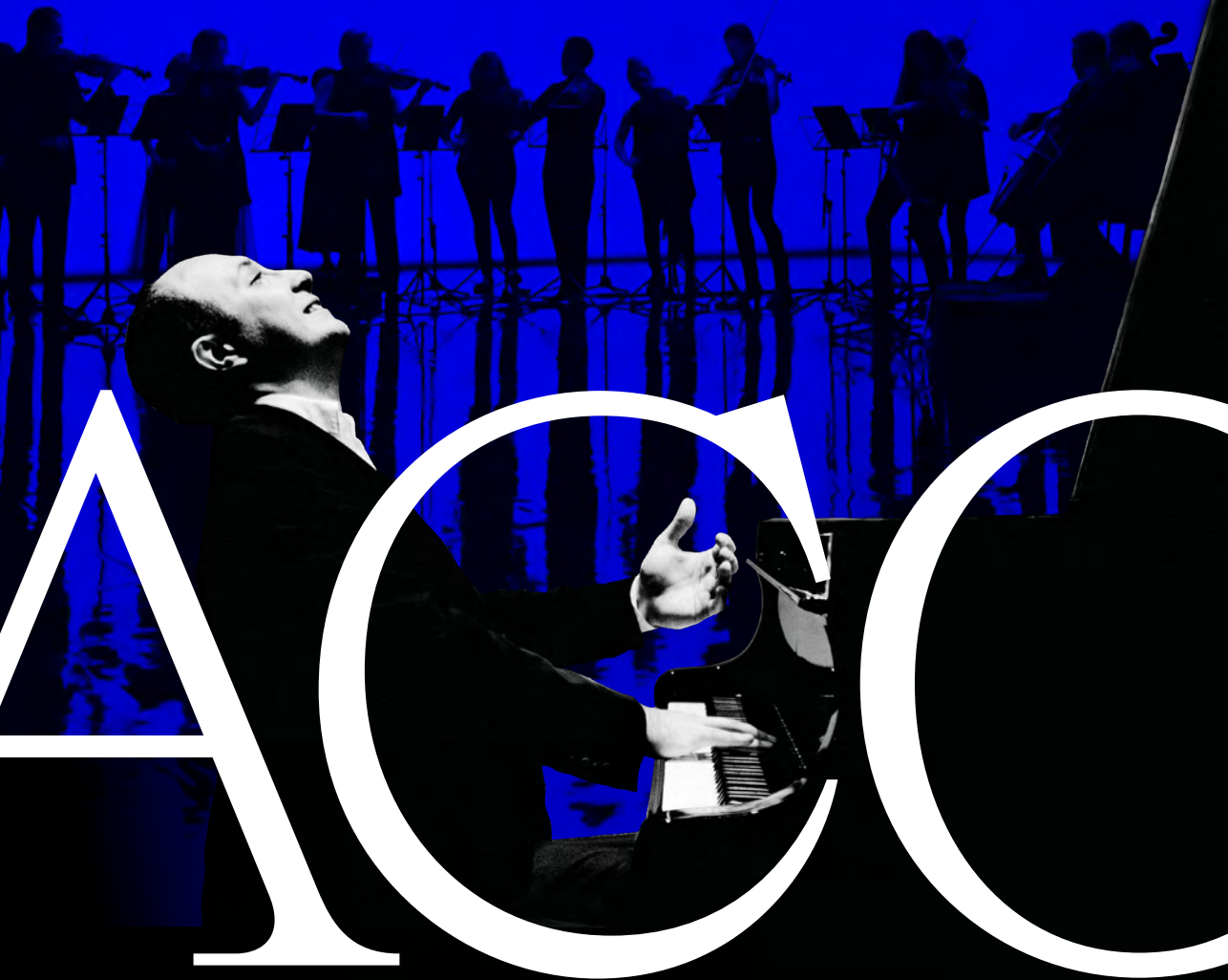


Australian Chamber Orchestra

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



GERSHWIN & SHOSTAKOVICH

Directed by Richard Tognetti

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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



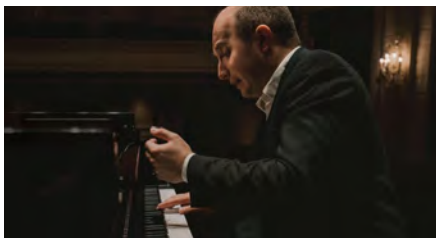
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Up Front

- 2 **Welcome**
From the ACO's Managing Director Richard Evans
- 4 **News**
Upcoming concerts and the latest announcements

The Concert

- 7 **Program**
The music you're about to hear
- 8 **Musicians on Stage**
Players on stage for this performance
- 10 **Program in Short**
Your five-minute read before lights down
- 14 **An Act of Remembrance**
Marko Pavlyshyn speaks with Alexander Gavrylyuk



- 24 **About the Artists**

Behind the Scenes

- 28 **ACO Subscriber Stories**
Meet our beloved Subscribers
- 29 **ACO Staff**
- 30 **Acknowledgements**

WELCOME

Welcome to *Gershwin & Shostakovich*.

We could not be more delighted to have piano virtuoso Alexander Gavrylyuk make his long-awaited ACO debut on this national tour. Witnessing Alexander perform is a truly electrifying experience, and this concert will showcase his mastery of two of the most extraordinary works of the 20th century – Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No.1.

Ahead of this tour, Alexander spoke with writer and professor Marko Pavlyshyn about his upbringing in Ukraine and how it has shaped his belief in the power of music to unite and uplift people in times of adversity. I encourage you to turn to page 14 of this program to experience this powerful and deeply moving read.

Also on the program is a world premiere from exiled Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov, commissioned by the ACO in partnership with the Arctic Philharmonic, Scottish Ensemble, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and Witold Lutosławski National Forum of Music. Silvestrov is Ukraine's most celebrated living composer, and has lived in exile in Germany since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. His new work, *Moments of Memory (VI)* is poetic, reflective and incredibly personal and the ACO is honoured to give its world premiere performance on this tour.

Many of you participate in the life of the ACO beyond buying tickets to concerts by making a tax deductible donation in some form – which together with box office takings are our life blood, accounting for 80% of our revenue. For those who donated at the end of the tax year, on behalf of our musicians and national audiences, I thank you. I note that you don't need to feel restricted to only donating at the end of June – donations are just as effective whenever they are received.

We are busily preparing for the unveiling of our 2026 National Concert Season later this month. If you haven't already, make sure to sign up to the ACO's eNews on our website to ensure that you're the first to know what Richard Tognetti has planned for our next Season of music.

Thank you for joining us for this very special program of Vivier, Silvestrov, Gershwin and Shostakovich – I look forward to seeing you all in the concert hall.



Richard Evans AM
Managing Director

The image shows a full orchestra performing on a large, tiered wooden stage. The musicians are dressed in black, and the stage is filled with various instruments including violins, violas, cellos, double basses, brass, and woodwinds. The background is a warm, wood-paneled wall. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members are visible, seated in rows of chairs. The overall atmosphere is professional and artistic.

ACO

2026

It won't be long until we share our exciting 2026 Season with you. Be the first to discover what's in store by ensuring your contact details are up to date and signing up to our eNews.

[ACO.COM.AU/REGISTRATION](https://aco.com.au/registration)



NEWS

Upcoming concerts and the latest announcements.

Latest News ACO 2026

We're looking forward to unveiling our 2026 Season this month. Make sure to sign up to our eNews to be the first to know the extraordinary concerts we have planned for your ACO 2026 Season.

Thank You

We would like to thank each and every one of you who generously supported our 2025 annual appeal.

As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year, we are more grateful than ever for the support of our wonderful ACO family. You play a critical role in the Orchestra's continued story, and we would not be where we are today without you.

On Tour A Musical Awakening

4-21 SEP National Tour

The music of Beethoven, Hildegard von Bingen and Max Richter centres this exploration of music's ability to heal, nourish and awaken, directed by ACO Principal Cello Timo-Veikko Valve and featuring recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey.

Mountain

27-30 OCT National Tour

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.

1.
Mountain



1

On Tour
Cocteau's Circle

8-22 NOV
National Tour

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'.

2.
 Cocteau's Circle

3.
 ACO Up Close:
 Baroque Resonance
 with ACO &
 Pinchgut Opera

4.
 Where to Hide a Star



2

ACO On The Pier
**ACO Up Close: Shostakovich,
 Silvestrov & Bach**

23-25 AUG
ACO On The Pier
& Melbourne Recital Centre

ACO Principal Violin Satu Vänkä leads a deep exploration of the majesty and heartache of Shostakovich and Silvestrov chamber works, set alongside the depth, candour and ecstasy of the music of JS Bach.

**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.



3

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

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music of Beethoven,
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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.

SYDNEY – CITY RECITAL HALL

Andrew Bukenya

Fri 1 Aug 6.15pm
Sat 2 Aug 6.15pm
Tue 5 Aug 7.15pm
Wed 6 Aug 6.15pm

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Andrew Bukenya

Sun 3 Aug 1.15pm

NEWCASTLE CITY HALL

Andrew Bukenya

Thu 7 Aug 6.45pm

CANBERRA – LLEWELLYN HALL

Bernard Rofe

Sat 9 Aug 6.45pm

MELBOURNE – ARTS
CENTRE MELBOURNE

Kym Dillon

Sun 10 Aug 1.45pm
Mon 11 Aug 6.45pm

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL

Russell Torrance

Tue 12 Aug 6.45pm

PERTH – WINTHROP HALL

William Yeoman

Wed 13 Aug 6.45pm

WOLLONGONG TOWN HALL

Bernard Rofe

Sat 16 Aug 6.45pm

BRISBANE – QPAC
CONCERT HALL

Matthew Hodge

Mon 18 Aug 6.15pm

PROGRAM

Richard Tognetti Director & Violin
Alexander Gavrylyuk Piano
David Elton Trumpet
Australian Chamber Orchestra

COMPOSER	TITLE	MIN
Claude Vivier	Zipangu	15
Valentin Silvestrov	Moments of Memory (VI) (<i>World Premiere</i>)* <i>I. Allegro</i> <i>II. Andante</i> <i>III. Moderato</i> <i>IV. Maestoso</i> <i>V. Moderato – Allegro</i> <i>VI. Allegretto</i> <i>VII. Animato</i>	15
Dmitri Shostakovich	Piano Concerto No.1 in C minor, Op.35 <i>I. Allegro moderato</i> <i>II. Lento</i> <i>III. Moderato</i> <i>IV. Allegro con brio</i>	21
Interval		20
George Gershwin (arr. Bernard Rofe)	Rhapsody in Blue	15
Shostakovich (arr. Rudolf Barshai)	Chamber Symphony in C minor, Op.110a <i>I. Largo –</i> <i>II. Allegro molto –</i> <i>III. Allegretto –</i> <i>IV. Largo –</i> <i>V. Largo</i>	22

* Co-commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Arctic Philharmonic, Scottish Ensemble, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and Witold Lutoslawski National Forum of Music.

The concert will last approximately two hours, 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. *Gershwin* & *Shostakovich* will be broadcast on Friday 29 August, 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



Richard Tognetti
Director and Violin

Richard plays a 1741–44 Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù violin on loan from the ACO. His Chair is sponsored by Gaby Kennard, Peter McMullin AM & Ruth McMullin, Andrew & Andrea Roberts, and Rosy Seaton & Seumas Dawes.



Alexander Gavrylyuk
Piano



David Elton
Trumpet



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.



Satu Vänkä
Principal Violin

Satu plays a 1728/29 Stradivarius violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. Her Chair is sponsored by David Thomas AM.



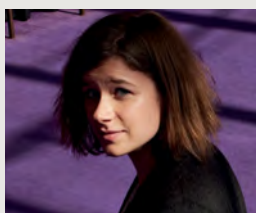
Anna da Silva Chen
Violin

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.



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.



Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba
Hobba Violin

Thibaud plays his own 1842 Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume violin. His Chair is sponsored by The Minta Group.



Ike See
Violin

Ike plays his own 2021 Samuel Zygmuntowicz violin.



Tim Yu
Violin

Tim plays a violin ascribed to Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù in 1740, assembled by John Lott circa 1850, on loan from an anonymous Australian private benefactor. His Chair is sponsored by Barbara & Ralph Ward-Ambler.



Mark Ingwersen[#]
Violin

Mark plays a 1989 violin by David Gussett.



Maja Savnik[#]
Violin

Maja plays her own 1797 Giuseppe Gagliano violin.



Stefanie Farrands
Principal Viola

Stefanie plays her own 2016 viola made by Ragnar Hayn in Berlin. Her Chair is sponsored by peckvonhartel architects.



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.



Amanda Verner[#]
Viola

Amanda plays her own viola, a 2023 copy of a Gasparo da Salò by Florian Leonhard Fine Violins. She appears courtesy of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



Tomas Djupsjöbacka[#]
Principal Cello

Tomas plays a rare Lorenzo Storioni cello built in Cremona in 1780. He appears courtesy of Meta4.



Melissa Barnard
Cello

Melissa plays an 1846 cello by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. Her Chair is sponsored by Jason Wenderoth.



Julian Thompson
Cello

Julian plays a 1729 Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andrea cello with elements of the instrument crafted by his son, Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, donated to the ACO by the late Peter Weiss AO. His Chair is sponsored by The Stewart Family, and Julie Steiner AM & Judyth Sachs.



Maxime Bibeau
Principal Bass

Max plays a late-16th-century Gasparo da Salò bass on loan from UKARIA. His Chair is sponsored by Janet Matton AM & Robin Rowe, and Ros Morauta.

[#] Guest Musician

PROGRAM IN SHORT

Your five-minute read
before lights down.

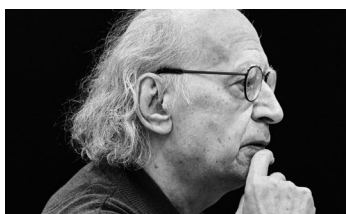
Written by Russell Torrance

Claude Vivier (1948–1983)

*Zipangu**

The hell-raising Québécois composer Claude Vivier studied in Cologne with Karlheinz Stockhausen before returning to Montréal to establish himself as one of Canada's leading composers. His personality was abrasive but lonely, and most of his compositions are understood to be autobiographical, reflecting his personal experiences and search for love and acceptance. Vivier's compositions employ a diverse range of musical influences, including spectral music, ethnomusicology, serialism, musique concrète (use of recorded sounds), extended techniques (non-standard instrumental sounds) and surrealism. György Ligeti named Vivier "the most important and original composer of his generation."

In 1976 Vivier toured Asia in search of inspiration and visited the *Kabuki* theatres of Tokyo. He was struck by the highly ritualistic nature of the music and performances, which can appear avant-garde to those new to the artform. In 1980 he composed *Zipangu*, employing Japanese sounds and elements of South Indian Carnatic music including imitations of the tanbur, raga, chalanata and rhythmic tala. The title *Zipangu*, which roughly translates as "the land of sunrise", is a name used to refer to Japan during the time of Marco Polo (a figure who fascinated Vivier). *Zipangu* is all about aural colour, blurring harmonies through a range of extended techniques, exaggerated bow pressures, and use of melody as a colour that grows lighter and returns "as though purified and solitary."



Valentin Silvestrov (1937–)

Moments of Memory (VI)#

World Premiere

In *Moments of Memory (VI)*, Valentin Silvestrov extends his signature aesthetic of liminal retrospection into a fragile new terrain. Composed while in exile from Kyiv, Silvestrov describes the music as "a chain of moments, a beginning but no end. It doesn't break off but listens attentively, awaiting a continuation that is lost in infinity." This poetic

conception evokes the principle of Scheherazade from *One Thousand and One Nights*, where each moment opens a door to another, creating a form of duration that is both expectant and elusive. “Musicians and listeners of this kind of music,” he writes, “are invited not to just listen but to listen attentively not only to the sound but also to the silence between the sounds”.

Alongside Shostakovich’s Chamber Symphony, *Moments of Memory* (VI) draws a resonant line between two composers who transmute personal and political upheaval into music of haunting introspection.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Concerto No.1 in C minor, Op.35

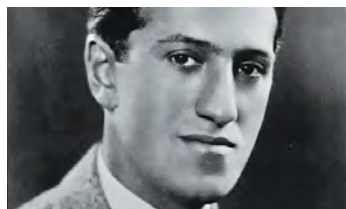
Dmitri Shostakovich might well have pursued a career as a concert pianist. He was a capable and brilliant performer – this much is clear from his writing for the instrument – and friends described him having, “strong hands and his own precise and somewhat dry manner of playing.” His Achilles heel was intense performance anxiety, fuelled by a combination of his own personality and the political climate.

For this concerto, we meet him in a glorious period, riding a wave of success after his First Symphony and before the worst of his political troubles. He was in his late 20s and had also just got married.

The Piano Concerto No.1 is really a double concerto – there is a strong, prominent trumpet part alongside the piano. Shostakovich initially set out to write a trumpet concerto for the soloist Alexander Schmidt, but then began to doubt his technical abilities in writing for the instrument. The solution was to bring in a piano part, which eventually took over.

There are glorious, warm, sweeping passages throughout the music. But this is Shostakovich, and the music is full to the brim with his characteristic wit and humour. In fact, the sentimental moments are probably the composer poking fun at the late Romantic piano concertos that abounded at the time. There’s also a distinct jazziness to the music, and quotes from Beethoven (listen for *Rage Over a Lost Penny* in the third movement).

The premiere was in Leningrad in October 1933, with Shostakovich at the piano. The other soloist was Alexander Schmidt, the original dedicatee of the trumpet concerto that never was.



George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Rhapsody in Blue

Arranged by Bernard Rofe

The biggest risk you can take, is when you have everything to lose. By 1924, George Gershwin was one of the most famous – and richest – musicians around. He had two Broadway successes, a hit song championed by Al Jolson, and was the toast of the American music scene with a flurry of pop tunes to his name.

When Gershwin tried something completely different in February 1924, it must have felt like betting the farm. Would classical musicians take his attempts at writing concert music seriously? Would his ‘pop song’ fans feel left behind?

Bandleader Paul Whiteman, the self-proclaimed ‘king of jazz’, held a concert that February, hailed as ‘An Experiment in Modern Music’. Gershwin’s involvement in the evening would end up being a triumph, and result immediately in a commission from Walter Damrosch for a new piano concerto. But he took part, it would seem, only under duress.

Whiteman gave a newspaper interview about the event the previous month and proclaimed that there would be a new piece, a ‘jazz concerto’, from George Gershwin. This was the first Gershwin had heard of it. But luckily, and after a heated phone call, Gershwin relented.

The composer had no time to write the promised concerto, so he instead presented a glorious collection of ideas that became *Rhapsody in Blue*. The premiere was at the Aeolian Hall on 12 February 1924 with the composer playing the piano part.

The fast moments of this Gershwin masterpiece have all the energy and jazziness that you would expect from a work written in New York in the 1920s. Gershwin himself explained that the driving rhythms were inspired by a late-night train ride between Boston and New York, and the sound of the tracks beneath him.

The extensive solo section in the middle was improvised on the night by Gershwin and had to be written down later. This gives way to an expansive, Rachmaninoff-like tune (there is a rumour that the Russian composer was present at the premiere).

Ironically, the most famous musical motive from *Rhapsody in Blue* is not from the piano, but the clarinet. Ross Gorman, clarinetist in the Paul Whiteman band, played a swooping glissando at the very beginning of the piece as a joke in rehearsal – and Gershwin liked it so much it stuck!

Dmitri Shostakovich

Chamber Symphony in C minor, Op.110a

Arranged by Rudolf Barshai

There are many puzzles around Shostakovich and his music. This is a composer whose career took place entirely during Soviet times, and so any messages or subtext in his music, particularly around politics and patriotism, are a matter of debate.

The Chamber Symphony Op.110a is an arrangement of Shostakovich's Eighth String Quartet. There are two very different ways of looking at this composition.

The first – the original explanation for the work – is that Shostakovich conceived the music in 1960. He was drafted in to write the score for an East German film, and so was brought to Dresden.

The composer was seemingly horrified to see the post-war scenes of destruction in the German city and indeed, the Eighth Quartet was bestowed the subtitle, "Dedicated to the victims of war and fascism". The music does suggest this – the slow movement could be an elegy for these victims. And Shostakovich uses his Jewish theme in the work.

The second way of looking at the Eighth Quartet – and its arrangement as the Chamber Symphony you will hear tonight – came to light in 1979, four years after the composer's death. Solomon Volkov published *Testimony*, claiming to be a collection of Shostakovich's true memoirs.

According to *Testimony*, the Eighth String Quartet was entirely personal and that the 'war and fascism' in the subtitle was reference to the horrors of Stalin's USSR and the terror of Shostakovich's own run-ins with the regime.

Many of the musical ideas in the quartet do indeed appear to be the composer referencing himself. You will hear quotations from the Fifth Symphony, Cello Concerto and the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. There is also the characteristic use of Shostakovich's own DSCH theme (German notation for D, E flat, C, B).

The Chamber Symphony version of the quartet was made in 1967 with the composer's approval. The arranger was Rudolf Barshai, conductor and founder of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

Russell Torrance is an award-winning radio presenter and producer, and is currently the Mornings Presenter on ABC Classic. Russell's career began as an editor on the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and, as well as broadcast, has encompassed music teaching, composition and performance.

* Note by Bernard Rofe

Note by Ross McHenry



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The ACO is premiering a commissioned work from the exiled Ukrainian composer, Valentin Silvestrov, while superstar Ukrainian–Australian pianist Alexander Gavrylyuk plays *Rhapsody in Blue* and Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No.1.

AN ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Written by Marko Pavlyshyn



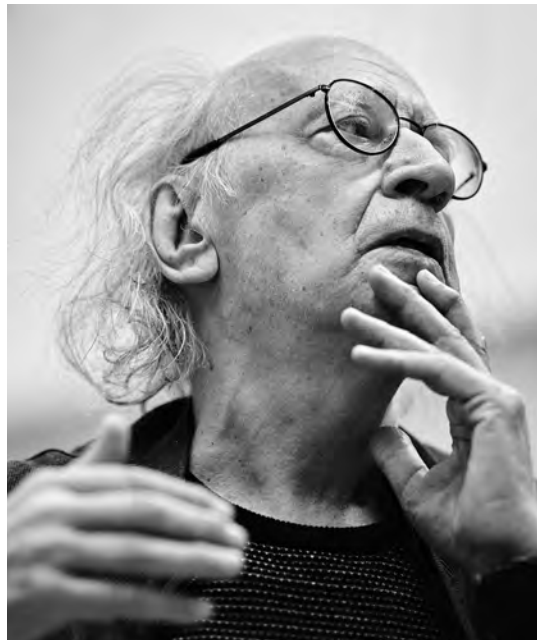
Like all expectations, those that we bring to the world premiere of a musical composition are shaped by what we know: of the composer, the composer's previous oeuvre and the context. *Moments of Memory (VI)*, a work by Valentin Silvestrov newly commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, makes us reflect on the Ukrainian composer's life and works but also, inevitably, on the circumstances in the shadow of which the composition was written: Russia's war on Ukraine, which commenced in 2014 and on February 24, 2022, became a full-scale invasion.

The war's direct impact on the then 85-year-old composer was grim: he fled his native Kyiv with a suitcase full of musical manuscripts to find asylum in Berlin. Silvestrov – the author of nine symphonies and many works for chamber orchestra, for solo instrument with orchestra and voice with orchestra; of trios, quartets, quintets and other chamber compositions; of works for solo piano and voice with piano accompaniment; and of music for cinema, including scores for six films by the celebrated Odesa filmmaker Kira Muratova – became a refugee.

At the same time, the war at last turned international attention to Ukraine and Ukraine's culture. Silvestrov has become the most-performed Ukrainian composer and, as music theorist Richard Louis Gillies put it, "an unequivocal symbol of defiance in the face of Russian aggression". His works are now prime objects of inquiry for musicologists and historians of music as, motivated by the war, they deepen their interest in the musical cultures of the other-than-Russian parts of the Soviet Union and its successor countries.

Silvestrov was born in Kyiv in 1937. He tells of teaching himself to play the piano. In 1963 he graduated from the Kyiv Conservatorium, where his teachers were Borys Lyatoshynsky (1895-1968) and Levko Revutsky (1889-1977). Like their younger contemporary, Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), they made complicated aesthetic and political compromises with Soviet officialdom and the ill-defined but compulsory "creative method" of Socialist Realism. Unlike Shostakovich, Lyatoshynsky and Revutsky – both composers of note – were scarcely visible to Western eyes, hidden under Soviet Russocentrism.

After Stalin's death and during the ambivalent and tentative liberalisation of the early 1960s known as the Thaw, Lyatoshynsky gave his students licence to experiment with avant-garde practices that had been explored in the West, including serialism, dodecaphony and aleatory music that embraced chance. In an interview given in 2006, Silvestrov, a participant in this risky excursion to the edges of the permissible, recounted the names – all but unknown



“The war’s direct impact on the then 85-year-old composer was grim: he fled his native Kyiv with a suitcase full of musical manuscripts to find asylum in Berlin.”

Page 14-15
Alexander Gavrylyuk.
Photo by Marco Borggreve

Page 16
Valentin Silvestrov.
Photo by Kaupo Kikkas

Page 17.
Kyiv, Ukraine.
Photo by Glib Albovsky





in the West – of his fellow-members of the Kyiv avant-garde: the conductor Ihor Blazhkov and composers Leonid Hrabovsky, Vitalii Hodziansky, Volodymyr Zahortsev, Volodymyr Huba, Sviatoslav Krutykov, Petro Solovkin and, from a younger generation, Ivan Karabits, Yevhen Stankovych and Oleh Kiva.

Silvestrov was friends with near-contemporaries and kindred avant-garde musical spirits, including the Estonian Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), the Georgian Giya Kancheli (1935-2019) and the Russian Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998). His notable early work *Spectrums* (1965), intended for Sergo Parajanov's unfinished film *Kyiv Frescoes* (1966), preceded his winning a commission from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation that resulted in his *Symphony No.3, "Eschatophony"* (1966).

Before long, however, Soviet cultural policy caught up with him. In 1970 Silvestrov was expelled from the Union of Composers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Undaunted, he continued composing. The 1970s became for him a period of critical reconsideration of the primacy of innovation as a musical value, walking back from his early avant-gardism. "The most important lesson of the avant-garde," he would later say, "was to be free of all preconceived ideas – particularly those of the avant-garde." Silvestrov's reflections on music recognise the memory of times and music past as the inescapable predicament of composition: "We are surrounded or, to be more precise, submerged in the sounding

"The most important lesson of the avant-garde," he would later say, "was to be free of all preconceived ideas – particularly those of the avant-garde."

memory of all times and peoples," he wrote; or, again, "I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists." He devised terms for the fruits of this mnemonic aesthetics: "metamusic", "metaphoric music" and, more ironically, "naive music" and "kitsch music".

In 2012 Silvestrov offered a parable of the predicament of the composer confronted with the burden of tradition: "In front of you is a solid wall of what was written long ago. If you try to break through it, you get cracked across the knuckles and you hear, 'Where do you think you're going? That's already been done.' If suddenly a chink appears in that wall, you have to leap into it and through it. Then it doesn't matter if what you've done is already there in Tchaikovsky or Chopin. As Paul Valéry said, nothing exists that is not similar to something else."

A compositionally fruitful dimension of Silvestrov's rapprochement with the history of music was his embrace of the liturgical tradition of the Eastern Church and of choral music. His first work in an explicitly religious genre was *Requiem for Larissa*, written in 1997-99 after the death of his wife Larissa Bondarenko.

Silvestrov's musical voice matured in its diction – slow, dreamy and, in the words of one scholar, “soporific”; Ukrainian-Australian pianist Alexander Gavrylyuk characterises it as possessing a “haunting intimacy.” It is also melancholy. “If there is no shade of sadness, no breath of sorrow,” Silvestrov said in 2006, “there is no music. Though there can be different kinds of sadness – light or dark.” Intimacy and melancholy imply a love of quietude: “a raised voice retreats into the middle distance. Shouting, exclamations, culminations – all of that disappears like water poured onto sand. You’ve just strained your voice. As in music, literature and poetry, so in politics.” In a similar spirit, he wrote: “Music for me wafts like a draught. Even when you think it has stopped, it is slowly moving.”

For Silvestrov, music was never far from perilous political confession, which, as the decades proceeded, became increasingly strident. In the 1960s his avant-gardism had been legible as a refusal of the authority of the Soviet paradigm of art as “socialist in content, national in form”. In independent Ukraine, threats to recently acquired freedoms compelled him to act politically.

In 2004 he sided with the Orange Revolution and stood with the demonstrators on Independence Square to protest against falsified presidential election results. In 2013-2014 he supported the Euromaidan protests. “Like any creative person I’m by nature an individualist,” he told an interviewer. “But there comes a time when it becomes impossible not to come out [onto Independence Square].” Most recently, in response to Russia’s invasion, he has called for Vladimir Putin to be recognised as “an international terrorist” and “put on the wanted list”.

The explicitness of political gesture and the open patriotism of some of Silvestrov’s compositions of the last decade are, from the standpoint of Westerners unaccustomed to expressions of national sentiment, nothing less than breathtaking. But Silvestrov never abandoned his characteristic tranquillity. *Maidan 2014*, to cite the most telling example, is an a cappella choral work that pays homage to the Euromaidan, composed at the time of Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in Ukraine’s east. Liturgical in its tempo and full of allusion to the musical tradition of the Eastern Churches, it is a cycle of 15 compositions, five of which are different settings

“If there is no shade of sadness, no breath of sorrow,” Silvestrov said in 2006, “there is no music. Though there can be different kinds of sadness – light or dark.”

Page 18.
Ukrainian landscape.
Photo by Mary El

Page 19.
Dimitri Shostakovich.
Photo by Vsevolod Tarasevich



of the poem “Shche ne vmerla Ukrayina” by Pavlo Chubynsky (1839-1884), which became the Ukrainian national anthem. The remaining 10 pieces are an excerpt from the anti-colonial poem “The Caucasus” by Ukraine’s national poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), the Lord’s Prayer and other religious texts, and a concluding lullaby.

“It’s no accident that the symbolic crown and ending of the *Maidan 2014* cycle is a quiet lullaby,” Silvestrov wrote. “I’m neither able nor willing to duplicate the noise of this terrible war. Instead, I want to show how fragile our civilisation is. I try, with my music, to safeguard and preserve a day of peace.” In that day of peace, even if the noise of the terrible war is not replicated, it is remembered – together with the beliefs, values and emotions articulated in the anthem and the prayers that Silvestrov’s cycle quietly amplifies.

As we await Silvestrov’s *Moments of Memory* (VI), we cannot but wonder what, at this moment of war and displacement, this act of remembrance will be and mean.

Memory is also one of the interpretive keys that Ukrainian–Australian pianist Alexander Gavrylyuk brings to bear in this program with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Born in Kharkiv in 1984, Gavrylyuk came to Australia at the age of 13, six years after Ukraine regained its independence. “My happiest memories from my childhood in Ukraine were from the countryside, spending time with my grandmother,” he reminisced when we spoke. “These were seemingly unassuming but very strong memories of being carefree and completely connected with the environment, with nature and the local folkloric culture – folkloric singing, for example, and accordion playing, which my parents did. These memories are very strong and they enable me to see music in quite specific colours.” The location of this idyll was a village near the Russian border called Malyzhyne, which, he explained, “has now been destroyed by the occupiers”.

Gavrylyuk is less nostalgic about the beginnings of his musical education in a system still confined within Soviet pedagogical traditions. The “unforgiving Soviet machine” was a “factory that produced



virtuosi”, he says. “It followed a military approach to music that crushed individuality and personal expression.” It “melted everyone into an impressive reflection of the system, of the school, of the authority behind it.”

Coming to Australia in his early teens was a watershed for Gavrylyuk. “I started to realise what inner freedom really means, and free choice, free inspiration and a free path. That was a huge transition for me.” This juxtaposition of liberty and stricture is what Gavrylyuk emphasises as he discusses the inclusion, in a single concert program, of works as different as George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No.1 in C minor (1933).

“The rhythm, the spaces between the notes in Gershwin is what creates the music: not the notes, but rather the spaces and the poetry and the energy between the notes,” he says. Gershwin’s *Rhapsody* is “completely open music, playful, improvisatory, full of possibility and jazz and individuality – which Shostakovich was fighting for all his life: the idea of the individual which was destroyed by the system, and which he kept bringing back in his music.” Shostakovich’s concerto was written well after his Symphony No.1 (1926), which made him famous, and not long before the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1934), which, initially welcomed by Soviet audiences and critics, was disparaged by Stalin. The dictator’s verdict resulted immediately in the composer’s fall from grace, although he was rehabilitated in 1937.

“Shostakovich is full of edge and irony,” says Gavrylyuk. The concerto was written under a regime that demanded conformity. “It is coded language: smiling through clenched teeth and laughing in the face of the fate that was created by the regime. That’s the type of humour that one gets with this music.” The piece is circus-like, Gavrylyuk observes: it is technically challenging, but it also reflects the feats of ideological contortion required of an artist determined to express a yearning for freedom while in thrall to an autocracy.

No less complex in its ambiguity is the other work by Shostakovich that completes the concert: Chamber Symphony in C minor, Op.110a, an adaptation by Shostakovich’s close associate Rudolf Barshai of the composer’s Quartet No.8, Op.110. Shostakovich composed the quartet in Dresden in July 1960. He had been invited to write the music for Lev Arnshtam’s film, *Five Days, Five Nights*, which was set in that city in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Affected by his visit to Dresden and reflections on the city’s destruction by Allied bombing 15 years earlier and the slaughter and genocide of World War II more generally, he wrote the quartet over three days and dedicated it “in memory of the victims of fascism and war.”



“Gavrylyuk believes in the power of music to address people of the most diverse cultures and backgrounds and sustain them in adversity, to incline them toward virtue and to unite them.”

Page 20.
Alexander Gavrylyuk.
Photo by Marco Borggreve

Page 21.
George Gershwin

Later Shostakovich confided in a letter to his friend, the literary critic Isaak Glikman, that he had conceived of the work as a kind of auto-epitaph – a memorial to himself. He had signalled the work’s autobiographical reference, he wrote, by quoting from his earlier works and by including the motif that was his musical cryptogram: D, E flat, C, B natural or, in German musical notation, DSCH: the initial letters of his given name and surname as written in German: Dmitrij Schostakowitsch. Whatever the psychological motivation of Shostakovich’s quartet, the work remains a tribute to victims of war and of totalitarianism, but also to himself as a victim of the system in which he was trapped.

My conversation with Gavrylyuk returns to the topic of the current war. “Ukraine is fighting for its identity, for its sovereignty, its dignity and ultimately for its right to exist on its own terms,” the virtuoso says. “In a way, that was the struggle I was referring to when I spoke about individuality – about how Shostakovich promotes this idea in the face of suppression. I’m in awe of the musicians in Ukraine – the musicians and artists who continue to produce art and to play, showing incredible resilience; those sounds and those expressions of art are really acts of resilience. I’m reminded of Shostakovich gathering audiences in [besieged] Leningrad. Now Ukrainians are doing the same in concert halls in defiance of Russian aggression. Which is darkly ironic.”

Gavrylyuk believes in the power of music to address people of the most diverse cultures and backgrounds and sustain them in adversity, to incline them toward virtue and to unite them. The task of the musician, he says, is to become the selfless intermediary who enables music to perform its ennobling and uplifting mission. “I try to dissolve in the natural breath and heartbeat of the music. I try to erase myself, but still to be present in order to be the connecting point between the musical idea and the audience – the binding force, so to speak. ... I get the same kind of return energy from audiences of every culture, every religion, every form of thought. ... I think [music] is the strongest diplomatic tool we have.”

Marko Pavlyshyn is an Emeritus Professor of Ukrainian Studies at Monash University, where he had charge of the Ukrainian language and culture program from 1983 to 2019. His scholarly specialisation is modern and contemporary Ukrainian literature. His publications include the *Ukrainian Literature: A Wartime Guide for Anglophone Readers* (Cambridge University Press, 2025), the books *Literature, Nation and Modernity* (2013), *Olha Kobylianska: Interpretations* (2008) and *Canon and Iconostasis* (1997) and many scholarly articles and chapters. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and an International Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

Kyiv, Ukraine.
Photo by Glib Albovsky



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Richard Tognetti

Artistic Director
& Lead Violin



Richard Tognetti is Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

Richard began his studies in his home town of Wollongong with William Primrose, then with Alice Waten at the Sydney Conservatorium, and Igor Ozim at the Bern Conservatory, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he led several performances with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and that November was appointed as the Orchestra's lead violin and, subsequently, Artistic Director.

Richard performs on period, modern and electric instruments and his numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. As director or soloist, Richard has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music, Slovene Philharmonic Orchestra, Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Nordic Chamber Orchestra and all the major Australian symphony orchestras. Richard performed the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutoslawski's Partita. In November 2016, he became the Barbican Centre's first Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall in London.

Richard created the Huntington Festival in Mudgee, New South Wales and was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

Richard's arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. He curated and co-composed the scores for the ACO's documentary films *Musica Surfica*, *The Glide*, *The Reef* and *The Crowd & I*, and co-composed the scores for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* and Tom Carroll's film *Storm Surfers*. Richard collaborated with director Jennifer Peedom and *Stranger Than Fiction* to create the award-winning films *Mountain*, which went on to become the highest-grossing homegrown documentary in Australian cinemas, and *River*, which won Best Soundtrack at the ARIA, AACTA and APRA awards.

His recordings have received accolades around the world, and he is the recipient of seven ARIA awards, including three consecutive wins for his recordings of Bach's violin works.

Richard was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010. He holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. In 2017 he was awarded the JC Williamson Award for longstanding service to the live performance industry. He performs on a 1741–44 Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by the ACO.

Alexander Gavrylyuk

Piano

A stunningly virtuosic pianist, Alexander is internationally recognised for his electrifying and poetic performances. His performance of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No.3 at the BBC Proms was described as "revelatory" by *The Times* and "electrifying" by *Limelight*. Alexander was Artist-in-Residence at Wigmore Hall for the 23/24 season.

Highlights of the 2024-25 season include concerto debuts with Hamburger Symphoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liege, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Estonian National Symphony, Phil Zuid, Enescu Philharmonic and Taiwan National Symphony, as well as return visits to Rotterdam Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony and New Zealand Symphony. Recent highlights also include NDR Hannover, Bournemouth Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony and São Paulo Symphony. This season also sees a return to the Concertgebouw Master Pianists Series and a solo recital debut at Philharmonie Luxembourg, as well as recitals throughout Australia and the UK.

Alexander collaborates regularly with conductors including Rafael Payare, Thomas Søndergård, Kirill Karabits, Edward Gardner, Sir Donald Runnicles, Juraj Valčuha and Gustavo Gimeno.



Born in Ukraine in 1984 and holding Australian citizenship, Alexander began his piano studies at the age of seven and gave his first concerto performance when he was nine years old. At the age of 13, Alexander moved to Sydney where he lived until 2006. He won First Prize and Gold Medal at the Horowitz International Piano Competition (1999), First Prize at the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition (2000), and Gold Medal at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition (2005).

As a recitalist Alexander has performed at the Musikverein in Vienna, Tonhalle Zurich, Victoria Hall Geneva, Southbank Centre's International Piano Series, Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Master Pianists Series, Suntory Hall, Tokyo Opera City Hall, Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, Cologne Philharmonic, Tokyo City Concert Hall, San Francisco, City Recital Hall in Sydney and Melbourne Recital Centre. Gavrylyuk has appeared at many of the world's foremost festivals, including the Hollywood Bowl, Bravo! Vail Colorado, Mostly Mozart, the Ruhr Festival and the Kissinger Sommer International Music Festival. Alexander is currently Artist in Residence at Chautauqua Institution.

David Elton

Trumpet



Principal Trumpet of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, David Elton enjoys a performance career that has seen him hold positions with many of Australia's and the world's leading orchestras. Most recently, David was Principal Trumpet of the London Symphony Orchestra (2017-2021) under the baton of Chief Conductor Sir Simon Rattle.

David also performs regularly as a guest Principal Trumpet with leading international orchestras, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. He frequently performs as part of the Australian World Orchestra.

As a soloist, he has performed concertos with the London Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony

Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He has performed and recorded the Trumpet Concerto (2020) by Andrew Batterham and gave the world premiere of the Trumpet Concerto (2007) by James Ledger with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

As an educator, David has served on the faculties of many of Australia's tertiary institutions. He is currently Visiting Professor of Trumpet at the Royal College of Music in London and is currently on the faculties of both the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne and the Sydney Conservatorium.

David is proud to be a Yamaha artist.

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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

Ian Lansdown

Ian Lansdown first encountered the ACO thirty years ago and has been a subscriber ever since.

“My association with the ACO began when I met Richard Tognetti at the Huntington Music Festival, 30 years ago,” Ian Lansdown, a long-time Subscriber and supporter of the ACO says.

“It was unique in the world of music festivals, in terms of its location in the bottling room of the winery – which had fabulous acoustics, incidentally – and with its concerts and performers, meals, drinks and talks taking place all together on the same site for five days,” he reflects.

Meeting Artistic Director Richard Tognetti at the festival, Ian’s impression was of someone “always vigorous, inventive, thoughtful, and clever.” He calls Richard “a terrific entrepreneur”.

Richard’s appointment as Artistic Director cemented Ian’s commitment to the Orchestra, and marks the year he became a Subscriber. “I had previously been a subscriber to a couple of other orchestras and concert series,” Ian confesses, “but Richard brought new ideas and new vibrant flavours to my classical music world.”

Ian’s association with Richard and the Orchestra deepened when they toured to Japan. “When we lived in Japan, the ACO visited on tour and we hosted Richard to stay in our apartment with us in Tokyo,” Ian remembers. “Richard was complaining that Tokyo hotel rooms were not big enough to rehearse in!” he laughs.

Looking forward to “a fabulous chance to hear Richard up close”, Ian soon discovered the realities of instrumental practise. “We heard one particular chord practised a zillion times, and watched Richard compose soundlessly on his computer!”



“The ACO is so dynamic,” Ian says, reflecting on many years of performances by the Orchestra. His love of Richard’s work, and of the ACO’s energetic style, led to Ian supporting the Orchestra financially, and he became an ACO Medici Patron sponsoring the chairs of several players over the years, initially of violinist Lorna Cumming, then violist Nicole Divall and until recently, violinist Ike See.

In the time-honoured fashion of the great Medici family, the ACO’s Medici Patrons support individual players’ Chairs and assist the Orchestra in attracting and retaining musicians of the highest calibre.

Ian is also an ACO Instrument Fund investor, which enables ACO musicians to perform on stunning Golden Age instruments.

As well as the Orchestra’s dynamism, its programming is what keeps Ian coming back.

“It’s so innovative,” he enthuses. “They’re not afraid to put unexpected things together, and they seem to step outside the set formula other orchestras rely on.”

After 30 years, Ian’s still attending the ACO’s concerts in 2025, the Orchestra’s 50th anniversary year, and he hasn’t missed a tour yet.

Age: 86

Subscriber for: 30 years

Date of first ACO concert: 1993

Favourite ACO concert: Huntington Music Festival

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