to learn how Mutual Trust can help your family to achieve what matters most.



NEWS

Upcoming concerts
and the latest
announcements.

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Mountain
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Cocteau's Circle
3.
ACO Up Close:
Baroque Resonance
with ACO &
Pinchgut Opera
4.
Where to Hide a Star

Latest News 2026 Season

We're thrilled to have unveiled the ACO's 2026 Season. Steeped in a rich musical tradition while simultaneously challenging expectations of what a chamber orchestra can be and do, the ACO's 2026 Season spans a millennium of music, from ancient hymns and majestic symphonies, through to trailblazing new works from today's most innovative composers.

Champagne Taittinger & Joval Wines

We're proud to continue our longstanding partnership with Champagne Taittinger and their Australian distributors, Joval Wines – valued supporters of the ACO since 2017.

"There is a natural affinity between the artistry of Champagne and that of music – our partnership with the ACO is a celebration of both. At Joval, we're honoured to support Taittinger in sharing its legacy of excellence, and the ACO in bringing extraordinary performances to Australian audiences."

— Tim Menting, Chief Executive Officer, Joval Group

Special Events Mountain

27-30 OCT
Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne

We're bringing back one of our most groundbreaking, award-winning and popular cinematic collaborations for a series of limited gala performances.

Created by Richard Tognetti in collaboration with BAFTA-nominated director and filmmaker Jennifer Peedom (*Sherpa* 2015, *River* 2021), *Mountain* pushed the creative possibilities of presenting music and film live in concert in an innovative new direction.



On Tour
Cocteau's Circle

8-22 NOV
National Tour

A spectacular evening of storytelling, song and surrealism, Richard Tognetti directs the ACO as it dives into an era of innovation and wonder in 1920s Paris, featuring Le Gateau Chocolat, of *La Clique* and *La Soirée* fame, as maître d'. You'll hear the music of Erik Satie, Lili Boulanger and the group dubbed 'Les Six' – composers including Francis Poulenc and Darius Milhaud, who took their inspiration from the transgressive jazz they heard at legendary cabaret bar Le Boeuf sur le toit as well as Cocteau's avant-garde poetry.

In the Shadow of Time

17-27 SEP
Western Australia Tour

In collaboration with the ACO, the newest work from contemporary dance company Co3's Artistic Director Raewyn Hill is an exploration of ageing, resilience, and the unseen forces that shape our lives, featuring live music from ACO Collective and costumes by fashion designer Akira Isogawa.



2

ACO On The Pier
ACO Up Close: Baroque Resonance with ACO & Pinchgut Opera

21-22 OCT
ACO On The Pier

Experience a unique collaboration between the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Pinchgut Opera, featuring renowned soprano Samantha Clarke and harpsichordist Erin Helyard.

ACO Up Close: Le Gateau Chocolat in Raw Cacao

25 NOV
ACO On The Pier

Stepping aside from their national tour with the ACO, Le Gateau Chocolat comes at us in *Raw Cacao*, an exploration of intimacy and an invitation into the most hallowed of spaces; the chamber where one transitions from performer to person. Who are we when no one is watching?



3

ACO On The Pier
ACO Up Close: Timo-Veikko Valve & AYO Momentum Ensemble

28 NOV
ACO On The Pier

ACO Principal Cello Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve leads AYO Momentum Ensemble in a lush program for cello and strings, masterfully intertwining his Finnish heritage and his Australian experience.

ACO Families
Where to Hide a Star

1-11 OCT
ACO On The Pier

From the creative team that brought us the smash-hit production *How to Catch a Star*, comes a brand-new theatrical adventure based on Oliver Jeffers' sequel, *Where to Hide a Star* – a sparkling celebration of imagination, friendship, empathy, courage and love for young audiences and their families.

Join our Boy on his brave journey across lands, seas and space, as he finds unexpected friends in the most surprising places. Beautifully staged with live music by an ACO quartet, *Where to Hide a Star* is a story of friendship and connection, of learning when to hold on – and when to let go.



4

ACO

Australian
Chamber
Orchestra

2026 SEASON

Uncompromising
Adventurous
Always in motion

Richard Tognetti
Artistic Director

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Pre-Concert
Talks

Pre-concert talks take place 45 minutes before the start of every concert. See the ACO information desk for location details.

NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
Genevieve Lang
Thu 4 Sep 6.45pm

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE
Kym Dillon
Sat 6 Sep 6.45pm
Mon 8 Sep 6.45pm

MELBOURNE – ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE
Kym Dillon
Sun 7 Sep 1.45pm

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL
Russell Torrance
Tue 9 Sep 6.45pm

PERTH – WINTHROP HALL
Will Yeoman
Wed 10 Sep 6.45pm

CANBERRA – LLEWELLYN HALL
Bernard Rofe
Sat 13 Sep 6.45pm

BRISBANE – QPAC CONCERT HALL
Matthew Hodge
Mon 15 Sep 6.15pm

SYDNEY – CITY RECITAL HALL
Genevieve Lang
Tue 16 Sep 7.15pm
Wed 17 Sep 6.15pm
Fri 19 Sep 6.15pm
Sat 20 Sep 6.15pm

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
Genevieve Lang
Sun 21 Sep 3.15pm

PROGRAM

Timo-Veikko Valve Director and Cello
Genevieve Lacey Recorders
Australian Chamber Orchestra

COMPOSER	TITLE	MIN
Hildegard von Bingen	Illuminations* Ave, generosa (Hymn to the Virgin)	8
Max Richter	On the Nature of Daylight	6
Melody Eötvös	Meraki**	6
David Lang	flute and echo (<i>World Premiere</i>)***	15
Interval		20
Jaakko Kuusisto	Wiima	11
Claudio Monteverdi Antonio Vivaldi	Imaginary Cities: A Baroque Fantasy* Vespro della Beata Vergine – Recorder Concerto in C major, RV444: I. Allegro non molto – Intermezzo I – Che si può fare – Recorder Concerto in C major, RV443: III. Allegro molto	20
Erkki Veltheim Barbara Strozzi Antonio Vivaldi		
Ludwig van Beethoven (arr. strings)	String Quartet in A minor, Op.132: III. Molto adagio	17

* *Illuminations* and *Imaginary Cities: A Baroque Fantasy* were commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Soundscapes by Erkki Veltheim, with contributions from Genevieve Lacey (Recorders) and Kelly Dowall (Ney flute). Recording of “Hero y Leandro” by Viktoria Ventura is used courtesy of Maaleh Adumim Institute for the Documentation of the Judeo-Spanish Language (Ladino) and its Culture. Hildegard, Monteverdi and Strozzi arranged by Erkki Veltheim.

** Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

*** Commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, generously supported by Ulrike Klein AO.

The concert will last approximately one hour and fifty minutes, including a 20-minute interval. The Australian Chamber Orchestra reserves the right to alter scheduled artists and programs as necessary.

ACO concerts are regularly broadcast on ABC Classic. *A Musical Awakening* will be broadcast on Wednesday 1 October, 1pm and available on demand for 30 days after.

MUSICIANS ON STAGE

Learn more about our musicians,
go behind the scenes and watch
ACO StudioCast films at:
acoondemand.com.au



Timo-Veikko Valve
Director &
Principal Cello

Tipi plays a 1616 Brothers Amati cello on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Prof Doug Jones AO & Prof Janet Walker CM.



Genevieve Lacey
Recorders

Genevieve plays multiple recorders including two copies of historical instruments by Australian makers: a mulga wood descant by Joanne Saunders, and a maple wood treble by Fred Morgan.



Helena Rathbone
Principal Violin

Helena plays the 1732 'ex-Dollfus' Stradivarius violin on loan from anonymous Australian private benefactors. Her Chair is sponsored by Margaret Gibbs & Rod Cameron.



Anna da Silva Chen
Violin

Anna plays an 18th-century violin made in the style of Pietro Guarneri of Venice, on loan from Jannie Brown. Her Chair is sponsored by Alenka Tindale.



Aiko Goto
Violin

Aiko plays the 1714 'ex-Isolde Menges' Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andreæ violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. Her Chair is sponsored by Anthony & Sharon Lee Foundation.



Ilya Isakovich
Violin

Ilya plays a 1590 Brothers Amati violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Meg Meldrum.



Liisa Pallandi
Violin

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



Véronique Serret[#]
Violin

Veronique plays a 1900 violin by Leandro Bisiach.



Riitta-Liisa Ristiluoma*
Principal Viola

Riitta-Liisa plays a 1640s Italian viola made by Valentino Siani. The instrument is owned by the city of Espoo. She appears courtesy of Tapiola Sinfonietta.



Elizabeth Woolnough
Viola

Elizabeth plays a 1952 A.E. Smith viola on loan from the ACO. Her Chair is sponsored by Terry Campbell AO & Christine Campbell.



Jack Ward*
Cello

Jack plays a 1834 Franz Herzlieb cello made in Austria.



Hiroshi Ikematsu*
Principal Bass

Hiroshi plays a late-16th-century Gasparo da Salò bass on loan to ACO Principal Bass Maxime Bibeau from UKARIA.



Simon Martyn-Ellis*
Theorbo

Simon plays a theorbo made by Klaus Jacobsen in London in 2006 and a Baroque guitar made by Marcus Wesche in Bremen in 2011.

Guest Musician

PROGRAM IN SHORT

Your five-minute read
before lights down.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

Illuminations:

Ave, generosa (Hymn to the Virgin)

Arranged by Erkki Veltheim

Erkki Veltheim writes:

Hildegard of Bingen, Medieval Abbess, polymath, composer and mystic, experienced life with an unusual level of intensity. She frequently had synaesthetic “visions” of piercing light, which she termed *umbra viventis lucis*, interpreting them as a direct form of communication from God. *Ave, generosa*, from the collection *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (“Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations”), is one of Hildegard’s many “Hymns to the Virgin”. In it she describes, at times via metaphors verging on the erotic, Mary’s communion with “heaven’s flood”, identifying her with both the terrestrial natural world as well as the “celestial symphony”.

In re-imagining this hymn for recorder, strings and electronics, I wanted to create a soundworld that feels like it could be experienced by any of the senses; a swirling, misty texture that orbits the melody and gradually evaporates skywards, echoing its phrases at different time scales. The electronics part also incorporates barely audible morse-code translations of Hildegard’s invented “lingua ignota” (“unknown language”), which was most likely also inspired by her visions, as a further acknowledgement of her access to a vibrant sensory universe beyond our everyday awareness.

Illuminations: Ave, generosa was originally conceived as Part I of *Illuminations for a hymn and two sequences by Abbess Hildegard von Bingen*, commissioned in 2021 by Genevieve Lacey. The current stand-alone version was commissioned in 2025 by the Australian Chamber Orchestra.



Max Richter (1966–)

On the Nature of Daylight

On the Nature of Daylight was originally written for Max Richter’s second album *The Blue Notebooks*. Released in 2003, Richter describes the album as “a protest album about Iraq, a meditation on violence – both the violence that I had personally experienced around me as a child and the violence of war, at the utter futility of so much armed conflict.” Interspersed

between the music are readings from the writings of Franz Kafka and Czesław Miłosz, read by actress Tilda Swinton. *On the Nature of Daylight* has gone on to be used extensively in film and television, and has become instantly recognisable to audiences worldwide.



Melody Eötvös (1984-)

Meraki

Australian composer Melody Eötvös's work draws on both multi-media and traditional instrumental contexts, as well substantial extra-musical references to a broad range of philosophical, biological, and ancient topics alongside a sustained interest in late 19th-century life and literature.

The composer writes:

'Meraki' is a word that modern Greeks often use to describe doing something with soul, creativity, or love – when you put 'something of yourself' into what you're doing, whatever it may be. As a composer I've been through so many different stages of growth, and no matter what kind of changes or evolutions result from this growth there is always a part of myself that manifests in the work – not unlike the common belief that all composers' music is autobiographic. While I'm not at all connected to Greece by lineage or otherwise, I believe this word 'Meraki' is a beautiful term that aptly captures this phenomenon.



David Lang (1957-)

flute and echo (World Premiere)

The composer writes:

I was very happy when Genevieve Lacey asked me if I would write her a little concerto. We have been corresponding for 20 years now and I am glad I finally got the chance to write something for her.

I have to admit, though, that I don't have much experience with recorders. The most powerful association I have with them is that the New York City public schools regularly get 1,000 young students together at the same time to play recorders in Carnegie Hall, so I have seen and heard my three children have their Carnegie debuts, on recorder. Other than that, the recorder music most prominent in my mind was Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No.4*, but along with the Bach came a distant memory of something I never understood, and still don't.

I started writing music when I was around 9 years old, but I didn't really learn how to study it until I was in high school. Until high school I would just listen to recordings and sing along. My father had a recording of the complete *Brandenburgs*, with Yehudi Menuhin, I think, so I would listen to these recordings all the time, over and over. At some point someone told me that I could *buy* cheap, pocket-sized study scores of old music, and if I looked at them carefully enough I could learn their secrets. The first study score I ever bought was of the *Brandenburg Concerti*. It had tiny print, cheap paper, and was really hard to read, but I studied it the best I could. One thing that confused me was the very first page of *Brandenburg No.4*. My father's LP identified the solo instruments as recorders, but Bach's score said the musicians should be playing 'flauti d'echo' – echo flutes. I had no idea what that meant, and I am not sure musicologists agree on it, to this day.

The association of recorders and echo flutes stayed with me, all these years later, and so I decided to structure my piece around that association. In *flute and echo* every musical idea is initiated by the solo recorder, and then these ideas are echoed by an obbligato violin, and then echoed again into the ensemble. Just as real-life echoes lose their clarity and focus with each repetition, each new echo-layer of music becomes a little less accurate and detailed, as it ripples away from the original. Eventually, the soloist finds a way to separate themselves from their echoes entirely, and for good.



Jaakko Kuusisto (1974-2022)

Wiima

The composer, conductor and violinist Jaakko Kuusisto is one of a huge cohort of musicians that the Finnish system has nurtured. One of the most

important Finnish musical figures of his time, Kuusisto was diagnosed with brain cancer in the summer of 2020, and passed away in 2022. Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve says that: "Jaakko's generous and humane personality lives on through his music, whether it's performed at home in Finland or here in Australia, pretty much as far away from its intellectual home as possible." *Wiima*, based on an earlier string quartet work entitled *Play III* (2008), was written for the string quartet Meta4. Its title is taken from the Finnish word for a cold and wintry wind, which is referenced in the ultra-fast and semi-improvised textures of the opening section, which also make a return at the end of the piece.

This work was commissioned by Sysmän Suvisoitto, a humble summer festival located in a small, quiet town surrounded by many lakes. The piece evokes the nostalgic charm of this quirky place, a town dear to Tipi's childhood.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Erkki Veltheim (1976-)

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)

Imaginary Cities: A Baroque Fantasy

*Monteverdi and Strozzi arranged by
Erkki Veltheim*

Erkki Veltheim writes:

In creating this suite from works by three different Venetian Baroque composers, Genevieve Lacey and I wanted to reflect something of the sonic diversity and fecundity of the time and place of this music's origins. We took inspiration from Italo Calvino's celebrated novel *Invisible Cities* and the way that, through its pages, a fictional Marco Polo weaves a web of seemingly separate but interconnected images of the most exotic cities that are all in fact descriptions of Venice, merely from different perspectives.

Venice of the Baroque Era was reportedly a place overflowing with music, and no doubt a miscellany of other sounds, including the constant lapping of the sea, the creaking and clanking of a fleet of ships and boats, and the multitude of languages spoken by the city's cosmopolitan merchants and migrants. Besides the official music commissioned by the city's wealthy families and institutions, this soundscape would also have included all manner of folk and informal music, both local and international, and the city's population of sailors would have frequently brought back sonic mementos from many a faraway place along their trade routes.

Our collection of movements by Monteverdi, Vivaldi and Strozzi are threaded together by a tape part that alludes to the various imaginary sounds that our composers might have experienced in the bustling nexus of cultures that Venice had become: the underscore of a marine setting interspersed by a faint Turkish Ney flute, the recorder's distant cousin, a ladino Sephardic song that shares with Strozzi's *Che si può fare* both a tragic story of love as well as a distinctly Spanish melodic and harmonic movement, and finally a collage of Tarantellas, the feverish Southern Italian folk dance that, depending on the source, was caused by, or could cure, the bite of the wolf spider.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

**"Holy Song of Thanksgiving" from
String Quartet in A minor, Op.132**

Arranged for string orchestra

The String Quartet in A minor, Op.132 emerged out of a momentous period in Beethoven's life during which he also composed the *Diabelli Variations*, *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony. He began to make sketches toward the end of 1824, and became fully immersed in the work from February 1825. His progress was severely interrupted by a serious and painful illness, most likely an intestinal inflammation. Beethoven honoured his recovery in the quartet's celebrated third movement, whose manuscript bears the full title "A Convalescent's Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity, in the Lydian Mode".

In choosing the Lydian mode, Beethoven not only alludes to sacred church music, but also renews his own faith following his recovery. The Holy Song is introduced in the manner of late-Renaissance sacred polyphony, with each voice entering one by one and building to the purest of chorale hymn textures. The hymn is restated several times throughout the movement, with variations and interjecting sections of wildly contrasting music. In one iteration of the hymn, Beethoven breaks off into a section marked "feeling new strength" in which a series of wide leaps, exuberant upbeats and jubilant trills contribute to a joyful atmosphere. After achieving a radiant climax, the music ascends serenely into the heavens.

ACO GOLD

50th Anniversary Circle

Help us blaze a trail into our next 50 years by joining ACO GOLD – our special golden anniversary circle – to celebrate this key moment in our story.

Find out more online or call Celeste Moore,
Head of Philanthropy, on 02 8274 3803.

ACO.COM.AU/GOLD





Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve and Genevieve Lacey
on music as solace in dark times.

A SPECTRUM OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Written by Anna Snoekstra



Recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey loves to watch children pick their first musical instrument. Decades ago, while working at a primary school, she'd observe kindergarten students making their choice. "The child never got it wrong," she tells me, when we meet on a rainy Melbourne day. "They knew what felt good, and they knew which sounds they were tuned to." Lacey believes there is a certain pull between an instrument and someone's personality, no matter their age.

"I guess my instrument and the sort of musical material that I'm drawn to fits well with this idea, because the recorder is gentle, it's a chameleon, it's a traveller," she says. "It passes through many different landscapes with quite a light touch." Lacey felt an immediate connection to the recorder as a child.

Later, through various phases of her education, she felt pressure to take up other instruments but ultimately returned to the recorder, moving with it to study at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, a music academy in Switzerland, and then onto the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music, in Denmark.

Lacey joins the Australian Chamber Orchestra for *A Musical Awakening*, a program which aims to showcase music's ability to nurture and nourish through pieces by Max Richter, David Lang, Ludwig van Beethoven, Hildegard von Bingen and Melody Eötvös, among others. The program is directed by principal cellist Timo-Veikko Valve, known to his friends and colleagues as "Tipi". I speak to him from his Sydney home in the midst of his renovations.

"They both speak of the chosen pieces as a journey of refreshing the audience's spirit, coming out of it more energised and in tune with themselves."

Valve began playing the cello when he was six, when his teacher at the local music school declared that "he looks just like a cellist!", which turned out to be correct. "I guess you can say I chose the cello by sticking with it. By finding my voice in it," he says. "The connection of the instrument to the player and their personality is ideally strong. After all, we are speaking through our instrument, telling stories through our instrument."

Valve is Finnish, originally from Helsinki. He was nearing the end of his studies at the Edsberg music institute in Stockholm when he was offered an audition for the ACO. He has now lived in Sydney for 19 years. It's a climate completely different to his upbringing. "Finland is, for long periods of the year, a

very dark and cold place,” he says. “In those physically harsh conditions, you might want to go to a concert because outside is pitch black at 3pm already, and it’s horribly cold, and you need to gather and distract yourself. Music is often the thing that you might seek out, to delve into and submerge yourself into.”

Lacey remembers what it was like to live through the long, dark winters from her time studying in Denmark. “It’s an entirely different relationship to light, to inside space, to how you deal with your own head – it’s a really different way of living, but I love the sort of hibernation of those years. I think that’s very powerful too, for someone who’s sensitive and so clearly artistic, as Tipi is. And again, the cycle of those seasons and sort of enduring them, celebrating them, seeing what they bring out in you. That’s really powerful, too.”

In contrast, Lacey spent her childhood in Papua New Guinea, spending a lot of time practising her instrument outdoors in the heat and attending the cultural sing-sings (an annual gathering of tribes or villages in Papua New Guinea) in the Highlands. “Tipi plays a bass instrument,” Lacey says, “and I play this kind of ethereal instrument. So not only, you know, did he grow up in a country that has such long, cold, dark winters and I grew up in the tropics, but also, he’s holding the kind of deepest, most heartfelt sonorities, which, of course, take the colour and the emotional spectrum towards those things that are grave and difficult, and then my instrument is a bird or a spirit, so we have different functions in this program.”

She believes music is a place of solace, where one can express things that are beyond words. “Really, most of what I’m playing in this program exists a bit more in the ether. We’re trying to have a balance of both ends of that sort of intense human expression and feeling.”

It’s a sentiment that Valve agrees with. He speaks of how emotional it is being inside the music, something that’s always visible to the audience. “All music that we play confronts us with emotions, whether it’s a memory of a place, or something tragic, or something joyful. So that aspect of music making is like we’re our own little psychiatrists, if you like.”

As the director of *A Musical Awakening*, Valve is deeply in tune with the ideas of nourishment and renewal that the program seeks to conjure up. He hopes to explore the music’s healing power and its societal meaning. “It’s a way to enrich and better yourself, or make you feel better about things in general,” he says. They both speak of the chosen pieces as a journey of refreshing the audience’s spirit, coming out of it more energised and in tune with themselves.

“I guess for a lot of musicians, music is home, it’s the place that we live,” Lacey muses. “I often think of it as an element. It’s something that, to me, is



“Finland is, for long periods of the year, a very dark and cold place,” he says. “In those physically harsh conditions, you might want to go to a concert because outside is pitch black at 3pm already, and it’s horribly cold, and you need to gather and distract yourself. Music is often the thing that you might seek out, to delve into and submerge yourself into.”

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Timo-Veikko Valve.
Photo by Simon Lekkiäs

Page 18
Genevieve Lacey.
Photo by Keith Saunders

Page 19.
Porvoo, Finland.
Photo by Tapio Haaja

“He calls the experience of an audience tuning in their energy en masse as “magical”.”



like air or light, you know, and I do feel like I inhabit it. There's always some part of me that is listening or playing something or responding to the sound around me. And I think most musicians are kind of wired primarily through their ears. That's how we experience the world. Throughout my life, music has been a source of constant joy, challenge and solace.”

Lacey is excitedly looking forward to this collaboration with the ACO, saying that, in her previous experiences with the Orchestra, she has found the rehearsals remarkable. “It's a miraculous example of how humans can work together, because there are all these people on stage doing very complex things without words. They're all responding to one another in the moment. It's just such a beautiful example of how we can work together when we put our egos aside and we're focused on something that's bigger.”

Valve feels similarly. “When we have a really great performance of a piece or a concert, it's because we emotionally align, if that makes sense. Over the years, the awareness and non-verbal communication between you and your colleagues can become very strong.

“Many things are left unsaid when there is shared understanding. Ideas will start to take shape without necessarily voicing them specifically. In a concert, you might even ideally forget all of that and just let go. Then the performance is based on mutual trust and responsibility.”

Valve is aware of the significant cultural timing of a program that celebrates nurture and connection and it also holds a very personal emotional significance for him. The fifth piece, *Wiima*, was composed by Finnish violinist Jaakko Kuusisto, a close personal friend of Valve's family who died in 2022 at only 48 years old.

Along with that, the final piece, Ludwig van Beethoven's *Holy Song of Thanksgiving*, has a connection to a very close friend of Valve's who passed away late last year. This piece is considered one of the most profound pieces of music in Western history. It was written after a difficult year for Beethoven. He had been going through a downward spiral and was arrested by police, who mistook his dishevelled appearance for vagrancy. He then became seriously unwell and feared he would lose his life to his illness. Beethoven did recover and wrote this work in gratitude for his new health. Lacey refers to it as a “holy piece” for string players. She says it “conjures up the essence of music and meaning. It's an incredibly personal piece for Beethoven and most string players have a really strong relationship with it through some point or some experience in their lives.”

Since his friend's death, Valve has been struck by how music has consoled and calmed him in his grief as well as helping to resurface memories of their time together. “This spectacular

movement by Beethoven I happened to study and perform a lot with my friend who's passed," he says. "I'm kind of fearing and also looking forward to going through that kind of emotional process every night. I'm not sure if it's going to be good or bad, but it's going to be something at least."

He knows performing the program 13 times around Australia will be emotionally hard work, and says the performances will be a "kind of group therapy session". But he hopes the audiences will join them on that emotional journey. He speaks about how the audience is the missing link that either makes or breaks the success of a concert and its ability to have a bigger meaning and effect. He calls the experience of an audience tuning in their energy en masse as "magical".

Although our conversation takes place in a different state, Lacey uses similar language when discussing the experience of listening to music, calling it "a very potent magic". She explains the shifting scientific knowledge of how humans' brains and bodies respond to music.

"It bypasses a lot of our normal thinking patterns and takes us somewhere different, so closely aligned with memory, and genuinely changes the hormones and the neural patterns in our bodies," she says. "I absolutely love being in a place where everyone's just listening together. It's beautiful. You can feel this incredible sense of an open, intangible connection in the room. I guess to me, it feels more and more necessary in the current world, the idea that we stop and we listen."

Whether it's through the celestial notes of Lacey's recorder or the depth and resonance of Valve's cello, both express the importance of doing their best to rise as musicians to meet the attention of the audience. "There is something that happens in the exchange that really does feel like an alchemy of everyone just being immersed in sound," says Lacey. "It's where we don't have to really have opinions about anything or navigate or negotiate... we can just be. It's so nuanced, it's so multi-layered and many-voiced. But there really is so much space in music, and people can meet it in the way that they need on that day."

She speaks about the process of listening to the concert as being an inward migration. "You are more awake after that. You're alive to yourself, the people around you, your environment; once you've been inside and stilled a whole lot of things then you're really alert. You're really present. So, it's like a process of musical awakening."

Anna Snoekstra is the author of six novels that have been translated across the globe. Her novels are works of literary suspense, focussing on everyday women in extraordinary circumstances. Her new book, *The Ones We Love*, is out now with Ultimo Press. She also writes for *The Saturday Paper*.



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Page 20.
Hildegard von Bingen.
Photo by RomkeHoekstra

Max Richter.
Photo by Dr. Space

Page 21.
Timo-Veikko Valve.
Photo by Wolter Peeters

For Principal Violin Helena Rathbone,
this year celebrating her 30th anniversary
with the Australian Chamber Orchestra,
performance is a passion.

HEART AND MIND AND BODY

Written by Fiona Wright



One: it just happened

“So much of the story of my life,” Helena Rathbone says, “is *it just happened*.”

It isn't luck, exactly, that Helena – Principal Violin with the Australian Chamber Orchestra – is talking about here. She isn't the type of artist to dismiss all of the other, far more important factors – hard work and dedication, training and passion and talent – that go into an artistic career and focus just on luck. Instead, what she's referring to is the unexpected consequences of decisions that never seemed so far-reaching at the time, and to the way that accident and something like inevitability have seemed so intertwined across her life.

For example: Helena has been playing chamber music since she was nine years old, when she first attended the Pro Corda music camp, held in the ruins of an abbey on the Suffolk coast. It is where she fell in love with chamber music and first learned some of its repertoire. “It spoke to me,” she says. “All music has a voice, and this music spoke to me.”

Because of this, Helena returned to the camp twice every year until she turned 18. Many of the other attendees did too, which meant, they quickly “became like colleagues” and developed the kind of rapport than any small ensemble needs. “Where you can communicate,” she says, “without anything being said.”

Helena fell in love, that is, with chamber music and ensemble performance as a child, and pursued what was in many ways the perfect training for an outfit like the ACO – purely by following her heart, rather than by design.

Because alongside “it just happened” she also says this: “I have always known this was my passion.”

“It’s always fresh, always surprising,” Rathbone says, “and we’re fortunate to have an audience that’s willing to take the risk alongside us and see what we have to offer.”

Two: my one and only full-time job

Helena auditioned for the ACO by cassette tape, and in response to a fax. She didn't know anything about the Orchestra, but her name was put forward by her violin teacher, who had been told that they were looking for a principal second violin.

“I had always wanted to live in another country,” she says. And she had just returned to her home in London from a three-month residency in Banff, landing in the middle of January to “grey and miserable” skies. It was something she thought she would try for a while – more than a whim, but far less than a momentous decision. When she signed with the ACO, it was on a one-year contract.

This year is Helena's 30th with the ACO. She now refers to the Orchestra as her “one and only full-time job”.

Three: that’s another reason to stay

Several times as we talk, Helena mentions something that she loves about her job and adds, “and that’s another reason to stay”.

One of these reasons is the calibre of the Orchestra and the demands of playing within a small, tight-knit ensemble. There is always, Helena says, “a high bar”. “We are tough on ourselves and tough on each other, and you have to be at the top of your game the whole time.” Another is the risks they take with repertoire, with unusual combinations and guest performers and directors who often push the musicians in unexpected ways. “It’s always fresh, always surprising,” Helena says, “and we’re fortunate to have an audience that’s willing to take the risk alongside us and see what we have to offer.”

A third is the camaraderie: from a very early age, the “social side” of music has been important to Helena, always learning alongside others – “I had my violin friends, and my local school friends,” she says, and describes meeting up with her violin friends on the Tube each Saturday, on their way to their lessons – and finding “joy” in the music they played together. Several times, she refers to composers and guest musicians in this year's ACO program as “dear friends”.

Most important to Helena is the ACO's Emerging Artist program, which she was instrumental in setting up 20 years ago. Helena loves mentoring emerging musicians and takes great pleasure in the idea that she is passing on some of the opportunities and experiences she was so lucky to be granted as a student – playing alongside professionals and teachers, being exposed to different people, learning collaboratively. It is work she finds “inspiring, and intensely gratifying”, especially as some of the program's alumni have now become her colleagues. “It is a special thing,” she says, “to be able to give some of that back. And that’s another reason to stay.”

Four: is it a Strad or something?

Helena plays a 1732 “ex-Dollfus” Stradivarius violin, and she refers to herself as its “custodian”. “I never dreamt I’d get to play an instrument like this,” she says, and then corrects herself. “Or at least, it only ever happened in my dreams.”

It is a violin that she describes as “sweet” at the top, “grainy and rich” at the bottom, remarkably even across its strings. It has taken her time to learn to how to play it. “It’s like a relationship with a person,” she says, “you have to get to know each other, learn each other’s character.”

Helena tells me that when she travels, the violin is kept as hand luggage, stowed in the overhead cabin, and that she has to keep a watchful eye on other travellers to make sure they’re not too forceful when stowing their own gear alongside it. “There was one man,” she says, “who, when I asked him to be careful, said ‘what, is it a Strad or something?’” She mimics his dismissive tone. “And when I said ‘yes’, he laughed. He clearly thought that I was joking.”

She laughs as she recounts this tale.

Five: heart and mind and body

More than at any other moment, Helena lights up when she talks about performing. It’s clear that performing is her real passion: it is something, she says, that involves “the heart and mind and body, all of them together”. All of these facets of a person, poured into the music. “You become a conduit for the music,” she says, “and you have to, to do it justice.”

But it is the audience, too, who make performing so exhilarating – the sense that they are trusting you, going along with you, and that sometimes, they emerge transformed. “There’s always something that you know they will take with them,” Helena says, “but sometimes, you know you have changed their world.”

“It is a gift to be able to give them that.”

Six: one of the most exquisite movements ever

In this concert, Helena is most looking forward to playing Beethoven’s *Holy Song of Thanksgiving*.

It is, she says, “one of the most exquisite movements ever”, a piece that is “intense, and so beautiful”. It’s fitting, she says, that it is the last piece on the program. “Because there’s nothing you can say or do to follow that.”

Fiona Wright is a writer, editor and critic from Sydney. Her book of essays *Small Acts of Disappearance: Essays on Hunger* won the 2016 Nita B. Kibble Award and the Queensland Literary Award for non-fiction, and was shortlisted for the Stella Prize and the NSW Premier’s Douglas Stewart Award. Her first poetry collection, *Knuckled*, won the 2012 Dame Mary Gilmore Award, while *Domestic Interior* was shortlisted for the 2018 Prime Minister’s Literary Award for Poetry. Her most recent book of essays, *The World Was Whole*, was longlisted for the 2019 Stella Prize.



“I never dreamt I’d get to play an instrument like this,” she says, and then corrects herself. “Or at least, it only ever happened in my dreams.”

Page 23.
Helena Rathbone.
Photo by Georges Antoni

Page 25.
Helena Rathbone.
Photo by Nic Walker

Timo-Veikko Valve

Director & Cello

Timo-Veikko Valve, affectionately known by audiences far and wide as ‘Tipi’, grew up in Finland, surrounded by a family who are “musically orientated normal people”. Music lessons were a natural part of his upbringing, and at six years old, Tipi was encouraged to pick up the cello after a teacher at the local music school declared with considerable conviction that “*he looks just like a cellist!*”. To this day, Tipi remains somewhat puzzled about what that statement actually meant. Whatever the subtext, the teacher seems to have been correct.

Tipi was appointed Principal Cello of the Australian Chamber Orchestra in 2006, and his leadership soon became an integral part of the ACO. Recognised for his natural, creative, and generous musicianship, Tipi seeks to define the modern-day musician. Prior to his Australian adventure, Tipi studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki before continuing to the Edsberg Music Institute in Stockholm.

Tipi effortlessly transitions between modern and period instruments and describes the cello as a flexible and adaptive partner, both in its role in an ensemble and as a soloist, across all forms of music.



He reflects this versatility and enjoys a diverse career as a musician, curator and director, directing from the cello as he plays and appearing as a soloist with many of the major orchestras across his two home countries, Finland, and Australia. Tipi is also a sought-after collaborator and frequently appears as a chamber musician. His active commitment to the music of our times through curating and commissioning has seen him delivering world-premiere performances of multiple concertos and other significant works written especially for him.

Tipi plays on a Brothers Amati cello from 1616, kindly on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund.

Genevieve Lacey

Recorders



Musician and arts advocate Genevieve Lacey creates, performs and curates. Her work can be experienced in concert halls, museums, gardens, festivals and the digital realm. A champion of Australian music and the centrality of arts and culture in any thriving community, she's been touring nationally and internationally for decades as a recorder virtuoso, has a substantial recording catalogue, a swathe of awards, and an ABC film *Recorder Queen* has been made about her life. She serves her community in countless voluntary ways, and advises, mentors and curates in diverse contexts.

Genevieve's works include *Breathing Space* (a permanent sound installation at the National Museum of Australia), *Soliloquy* (a communal re-invention of the solo recital), *Consort of the Moon* (an outdoor choral gathering), *Pleasure Garden* (a listening garden), and *Recorder Queen* (a semi-animated documentary).

Genevieve appears regularly as a soloist with orchestras including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Concerto Copenhagen, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne, Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras. She has performed at the Lindau International Convention of Nobel Laureates, for Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey, as a concerto soloist in the Royal Albert Hall for BBC Proms, at the opening night of the London

Jazz Festival and on a basketball court on Thursday Island with Australian Indigenous ensemble The Black Arm Band.

An advocate for contemporary composition, Genevieve has commissioned and premiered works by a huge number of composers working in radically different ways. She's the current curator for Sydney Opera House's Utzon Music chamber series, serves on the board of A New Approach (ANA), Australia's arts and culture think tank, and Chairs ANA's Reference Group. She's a former Chair of the Australian Music Centre board, artistic director and co-executive producer for *Finding Our Voice*, inaugural artistic advisor for UKARIA Cultural Centre, and inaugural artistic director for Musica Viva's FutureMakers. Her curatorial expertise has been sought by LiveWorks, Rising, Adelaide Festival, and Melbourne Recital Centre, where she was artist in residence. Her work has won ARIA and AIR, Helpmann and Green Room awards, Churchill, Freedman and Australia Council Fellowships, the Melbourne Prize for Music (Outstanding Musician Award), Australian Women in Music Awards, Excellence in Classical Music, John Truscott Artists Award and the Sidney Myer Individual Performing Arts Award. In 2024, *Breathing Space* won Work of the Year, Electroacoustic/Sound Art in the AMC/APRA Art Music Awards, and Genevieve was honoured with the National Luminary award.

Australian Chamber Orchestra

“The Australian Chamber Orchestra is uniformly high-octane, arresting and never ordinary.”

— THE AUSTRALIAN

The Australian Chamber Orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for its explosive performances that redefine orchestral music. With its fearless leader of 35 years, Artistic Director Richard Tognetti, in 2025 the Orchestra celebrates 50 years of invention, disruption and unforgettable music-making.

The ACO performs more than 100 concerts each year, with programs that embrace celebrated classics alongside new commissions and ground-breaking collaborations, working with artists and musicians who share the Orchestra’s ideology: from Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Polina Leschenko, Pekka Kuusisto, Nicolas Altstaedt and William Barton, to Jonny Greenwood, Neil Finn and Meow Meow; to visual artists and film makers such as Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jane Campion, and Jennifer Peedom, who co-create unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

The ACO has its own streaming platform, ACO On Demand, which hosts the Orchestra’s award-winning cinematic concert films, *ACO StudioCasts*, alongside live concert streams. The Orchestra also has an active recording program, with Richard Tognetti and the Orchestra winning eight ARIA Awards. Recent releases include *Water/Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, *Tchaikovsky/Shostakovich* and ARIA award-winning albums *River* and *Indies & Idols*.

In 2022 the ACO opened a new, world-class venue, ACO On The Pier, continuing the Orchestra’s dedication to creating and presenting transformative experiences for all music lovers.



ACO Subscriber Stories

Susan Maxwell-Stewart

Susan Maxwell-Stewart always had a preference for indie music, until she went along to her first ACO concert in the 1990s and was blown away by the Orchestra's 'wild exhilarating brilliance'.

"In my youth, I wanted to exchange lives with Annie Lennox or Laurie Anderson," ACO Subscriber Susan Maxwell-Stewart reminisces, "but now that would be Satu Vänskä."

The Australian Chamber Orchestra joined Susan's list of music loves, which is built from "artists like Laurie Anderson, Robbie Robertson, Peter Gabriel and Talking Heads," in the early '90s when she went along to her first ACO concert, and more than two decades later she was blown away by ACO Principal Violin Satu Vänskä's performance of Locatelli's Violin Concerto in D major *The Harmonic Labyrinth*.

"I was seated beside two other old biddies, the three of us stunned and gasping for air at the performance's conclusion," Susan laughs.

Now based in Perth, via long stints living all over the world including in New Mexico and India, Susan has a history with music, having played the electric dulcimer during her time living in India, improvising as part of a dance band.

"Music had always been vital yet, apart from one Glenn Gould cassette, my love of classical had mostly been replaced by jazz and alternative artists," Susan says. Seeing Richard Tognetti and the ACO in Perth with a friend changed that.

"I remember wonderfully intense and unconventional playing, all musicians young, clad in black and standing, longhaired Richard Tognetti a bobbing -weaving genius surfer with the violin," she remembers fondly. "It's always an unmistakable quality. They play from the inside, instead of the outside, and it's about more than just playing through the notes."



"The ACO is not only playing with brilliant technique but also a hundred percent from the inside, yes, and that is a rare quality," she reinforces. "I may not be a classically-trained musician, but I have the kind of ear where I can pick that quality up; that they're not just sitting on their arses digesting dinner, they're really playing!"

Susan became a subscriber, and has devoured ACO concerts – including digital content during the Covid-19 pandemic – ever since.

"I was blown away by the ACO's magnificently-filmed *Tabula Rasa* StudioCast," Susan says, referring to the series of cinematic films capturing the Orchestra when lockdown had put the possibility of live concerts in jeopardy. "In no concert hall would I similarly howl and weep as I was able to in my living room, nor see so closely the musicians' emotion-etched faces."

Susan names other highlights in her time subscribing to the ACO as Giovanni Solima's 2016 tour with the Orchestra, as well as a small ACO group performing chamber music by Marin Marais.

She says she donates to the Orchestra whenever possible, including when "unrealistic."

"Because it gives me selfish joy and a sense of participation," Susan says. "I am unreligious, yet an ACO devotee, rapt in its always wild exhilarating brilliance."

Age: 77

Subscriber for: 20 years

Date of first ACO concert: 1993

Favourite ACO concert: ACO Soloists (Satu performing Locatelli's *The Harmonic Labyrinth*)

Spotlight on BNP Paribas

We recently caught up with Nicolas Parrot, CEO of BNP Paribas Australia and New Zealand, to discuss the bank's passion for investing in the future of music through the ACO Academy and the BNP Paribas Pathway Scholarship.

At BNP Paribas, we believe that artistic creation has the power to connect, challenge and inspire – not only as individuals, but as a society. That's why, since 2006, we've proudly partnered with the ACO, one of the country's most visionary cultural institutions. Since 2017, we have deepened this partnership by supporting the ACO Academy, one of the ACO's flagship talent development programs.

This year, we were thrilled to witness the unfolding of another remarkable chapter of the ACO Academy. In July, 29 of Australia's most promising young string players – handpicked from across the country – came together for a week of intensive workshops led by ACO musicians, under the direction of ACO violinist Aiko Goto. Through rigorous rehearsals, ensemble work and performance coaching, these students were immersed in the ACO's unique musical language and inspired to reach new heights of artistic excellence.

The ACO Academy embodies the shared values at the heart of our partnership with the ACO - innovation, collaboration, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. As the bank for a changing world, BNP Paribas is committed to supporting the next generation, with major philanthropic initiatives focused on culture, social inclusion and the environment. We believe cultural experiences like the Academy not only cultivate technical skill and creativity but foster confidence, discipline and connection amongst young people.



Complementing our support of the Academy is our investment in greater access and equity through the ACO BNP Paribas Pathway Scholarship. This initiative supports school-aged musicians from diverse backgrounds, in particular, First Nations young people, by providing tailored assistance for lessons, orchestra participation, instrument access and coaching with ACO musicians. In 2025, we are proud to support recipients Lachlan Martin and Noah Armodoros, whose musical journeys continue to flourish, thanks to these targeted opportunities.

We were also delighted to share our passion for music more broadly with our people. More than 150 BNP Paribas staff and their families attended this year's ACO Academy concert, enjoying an unforgettable evening. Experiences like this reflect our belief in the power of culture to bring people together, inspire fresh perspectives, and enrich the workplace community.

BNP Paribas is proud to stand alongside the ACO and nurture all that it does. Together, we are building a future for music that is bold, inclusive, and brilliantly bright.

Nicolas Parrot
CEO of BNP Paribas Australia and New Zealand

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In Person
Australian Chamber Orchestra
Pier 2/3
Suite 3, 13A Hickson Road
Dawes Point NSW 2000

By Mail
PO Box R21
Royal Exchange NSW 1225
Australia

Telephone
(02) 8274 3800
Box Office 1800 444 444

Email
aco@aco.com.au

Web
aco.com.au

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