



YUJA WANG

REACH FOR THE CROWN



THE LAND-DWELLER



Australian Chamber Orchestra

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



MOUNTAIN

Directed by Richard Tognetti

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



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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.

Cover.
Milford Sound, New Zealand.
Photo by Joey Schusler

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#ACO25Season



@AustralianChamberOrchestra

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WELCOME

Welcome to *Mountain*, one of Richard Tognetti's most enduring and ambitious creations to date.

We are delighted to bring back this cinematic and musical odyssey for a limited run of gala performances across the country, as we continue to celebrate the Orchestra's 50th anniversary year.

Created in collaboration between Richard and award-winning filmmaker Jennifer Peedom, *Mountain* premiered in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall in 2017 as part of the Sydney Film Festival and was immediately met with critical and popular acclaim. In the years since, we have performed it around the country and the world, with sell-out performances in London's Barbican Centre and, most recently, Poland's National Forum of Music earlier in the year.

On behalf of the ACO, I thank the individuals within the *Mountain* Producers' Syndicate. Their generous support was instrumental in bringing *Mountain* to life both for its world premiere in 2017, and for this remounted tour.

We continue our 50th anniversary celebrations next month with *Cocteau's Circle*, a concert that will take audiences back in time to the glittering world of 1920s Paris. Directed by Richard and created in collaboration with Circa's Yaron Lifschitz and featuring the talents of cabaret star Le Gateau Chocolat and soprano Chloe Lankshear, it promises to be an unmissable event full of storytelling, song and surprise. If you haven't already, I urge you to secure your tickets now to what promises to be a sparkling season highlight.

Thank you for joining us for this special gala performance.



Richard Evans AM
Managing Director



Wesfarmers Arts



Australian Chamber Orchestra & Wesfarmers Arts
Bringing People & Music Together

Upcoming concerts and the latest announcements.

Latest News
ACO 2026

We are delighted that single tickets and Full and Flexi Subscriptions to our 2026 Season are now on sale.

Our 2026 National Concert Season features majestic symphonies of the 18th and 19th centuries through to Romantic masterworks and trailblazing new music from the most captivating composers of today. It's a season where you'll discover, and rediscover, some of the greatest music ever written.

ACO Subscribers can enjoy a wide range of benefits throughout the season including saving up to 35% off the cost of single ticket prices, free and easy ticket exchanges and access to exclusive subscriber offers and events.

We invite you to join us on the adventure.

Special Events
Celebrating the Australian Chamber Orchestra

21 NOV
Sydney Opera House

On 21 November 1975, a group of pioneering musicians walked out onto the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall stage and the Australian Chamber Orchestra was born.

Fifty years to the day, Richard Tognetti and the ACO will walk out onto that same stage to pay homage to the past and to celebrate a bright and ambitious future.

From beloved classics that capture the ACO's thrilling dynamism and imaginative spirit, to our groundbreaking film collaborations and guest appearances across music, film and dance, this concert showcases why the ACO is one of the most distinct, inventive and renowned ensembles on the world stage today.

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 Bœuf sur le toit* as well as Cocteau's avant-garde poetry.

On Tour
Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody

5-18 FEB
National Tour

In this joyful 2026 Season opener directed by Richard Tognetti and featuring the singular talents of ever-adventurous pianist Dejan Lazic as soloist, the ACO explores the power of music to take us to the edge of what is known... and beyond. Come with us to explore music including Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* alongside a new work from Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer John Luther Adams, *Horizon*, that explores the extremes of the Australian landscape.

ACO On The Pier
ACO Up Close: Le Gateau Chocolat in Raw Cacao

25 NOV

Stepping aside from their mainstage show with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Le Gateau Chocolat comes at us at his most delicious 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?

Carols On The Pier

18-22 DEC

Deck the halls and celebrate the magic of Christmas with our brand-new family concert at ACO On The Pier. Featuring ACO Families musicians alongside the enchanting voices of Luminescence Chamber Singers, *Carols On The Pier* combines the timeless joy of Christmas carols with the beauty of world-class classical music.

1.
ACO 2026 Season



2.
Le Gateau Chocolat

3.
Dejan Lazic

4.
Carols On The Pier



MOUNTAIN

A cinematic and musical odyssey

Richard Tognetti Director and Violin

Tamara-Anna Cislowska Piano

Satu Vänskä Violin and Voice

Helena Rathbone Violin

Ike See Violin

Timo-Veikko Valve Cello

Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI	Prelude
TOGNETTI	Majesty
TOGNETTI	Sublime Horror
TOGNETTI	Gods and Monsters
PETER SCULTHORPE	Djilile, for strings*
FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN	Prelude in F-sharp major, Op.28, No.13*
EDVARD GRIEG	Holberg Suite, Op.40: I. Praeludium
SCULTHORPE	Djilile, for piano and strings*
ANTONIO VIVALDI	Concerto for Four Violins and Cello in B minor, RV580: I. Allegro
VIVALDI	Winter from The Four Seasons, RV297: I. Allegro non molto
VIVALDI	Concerto for Four Violins and Cello in B minor, RV580: II. Larghetto*
VIVALDI	Concerto for Four Violins and Cello in B minor, RV580: III. Allegro
VIVALDI	Summer from The Four Seasons, RV315: III. Presto
ARVO PÄRT	Für Alina
TOGNETTI	Flying
TOGNETTI	Madness Bites
TOGNETTI	On High
PÄRT	Fratres*
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN	Violin Concerto in D major, Op.61: II. Larghetto†
TOGNETTI	A Final Bridge
BEETHOVEN	Piano Concerto No.5 in E-flat major, Op.73 "Emperor": II. Adagio un poco moto

* This work or movement is abridged during this performance.

† "Winter Snowfall" footage presented alongside the Beethoven Violin Concerto is used under license from Shutterstock.com

The Concert will last approximately one hour and 20 minutes, with no interval.

The Australian Chamber Orchestra reserves the right to alter scheduled artists and programs as necessary.

CREDITS

Screen Australia

and the

Australian Chamber Orchestra

present

A Stranger Than Fiction Films Production

in association with

Camp 4 Collective and Sherpas Cinema

WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY	Jennifer Peedom
WRITTEN BY	Robert Macfarlane
PRODUCED BY	Jo-anne McGowan
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Paul Wiegard, David Gross, Stephen Boyle, Martyn Myer AO
MUSICAL DIRECTOR AND COMPOSER	Richard Tognetti
EDITORS	Christian Gazal, Scott Gray ASE
SOUND DESIGN	David White
SOUND MIXING	Robert Mackenzie
PRINCIPAL CINEMATOGRAPHY	Renan Ozturk
MUSIC EDITOR AND MUSIC SUPERVISOR	Joseph Nizeti
NARRATED BY	Willem Dafoe

LIVE IN CONCERT PRODUCTION

STAGING DIRECTOR	Nigel Jamieson
LIGHTING DESIGN	Damien Cooper
LIGHTING SUPERVISOR	Joe Cox
AUDIO DESIGN	Bob Scott
AUDIO TECHNICIAN	Annika Unsen
VIDEO SYSTEMS DESIGN	Kevan Atkins
MUSIC TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANT	Charles Westhoff

ACO GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



MOUNTAIN GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



FILM PARTNERS



ACO MOUNTAIN PRODUCERS' SYNDICATE

The Australian Chamber Orchestra would like to thank the following people
for their generous support of *Mountain*:

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	Martyn Myer AO
MAJOR PRODUCERS	Janet Holmes à Court AC Warwick & Ann Johnson
PRODUCERS	Richard Caldwell Warren & Linda Coli Anna Dudek & Brad Banducci Wendy Edwards David Friedlander The late Tony Gill & Camilla Gill John & Lisa Kench Charlie & Olivia Lanchester Rob & Nancy Pallin Andrew & Andrea Roberts The late Peter Shorthouse & Victoria Shorthouse Alden Toevs & Judi Wolf
SUPPORTERS	Andrew Abercrombie Joanna Baevski Ann Gamble Myer Gilbert George Charles & Cornelia Goode Foundation Charles & Elizabeth Goodyear Phil & Rosie Harkness Peter & Janette Kendall Andy Myer AM & Kerry Gardner AM Sid & Fiona Myer Allan Myers AC The Penn Foundation Peppertree Foundation The Rossi Foundation Shaker & Diana Mark Stanbridge Kim Williams AM Peter Yates AM & Susan Yates



MUSICIANS ON STAGE

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



Satu Vänskä
Principal Violin and Voice

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



Aiko Goto
Violin

Aiko plays her own French violin by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. 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.



Ike See
Violin

Ike plays his own 2021 Zygmuntowicz violin.



Tim Yu
Violin

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



Caroline Hopson
Violin

Caroline plays her own 1955 A.E. Smith violin.



Katherine Lukey
Violin

Katherine appears courtesy of Opera Australia Orchestra. Katherine performs on her own modern Italian violin by Gaetano Gadda, ca.1940/50.



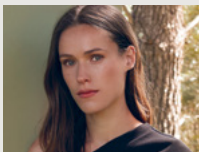
Maja Savnik
Violin

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.



Nathan Greentree
Viola

Nathan plays his own viola made in 2008 by New York-based maker Stefan Valcuha.



Timo-Veikko Valve
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.



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 Ms Julie Steiner AM & Prof 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.



Lily Bryant
Flute

Lily appears courtesy of Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.



Dean Newcomb
Clarinet

Dean appears courtesy of Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.



Christopher Tingay
Clarinet

Christopher appears courtesy of Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



Ben Hoadley
Bassoon



Laura Brown
Bassoon



Nicolas Fleury
Horn

Nicolas appears courtesy of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



Dorée Dixon
Horn



Bree van Reyk
Percussion

Bree appears courtesy of Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Guest Musician



*To those who are enthralled by mountains,
their wonder is beyond all dispute. To those
who are not, their allure is a kind of madness.*

*What is this strange force that draws us
upwards – this siren-song of the summit?*

*Only three centuries ago, setting out to climb
a mountain would have been considered an
act of lunacy.*

*The idea scarcely existed that wild
landscapes might hold any sort of attraction.
Mountains were places of peril, not beauty.
An upper world to be shunned, not sought out.*

*How then have mountains now come to hold
us spellbound, drawing us into their dominion
... often at the cost of our lives?*

*The mountains we climb, are not made only of
rock and ice, but also of dreams, and desire.*

*The mountains we climb, are mountains of
the mind.*

Robert Macfarlane

Mount Everest.
Photo by Jennifer Peedom



From Jennifer Peedom
*Director, **Mountain***

Richard Tognetti approached me with the idea of this collaboration. The idea of expressing musically and visually, the nature of human relationships with mountains was an opportunity that immediately excited me, as did the chance to work with this incredible orchestra that I had been a fan of for many years.

The creative challenge was creating something that married music, images and words, not only for live performance but also as a standalone film. Filmmaking is always about collaboration but I knew that in this case, the collaboration was the most important aspect of the project. And so it has proved.

Our process was very organic from the start. Richard had a very visceral reaction to Renan Ozturk's amazing cinematography and started responding musically to those ideas. Meanwhile, I would listen and respond to existing ACO recordings in the edit, and craft images around those masterpieces. In other cases, Richard and I would talk about what we were trying to express in a scene, and he would write something bespoke.

Robert Macfarlane's words were then an essential part in bringing the whole narrative together. This was completed by Willem Dafoe's brilliant performance of the text.

One of the interesting revelations in this process was that Richard and I would watch the same sequence of images, yet respond to them in very different ways. Where I'd see majesty and beauty, Richard would see horror and terror. I believe that this has ultimately made the film a more interesting, complex exploration of our relationships to mountains. The fact that Richard was able to somehow incorporate both these elements into his wonderful score was one of the great joys of this collaboration.

From Richard Tognetti
*Musical Director, **Mountain***

Being in a pitch-dark room can make your thoughts brighter, and being alone atop a mountain can bring you closer to humanity.

Mountain draws you into this world. Through the stunning images curated by Jen Peedom, and for the most part shot by Renan Ozturk, the abstraction of music underscores and captivates, opening a portal through which we concoct an experience that beckons the viewer to the majesty and horror that is the allure and portent of mountains.

Whether it be the goons' rodeo of going downhill at speed (in wing suits or skis or whatever your poison) or ascending rock-faces in slow-mo, that only a generation ago seemed unassailable, the original music attempts to inhabit this physical and geographical drama. The Beethoven, on the other hand, transcends it all.

Renan, the cinematographer for *Mountain*, isn't just a man with a camera; he lives in actuality on the rock face, as a fellow climber with the likes of Alex Honnold – a free solo climber who has scaled the likes of El Capitan. I trust you are sitting down when you're reading this: free soloing is the art of climbing with no ropes or aids of any kind.

Mountain attempts to bring you into these spaces that sane people would not otherwise dwell.

Ama Dablam, Nepal.
Photo by Renan Ozturk

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Your five-minute read before lights down.

Written by Bernard Rofe

Mountain is conceived, first and foremost, as a concert film in which live musical performance and moving image play equal parts in conveying the film's purpose. Just as Renan Ozturk's glorious cinematography, shot on all the world's continents, conjures a sense of wonder and awe under the inspired direction of Jennifer Peedom, so too does the music of *Mountain*. The musical performance leads the listener through a plethora of musical styles and genres from the Baroque to the contemporary, and on a journey through some of the world's most unrelenting environments.

The film opens with a sequence of original works composed especially for the film by Richard Tognetti. Opening with *Prelude*, we witness a serene yet terrifying shot of a lone climber who appears, at first, as little more than a red fleck against the imposing vertical face of a mountain. Against this scene, Tognetti sets a lone piano above an eery string tremolo, fragile and human in the face of great natural danger. Tognetti gradually piles on the tension with layered strings and a ticking col legno such that the sight of this climber in a death-defying act becomes almost unbearable.

In *Majesty*, the focus shifts from the lone human climber to those massive natural structures being scaled. The delicate solo piano of *Prelude* gives way to Tognetti's Bartók-inspired violin solo to imply something almost sinister. With rippling piano arpeggios, ominous horn calls, distorted strings and thumping timpani, *Majesty* turns the eery calm of the film's opening on its head, highlighting the terror that these beautiful structures can instil in those hoping to scale them.

It is this dichotomy, between the sublime and the horrific, that will come up time and time again in *Mountain*. *Sublime Horror*, with its intoxicating string chorales and resonating folk calls ('Call of the Seals') recorded by the late Danny Spooner, marries these two seemingly conflicting worlds together as we arrive at the film's title.

The central portion of the film explores humankind's relationship with mountains, from those who live in their shadow, to those who seek to scale them, and those who exploit them for recreation and death-defying stunts. After *Gods and Monsters*, we hear a long passage of works from the classical canon, beginning with Peter Sculthorpe's *Djilile*. Sculthorpe's music, which occurs twice in the film, uses the Aboriginal melody *Djilile* (which translates as 'whistling duck on a billabong'). Its fusion of the contemporary and the ancient is the perfect accompaniment to the rituals that make up the everyday lives of those who live at the foot of the Nepalese peaks.



In total contrast to the earthy sounds of *Djilile*, Chopin's *Prelude* in F-sharp major and the first movement of Edvard Grieg's *Holberg Suite* accompany archival footage of the European visitors to these peaks. Chopin's solo piano music, written for intimate performance in comfortable chamber settings, is especially anachronistic. Grieg's *Holberg Suite*, composed to celebrate the bicentenary of Norwegian writer Ludvig Holberg, is an homage to the era of a writer whose literary status is, in Scandinavian countries, akin to Shakespeare. Against this grainy footage, these two works bring a profound sense of nostalgic naivety in a hostile environment that is far from the warm salons of Poland or Norway.

Five continuous movements of Vivaldi constitute the film's most dynamic sequence, a testament to the composer's constant ability to thrill. Aerial shots of snowboarders and skiers accompany the Concerto for Four Violins & Cello in B minor, a dance on screen and stage as soloists compete for the spotlight and ski tracks intertwine. Movements from *The Four Seasons* complete the sequence: *Winter* conjures the harshness of the cold and snow through icy string writing, musical depictions of running and stomping to keep warm, and a solo violin whose repeated notes evoke the chattering of teeth. *Summer*, conceived by Vivaldi as a summer storm, accompanies athletic ski jumpers performing exhilarating stunts.

After the thrills of the Baroque, we return to more contemporary fare. First, with the stasis of Arvo Pärt's *Für Alina*, creating a sense of meditational zen as slackline walkers balance atop American canyons, then with the dreamlike calm of Tognetti's *Flying* as a wingsuiter leaps from a cliff face, set to the ethereal vocals of Satu Vänskä accompanied by tender piano octaves. In total contrast, *Madness Bites* sees these stunts from the opposite perspective – not as a peaceful state of release but as arrogant defiance, exemplified with grungy rock drums and mesmerising keyboard patterns. While mountains are, for some, fodder for thrill junkies and risk takers, mountains remain lethal and ever changing. *On High* and *Fratres*, with their sequences of Nepalese sherpas and deadly glowing lava, serve as a reminder of the reverence mountains must still command.

The film closes with two concerto movements by Ludwig van Beethoven. First, the *Larghetto* from his only Violin Concerto – conveying the transcendent beauty that mountains will always have, and then, after a *Final Bridge*, the *Adagio* from the *Emperor Concerto* – conveying the nobility of these massive natural structures, with delicate music that still seems as though it was touched by the hand of a giant.

Utah.
Photo by Joey Schusler

The creative collaboration that led to
the making of *Mountain*.

WHEN SCREEN MEETS SOUND

Written by Jane Albert

“I have this attitude that sometimes you hear better by seeing, and sometimes you see better by hearing,” says Australian Chamber Orchestra Artistic Director and Lead Violin Richard Tognetti. “That’s synaesthesia, and it’s not like it denudes the musical process at all, although some purists would argue that it does.”

It may come as a surprise to hear this statement from someone whose life has been so thoroughly immersed in music since he first picked up a violin, aged four.

But to see *Mountain* is to understand implicitly where Tognetti is coming from. The astonishing, awe-inspiring, fear-inciting and consistently majestic cinematography is only enhanced by the soundscape that moves and inspires you one moment, only to bring you to tears the next; the visuals leading you to hear the music in a way you never have before.

Here *Mountain* is quite unusual: a collaborative film with no conventional characters or story that gives the music and cinematography equal billing.

“It’s a fairly new form of expression, having the orchestra play live as part of a film,” explains Tognetti. “Plenty of orchestras play the scores of movies with the film projected behind them, but having the orchestra play the soundtrack to the film that they have actually been involved in creating is quite different.”

The idea for the feature documentary was Tognetti’s, after he was repeatedly urged to explore a film project on mountains and skiing by enthusiastic viewers of his 2013 surf film *The Reef* that combined stunning footage of surfing, the ocean and surrounding landscape with an original live score ranging from Ligeti and Beethoven to Alice in Chains. Despite being an avid skier, Tognetti was initially reluctant, envisaging a skiing film that couldn’t possibly add anything new to the genre.

His interest was piqued, however, after ACO cellist Julian Thompson suggested he watch some footage from his old friend, BAFTA award-nominated filmmaker and experienced mountaineer, Jennifer Peedom.

Tognetti did just that, beginning with Peedom’s gripping documentary *Solo* about Australian adventurer Andrew McAuley’s – ultimately doomed – attempt to kayak solo from Australia to New Zealand. The pair met in 2013 to discuss Tognetti’s evolving idea for a documentary that explored the intoxicating allure of mountains, humans’ interactions with them and our obsession and often futile attempts to conquer them, accompanied by a live soundscape that would enhance the footage and prompt audiences to view mountains in a new light.

Peedom was intrigued, particularly as someone who understood well the irresistible pull of mountaineering.



“The pair met in 2013 to discuss Tognetti’s evolving idea for a documentary that explored the intoxicating allure of mountains.”

Page 18-19.
Richard Tognetti directing *Mountain*.
Photo by Maria Boyadgis

Page 20.
Satu Vänskä performing in *Mountain*.
Photo by Maria Boyadgis

Page 21.
The premiere of *Mountain* in the Sydney Opera House in 2017.
Photo by Maria Boyadgis





“When I’m in the mountains I feel different, I feel alive,” she says. “Part of what *Mountain* is about and the reason I wanted to make it is I have had some insight into that world, and I can see part of what is so alluring to those climbers, and also what’s so addictive.”

It was while she was in the Himalayas shooting *Sherpa*, her feature documentary that captured the devastating 2014 avalanche that killed 16 Sherpa climbers, and working with renowned US-Turkish climber and Emmy award-winning cinematographer Renan Ozturk that *Mountain* began to take shape. Ozturk had a vast library of footage he’d shot in mountain ranges across the world, much of it unseen, and was keen to collaborate on bringing to life the allure, danger and obsession mountains have always held for humankind, himself included.

“Mountains changed my life and pretty much shaped everything I did toward them. They brought me onto this strange career path and lifestyle where I spend part of my year making films about them and the other part of my year pushing my limits in the mountains,” Ozturk says. “Working with Richard and the Australian Chamber Orchestra is the most unique part of this collaboration, the fact it has a live score transforms the way we see a lot of this footage.”

The final piece of the puzzle was a loose narration, penned by best-selling *Mountains of the Mind*’s British author Robert Macfarlane and voiced by Hollywood actor Willem Dafoe.

“When I’m in the mountains I feel different, I feel alive.”

The result was more than 2000 hours of footage shot in 15 countries edited into a 70-minute feature documentary that explores humankind’s history with mountain worship, the beginnings of mountaineering and the boundary-pushing, often fatal attraction adrenaline junkies have to mountains today, from free climbing (no ropes) to wing suiting, heli-skiing and para-biking.

Inseparable from it all is the score. And here the creative process proved both unique and challenging, for both Tognetti and Peedom. Not only did they have different reactions to certain vertiginous footage – where Peedom saw beauty Tognetti saw horror, meaning musical concepts differed – but *Mountain* was a true collaboration.

Rather than the customary practice of choosing music to accompany the film, it was often beholden on Peedom to craft images around the music.

“Collaborating with a musician was a totally different way of making the film. It meant I had to approach it in an entirely different way, the collaboration was the point, so I said ‘OK, what are the rules of engagement?’” says Peedom who is used to calling the shots but here was alerted to certain composers whose music she couldn’t cut, while other musical passages were to be kept free of narration. Similarly, if Tognetti’s musical choice failed to resonate with Peedom, it would go.

“Shaping the score to *Mountain* took a long time,” said Tognetti, who would source, or compose music that would express what the scene was seeking to achieve. “It is incredibly hard to use pre-existing music and make it fit a unique film. So with the music by Beethoven, Chopin, Grieg, Sculthorpe, etc., I would give Jen the music to craft the film around what she wanted. It’s a very different process to the original compositions where the music is crafted around the imagery.

“With the original music that is included in *Mountain*, that was a real collaboration with Jen. She would tell me what she was trying to express, and what the scene in the movie meant, and then I would try and come up with the musical equivalent. And the result is that some of the compositions are filmic and some of them are more like dreamscapes.”

Mountain premiered at the Sydney Opera House in 2017 and was an immediate success, enjoying a sell-out national tour, with the film going on to become the highest-grossing Australian documentary in box office history. It has since had a cinema release in more than 26 countries, while the ACO has toured the live performance internationally including a sold-out performance at London’s Barbican Centre.

Today, both Peedom and Tognetti continue to be buoyed by the fact their film still reaches new audiences, across all artforms.

“One of the things I’m proud of with this project is it’s really reached, from the orchestra-going audiences to normal cinema-going audiences,” says Peedom. “It’s totally different audiences seeing the same film in slightly different ways.”

Jane Albert is an author and journalist specialising in the arts. She is a regular contributor to the *Weekend Australian*, *Limelight*, *Wish Magazine*, *Good Weekend* and *Broadsheet* (Sydney).

“Not only did they have different reactions to certain vertiginous footage – where Peedom saw beauty Tognetti saw horror, meaning musical concepts differed – but *Mountain* was a true collaboration.”

Page 22.
Willem Dafoe, Jennifer Peedom and Richard Tognetti at the 2017 *Mountain* premiere.
Photo by Maria Boyadgis

Page 23.
Richard Tognetti performing at the 2017 *Mountain* premiere.
Photo by Maria Boyadgis.



Richard Tognetti Artistic Director

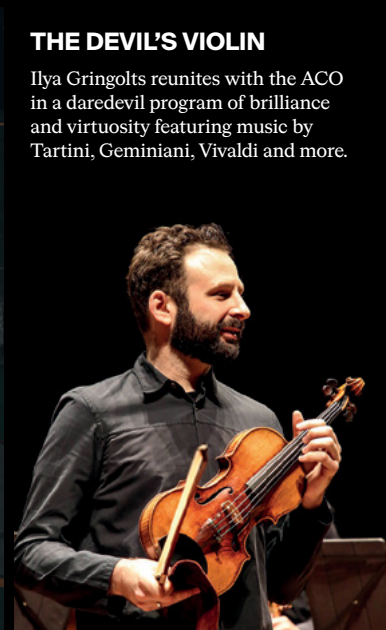
2026 NATIONAL CONCERT SEASON

Uncompromising. Adventurous. Always in motion



RACHMANINOFF'S RHAPSODY

A dazzling musical revelation featuring Rachmaninoff's Romantic masterpiece, *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and the world premiere of John Luther Adams' *Horizon*.



THE DEVIL'S VIOLIN

Ilya Gringolts reunites with the ACO in a daredevil program of brilliance and virtuosity featuring music by Tartini, Geminiani, Vivaldi and more.



FROM WINTER'S STILLNESS

Richard Tognetti directs an extraordinary collaboration with vocal phenomenon Trio Mediæval and jazz trumpeter Arve Henriksen featuring ancient hymns of Northern Europe through to Sigur Rós and Hildur Guðnadóttir.



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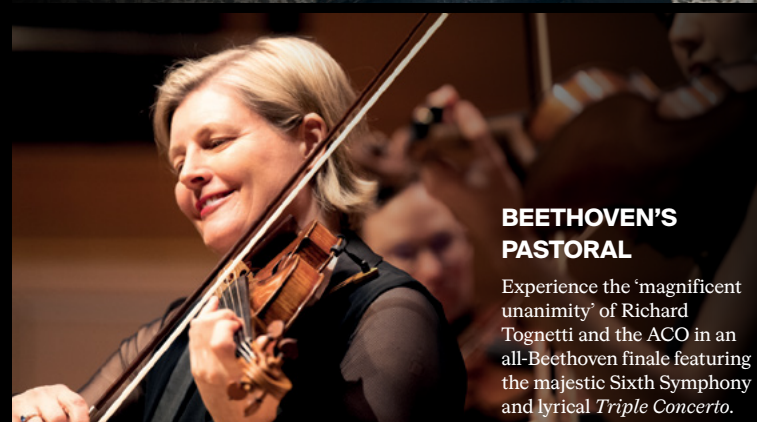
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Richard Tognetti

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.

Jennifer Peedom

Film Director



Jennifer Peedom is an Australian director known for visually striking, human-centred documentaries about landscapes and the communities connected to them. Her breakthrough feature, *Sherpa* (2015), reframed the Everest story through the Sherpa community in the wake of the 2014 ice-serac disaster, earning wide acclaim for its access and clarity of purpose.

Her first collaboration with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) was *Mountain* (2017), created with writer Robert Macfarlane and narrated by Willem Dafoe – a cinematic essay presented both in cinemas and in live performance. Following the ACO's national tour and a simultaneous theatrical release, it became the highest-grossing Australian documentary of all time. The collaboration with the ACO, Macfarlane and Dafoe continued with *River* (2021), a meditation on the power and fragility of the world's waterways.

Her most recent film, *Deeper* (2025), follows Australian of the Year Dr Richard "Harry" Harris – of Thai Cave Rescue renown – on his most dangerous adventure yet. Earlier credits include *Miracle on Everest* and *Solo*, reflecting a long-standing interest in endurance, risk and consequence.

Her films have screened at major festivals and received multiple Australian Academy Awards, as well as international recognition including a Grierson Award and a BAFTA nomination.

Jennifer is currently in post-production on her first narrative feature, *Tenzing*, told from Tenzing Norgay's perspective on the 1953 Everest ascent, starring Genden Phunsok as Tenzing, Tom Hiddleston as Edmund Hillary, and Willem Dafoe as John Hunt. Based in Australia, she runs the production company Stranger Than Fiction Films with co-founder Jo-anne McGowan.

Tamara-Anna Cislowska

Piano



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

Tamara has performed recitals at London's Purcell Room, the Kleine Zaal of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and New York's Frick Collection, and as soloist with the London Philharmonic, Puerto Rico Symphony, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and all major Australasian symphony orchestras.

Recent highlights include touring with CIRCA for New York's White Light Festival at the Lincoln Center, and the world premiere of Elena Kats-Chernin's Piano Concerto No.3, *Lebewohl* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra – now available on her new album, *Ancient Letters* (ABC Classic), recorded with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra – concerto engagements with the Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, and as librettist and pianist for the sold-out Sydney Opera House world premiere of *Human Waves*, commissioned by Sydney Philharmonia Choirs for its Centenary

Celebrations, with music by Kats-Chernin, with the premiere of two new verses by River City Voices in 2025. In the current season, Tamara returns as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony, with the Guizhou Chinese Orchestra, and tours nationally with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

With several million streams annually on Spotify alone and ten ARIA no.1 albums for ABC Classic, Deutsche Grammophon and Naxos, Tamara is undoubtedly one of Australia's most globally recognised pianists in classical music today. Presenting for ABC Classic in her weekly program, 'Duet', Tamara continues to earn praise from audiences and critics alike, with her latest chart-topping album, of performances drawn from the show, nominated for 'Best Classical Album' in the 2022 ARIA Awards.

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.





Matterhorn.
Photo by Renan Ozturk

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Mountain performance at the Barbican, London in 2018.
Photo by Nic Walker

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We would like to thank the following people who have supported the ACO's home at Pier 2/3 in the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct with a donation to our Capital Campaign. For more information or to discuss making a donation or dedicating a seat, please contact Lillian Armitage, Head of Major Gifts & Bequests on (02) 8274 3827.

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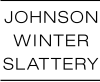
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