

**FROM BACH TO BRYCE DESSNER**  
**AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY WITH A EUROPEAN TOUR**  
**AMSTERDAM, WROCŁAW, STUTTGART & LONDON,**  
**MARCH 2025**



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*“An orchestra that, by any standards, is one of the wonders of the musical world today...If there’s a better chamber orchestra in the world today, I haven’t heard it.”* The Guardian.

One of the most dynamic and inventive chamber orchestras in the world, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, today announced details of its 2025 European tour. The ACO will visit Amsterdam, Wrocław, Stuttgart and London in March and with typically adventurous programmes that go from Bach to Bryce Dessner. This includes a performance of the ACO’s cinematic collaboration with award-winning film director Jennifer Peedom, *Mountain* (the highest-grossing homegrown documentary in Australian cinema) in Wrocław that features the ACO performing Richard Tognetti’s awe-inspiring soundtrack alongside a screening of the film.

The ACO’s Artistic Director and Lead Violin, Richard Tognetti, commented:

“As we make preparations for the ACO’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I am delighted that we will be returning to London, a city that has become the ACO’s second home over the years, as well as giving concerts in The Netherlands, Poland and Germany, including a performance of our cinematic collaboration, *Mountain*, in Wrocław.”

Defined by its sense of adventure and curiosity combined with the highest possible artistic standards, the ACO is comprised of 17 exceptional string musicians who hail from across the globe. It has been led by visionary pioneer and leader, Artistic Director Richard Tognetti, since 1990 who, over his 35 years at the helm, has galvanised the Orchestra into an internationally recognised trailblazing ensemble.

Where many other ensembles have followed, the ACO led the way with decades of adventurous cross-artform collaborations and programmes that embrace celebrated classics alongside new music, commissions and multi-media projects. Under the leadership of Tognetti, the ACO has collaborated with the world's great classical musicians, from Steven Isserlis to Emmanuel Pahud, to indie, rock and cabaret artists including Jonny Greenwood, Meow Meow and Bryce Dessner, along with photographers, visual artists, surfers and filmmakers.

*“Tognetti has transformed the ACO into a genuine Australian cultural icon, routinely voted one of the best orchestras of its kind on the planet.”* Australian Financial Review.

By any metric, the ACO is thriving with a business model that is the envy of many arts organisations around the globe. After a campaign lasting 20 years, the ACO in 2022 opened its own 300 seat venue on Sydney Harbour. Part of the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, the hall has created an additional revenue stream through venue hires for an orchestra that receives only 8% of its budget from government funding.

The ACO is the most active touring orchestra in Australia, with a global perspective and influence. The Orchestra performs over 150 concerts each year, including at least one international tour, seven Australian tours and multiple regional tours.

The Orchestra's unique sound is enhanced by its extraordinary collection of nine Golden Age instruments crafted by the great 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian luthiers Stradivari, Amati, Guarneri del Gesù, as well as a 400-year-old double bass. These instruments are owned by the ACO, loaned to the Orchestra by private benefactors or owned by the ACO Instrument Fund, an initiative established by the Orchestra that encourages supporters to fund the acquisition of new instruments, which are renowned for their high return on investment.

In addition to its intensive performance and recording activities, the ACO is committed to providing music education opportunities to young Australians across the country. Alongside the Orchestra's seasons of award-winning ACO Families concerts as well as elite musician training programs, the ACO runs a programme in one of the lowest socioeconomic status schools in its state enabling pupils to play an instrument for 15 minutes a day to improve their learning and social skills. The programme's effectiveness is monitored and assessed by the University of Sydney, with participating students showing improvements across literacy, numeracy, behaviour, school attendance and more.

In 2007, ACO Principal Violin Helena Rathbone created ACO Collective, an ensemble of ACO musicians mentoring some of Australia's best young string players. ACO Collective was founded to increase access to world class music for Australians living outside metropolitan hubs, supporting the development of the next generation of string musicians.

The Emerging Artists Programme was formed to stop young players having to leave Australia to pursue professional careers. Five current players of the ACO came through this programme.

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## **Notes to Editors**

For more information about ACO please visit [www.aco.com.au](http://www.aco.com.au)

### European Tour, March 2025:

Tuesday 11: **Muziekgebouw aan't IJ, Amsterdam**. Programme includes Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.1, Bach Concerto for Oboe & Violin and Shostakovich Chamber Symphony.

Saturday 15: **NFM-MH, Wroclaw**. Mountain, a film/live performance project.

Sunday 16: **NFM-MH, Wroclaw**, with NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra. Programme includes work by Lutostawski, Dessner, Bach & Haas.

Wednesday 19: **Kultur-Kongresszentrum Liederhalle, Stuttgart**. Programme includes Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.1, Bach Concerto for Oboe & Violin and Shostakovich Chamber Symphony.

Friday 21: **Barbican Centre, London**. Stuttgart program as above. Programme includes Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.1, Bach Concerto for Oboe & Violin and Shostakovich Chamber Symphony.

## **The Australian Chamber Orchestra**

The Australian Chamber Orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for its explosive performances and brave interpretations. Steeped in history but always looking to the future, ACO programs embrace celebrated classics alongside new commissions, and adventurous cross-artform collaborations.

Led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti since 1990, the ACO performs more than 100 concerts each year. Whether performing in Manhattan, New York, or Wollongong, NSW, the ACO is unwavering in its commitment to creating transformative musical experiences.

The Orchestra regularly collaborates with artists and musicians who share its ideology: from Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Olli Mustonen, Brett Dean and Ivry Gitlis, to Neil Finn, Jonny Greenwood, Barry Humphries and Meow Meow; to visual artists and film makers such as Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jon Frank, and Jennifer Peedom, who have co-created unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the ACO has an active recording program across CD, vinyl and digital formats. Its recordings of Bach's violin works won three consecutive ARIA Awards. Recent releases include *Water | Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, *Beethoven 1, 2, & 3 Eroica* and ARIA award-winning albums *River* and *Indies & Idols*.

In 2023 the ACO launched its digital streaming platform, ACO On Demand, which hosts the Orchestra's award-winning season of cinematic concert films, *ACO StudioCasts*, alongside live concert streams and premium on demand content.

## **Richard Tognetti**

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

After studying in Australia with William Primrose and Alice Waten, and overseas at the Bern Conservatory with Igor Ozim, Richard was appointed the ACO's Artistic Director and Lead Violin in 1990. He performs on period, modern and electric instruments and has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras as director or soloist. In 2016 Richard was appointed the first Artist-in-Residence at the Barbican Centre's Milton Court.

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 and River*, the former of which went on to become the highest-grossing homegrown documentary in Australian cinemas and the latter which won Best Soundtrack at the ARIA, AACTA and APRA awards.

Richard is the recipient of seven ARIA awards, including three consecutive wins for his recordings of Bach's violin works. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010, holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. In 2017 was awarded the JC Williamson Award for longstanding service to the live performance industry.