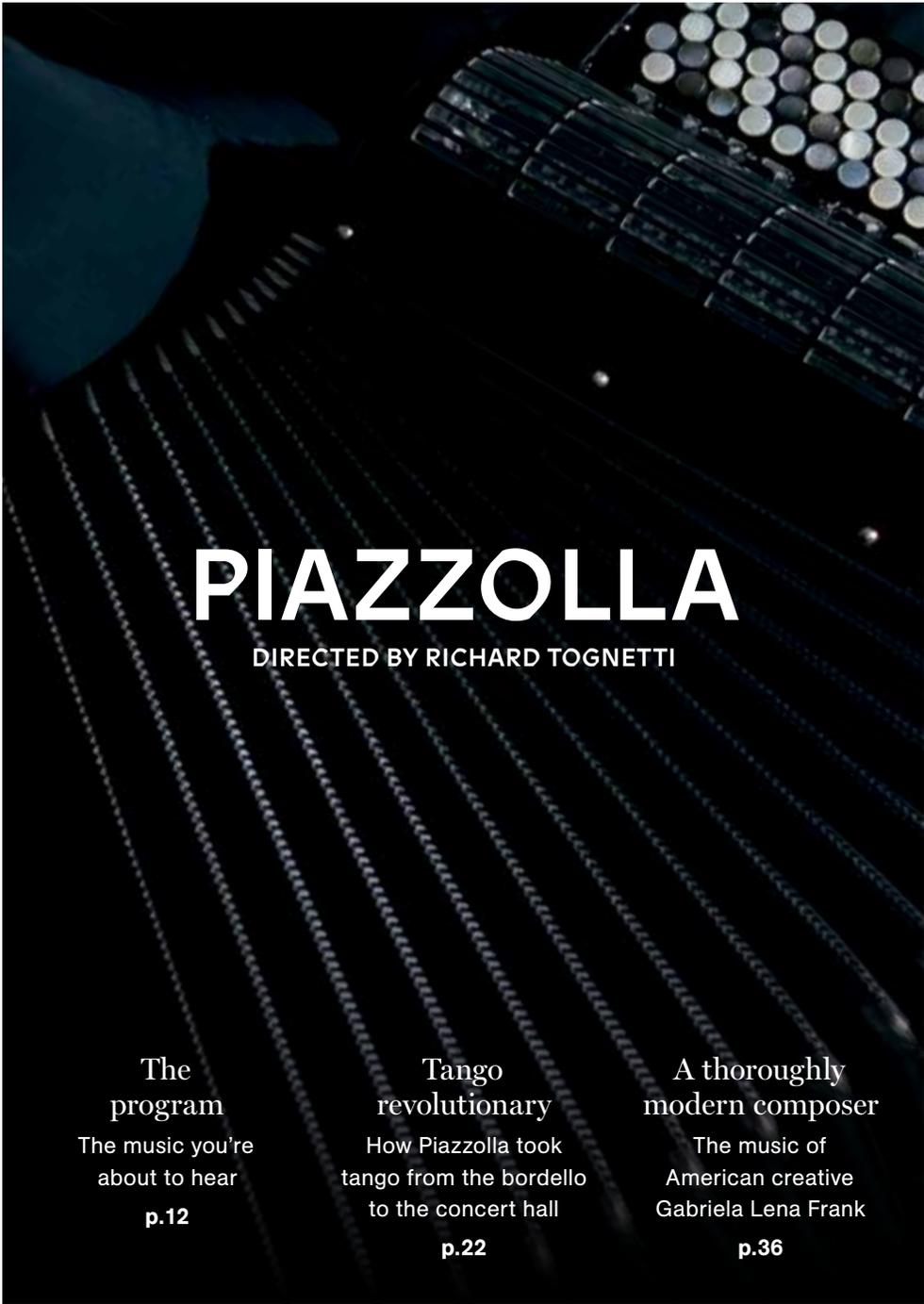


Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



# PIAZZOLLA

DIRECTED BY RICHARD TOGNETTI

## The program

The music you're  
about to hear

**p.12**

## Tango revolutionary

How Piazzolla took  
tango from the bordello  
to the concert hall

**p.22**

## A thoroughly modern composer

The music of  
American creative  
Gabriela Lena Frank

**p.36**

An exhilarating fusion of musical traditions featuring music from Bizet and Debussy through to Miles Davis and Chick Corea.

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\*Prices vary according to venue, concert and reserve. Booking fees apply. Transaction fee of \$7.50 applies.



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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From the ACO's Managing Director Richard Evans

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## Program in short

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## Tango revolutionary

How Piazzolla took tango from the bordello to the concert hall

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## A thoroughly modern composer

The music of American creative Gabriela Lena Frank

p.36

# WELCOME

Welcome to ACO 2022.

We celebrate the opening of our 2022 Season with the intoxicating tangos of South America, featuring the extraordinary classical accordion virtuoso James Crabb. James is a long-standing friend of the ACO who first performed with Richard and the Orchestra in 2002, and we are delighted to reunite with him again after all these years.

There is much to look forward to over the coming months as we move into our new home at Pier 2/3 in Sydney's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. Our state-of-the-art new home brings with it an abundance of creative opportunities, from inspired artistic collaborations to provocative talks and ideas programs and the expansion of our Learning & Engagement programs. We cannot wait to share it with you all at our Opening Festival in late April – please save the date in your diaries and stay tuned as we reveal the full weekend of free activities over the coming weeks, many of which will be streamed online across the country.

Our new home is only possible thanks to the generosity of our Capital Campaign supporters who, together with the NSW Government, have been instrumental in making this long-awaited dream a reality. On behalf of Richard Tognetti, the musicians and all of us at the ACO – thank you.

The past two seasons have been without a doubt the most challenging in the ACO's 47-year history. I thank you, our audiences, for your unwavering and valued support throughout this period, from engaging with the ACO online through our StudioCasts and HomeCasts seasons to donating your tickets to cancelled concerts. In particular I would like to acknowledge our wonderful Brisbane and Adelaide audiences, who we finally reunite with for the first time in two long years at these performances. It is a joy to share our music with you, live and in-person, again.



**Richard Evans**  
Managing Director

**Join the conversation**

#ACO2022 |    

@AustralianChamberOrchestra

## News



### 2022 Emerging Artists

#### LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

We are delighted that five talented young musicians have been selected to participate in our Emerging Artist Program in 2022.

These exceptional string players will spend the year working closely with the ACO musicians, and rehearsing and performing as members of ACO Collective.

The 2022 Emerging Artists' first performance together will be as members of ACO Collective in *The Italian Baroque* on 20 March at the Sydney Opera House.



### Oticon Australia

#### NEW PARTNERSHIP

We are pleased to announce our new partnership with industry leading hearing technology company, Oticon Australia.

Oticon Australia are Supporting Partner of the ACO's new recital series, ACO Up Close, to be presented at the Orchestra's new home at Pier 2/3 in Sydney's revitalised Walsh Bay Arts Precinct and at the University of Melbourne.

## Coming up

### MARCH



#### ACO Up Close: Maxime Bibeau

13 MARCH

Pier 2/3 Sydney

Get to know our Principal Double Bass Maxime Bibeau in this intimate recital at our new home at Pier 2/3, hosted by Kumi Taguchi.



#### TarraWarra Festival

19 – 20 MARCH

**SOLD OUT**

We are excited to return to the TarraWarra Museum of Art for a weekend of music, art, wine and some of the most breathtaking views in Victoria's Yarra Valley.



#### The Italian Baroque

20 MARCH

Sydney Opera House

Guest Director Erin Helyard teams up with ACO Collective to explore the theatricality and passion of masterpieces by some of the greatest and most influential composers of the Italian Baroque.

### MARCH – APRIL



#### Sketches of Spain

31 MARCH – 13 APRIL

Newcastle, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Wollongong

Richard Tognetti leads the ACO for a musical adventure that knows no boundaries, featuring music by Chick Corea, Ravel and Miles Davis, and a jazz quartet that includes pianist Matt McMahon and trumpeter Phil Slater.

### MAY



#### Mozart & Britten

7 MAY – 23 MAY

Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane

Our Principal Viola, Stefanie Farrands, makes her ACO concerto debut, joining Richard Tognetti for Mozart's exquisite *Sinfonia Concertante* before a performance of Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*.



**Pegaso de Sol - 1922**

Artwork by Xul Solar (1887-1963), a renowned and influential Argentine painter, sculptor and writer. Reserved rights by Foundation Pan Klub - Xul Solar Museum.



PEGASO

DEL

SOL

HIJOS



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Artistic Director

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\*Transaction fee of \$7.50 applies.

# PROGRAM

Richard Tognetti Director & Violin  
James Crabb Classical Accordion  
Australian Chamber Orchestra

PIAZZOLLA (arr. Crabb)	Libertango	5
ANTONIO AGRI / JOSÉ CARLI (arr. Crabb)	Desde Adentro	6
HANDEL	Concerto Grosso in A major, Op.6, No.11 <i>I. Andante larghetto, e staccato</i> <i>II. Allegro</i> <i>III. Largo, e staccato</i> <i>IV. Andante</i> <i>V. Allegro</i>	15
ELENA KATS-CHERNIN	Torque	15
<b>INTERVAL</b>		<b>20</b>
GARDEL (arr. John Williams)	Por Una Cabeza	4
GABRIELA LENA FRANK	Leyendas – An Andean Walkabout: VI. Coqueteos (Australian premiere)	4
VILLA-LOBOS	Bachianas Brasileiras No.9 <i>I. Preludio</i> <i>II. Fuga</i>	9
PIAZZOLLA (arr. Crabb)	Angels and Devils Suite <i>Milonga del Ángel</i> <i>Vayamos al Diablo</i> <i>Romance del Diablo</i> <i>La Muerte del Ángel</i>	20

The concert will last approximately one hour and 50 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.  
The Australian Chamber Orchestra reserves the right to alter scheduled artists and programs as necessary.



ACO concerts are regularly broadcast on ABC Classic.  
*Piazzolla* will be broadcast on Sunday 27 February at 1pm.

# MUSICIANS

The musicians on stage  
for this performance.

## Discover more

Learn more about our musicians, watch us Live in the Studio, go behind the scenes and listen to playlists at: [aco.com.au](http://aco.com.au)



**Richard Tognetti**  
Director and Violin

Richard plays the 1743 'Carrodus' Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù violin kindly on loan from an anonymous Australian private benefactor. His Chair is sponsored by Wendy Edwards, Peter McMullin AM & Ruth McMullin, Louise Myer & Martyn Myer AO, Andrew & Andrea Roberts.



**Helena Rathbone**  
Principal Violin

Helena plays a 1759 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin kindly on loan from the Commonwealth Bank Group. Her Chair is sponsored by Margaret Gibbs & Rodney Cameron.



**Aiko Goto**  
Violin

Aiko plays her own French violin by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. Her Chair is sponsored by Anthony & Sharon Lee Foundation.



**Mark Ingwersen**  
Violin

Mark plays a 1728/29 Stradivarius violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Prof Judyth Sachs & Julie Steiner AM.



**Ilya Isakovich**  
Violin

Ilya plays his own 1600 Marcin Groblicz violin made in Poland. His Chair is sponsored by Meg Meldrum.



**Liisa Pallandi**  
Violin

Liisa plays her own Elina Kaljunen violin made in 2019. Her Chair is sponsored by The Melbourne Medical Syndicate.



**Maja Savnik**  
Violin

Maja plays the 1714 'ex-Isolde Menges' Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andreae violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. Her Chair is sponsored by Alenka Tindale.



**Ike See**  
Violin

Ike plays a 1590 Brothers Amati violin on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Ian Lansdown & Tricia Bell.



## Lily Higson-Spence

**Violin**

Lily plays an Italian violin from 1857 by Giuseppe Rocca, generously on loan from Gregor Sigl.



## Katherine Lukey<sup>^</sup>

**Violin**

Katherine plays her own Modern Italian Violin made by Gaetano Gadda (c. 1940–50).



## 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 her own 1968 Parisian viola by Pierre M. Audinot.



## Meagan Turner

**Viola**

Meagan plays a 2019 viola by Samuel Zygmuntowicz on private loan.



## 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.



## Melissa Barnard

**Cello**

Melissa plays a cello by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume made in 1846. Her Chair is sponsored by Dr & Mrs J Wenderoth.



## Julian Thompson

**Cello**

Julian plays a 1729 Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andreae cello with elements of the instrument crafted by his son, Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, kindly donated to the ACO by the late Peter Weiss AO. His Chair is sponsored by The Grist & Stewart Families.



## Maxime Bibeau

**Principal Bass**

Max plays a late-16th-century Gasparo da Salò bass kindly on loan from a private Australian benefactor. His Chair is sponsored by Darin Cooper Foundation.



## James Crabb

**Classical Accordion**

James plays a 1992 Pignini Mythos No.4 model classical accordion, tuned and prepared by Viktor Melnyk.



## Stefan Cassomenos

**Piano**

<sup>^</sup> courtesy of Opera Australia Orchestra



**San Danza - 1925**

Artwork by Xul Solar (1887-1963), a renowned and influential Argentine painter, sculptor and writer. Reserved rights by Foundation Pan Klub - Xul Solar Museum.



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## PROGRAM IN SHORT

Your five-minute read  
before lights down.

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

City Recital Hall, Sydney

**Genevieve Lang**

Tue 1 February, 7:15pm

Wed 2 February, 6:15pm

Fri 11 February, 12:45pm

Sat 12 February, 6:15pm

Sun 13 February, 1:15pm

Llewellyn Hall, Canberra

**Kim Cunio**

Fri 4 February, 7:15pm

Melbourne

Recital Centre

**Andrew Aronowicz**

Sat 5 February, 6:45pm

Mon 7 February, 6:45pm

Arts Centre Melbourne

**Andrew Aronowicz**

Sun 6 February, 1:45pm

Adelaide Town Hall

**Russell Torrance**

Tue 8 February, 6:45pm

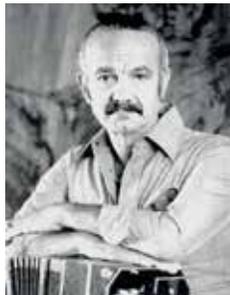
QPAC Concert Hall,

Brisbane

**James Tudball**

Mon 14 February, 6:15pm

Pre-concert speakers are subject to change.



## Ástor Piazzolla

(1921-1992)

**Libertango** Arranged by James Crabb

*Libertango* is the opening work from Piazzolla's iconic 1974 album of the same name. Written in Italy shortly after Piazzolla left Argentina, the title reflects his liberation from the socially defined style of classical tango, as well as his freedom from the political constraints imposed on Argentinians. Boasting an instantly recognisable melody and ostinato, *Libertango* is Piazzolla's best known and most frequently performed composition, appearing in countless arrangements for tango band, orchestra and even a-cappella choir.

## Antonio Agri / José Carli

(1932-1998) / (1934-)

**Desde Adentro** Arranged by James Crabb

In 1961, the Argentine violinist, composer and conductor Antonio Agri met Ástor Piazzolla, who invited him to join his ensemble, the Quinteto Nuevo Tango. Agri became so crucial to Piazzolla's ensemble that, when Agri finally decided to leave the group in 1976, Piazzolla was understandably furious: "I admit that a mediocrity can retire, but not a genius of the violin like him". *Desde Adentro* ("From Within") was recorded in 1997 with the Argentine violinist José Carli, who has created and performed orchestrations of tango music around the world, notably works by Piazzolla and Ginastera, as well as his own original compositions.

## George Frideric Handel

(1685-1759)

**Concerto Grosso in A major, Op.6, No.11**

Ástor Piazzolla was significantly influenced by Baroque music, drawing on its use of driving bass lines, intricate counterpoint and virtuosic, improvisatory instrumental writing in ensemble settings – all of which are vividly demonstrated in Handel's concerti grossi. The Concerto Grosso in A major, Op.6, No.11 is part of a set of 12 composed over the course of only a few weeks, each inspired by the concerti grossi of Arcangelo Corelli and Francesco Geminiani. As with those of his contemporaries, Handel's concerti grossi feature a group of concertino soloists who are pitted against the orchestra.





## Elena Kats-Chernin

(1957-)

### Torque

The composer writes:

“Torque” is about the process of gear shifting, acceleration and deceleration and the momentum that is generated by this power.

The work is made up of a mixture of musical styles or gears, all of which share an edginess and drive which at times borders on the motoric. Having just lost my car due to a damaged gearbox I had become interested in how much we need a car and its engine in life.

I wanted to write a piece that gave a powerful sense of musical momentum. I used angular rhythms (often borrowed from Tango) and wild gestures to give the impression of a human musical machine, whose pistons are made of fingers and bow arms, that would drive this piece until the rivets began to pop and the rubber started to burn.

Fittingly the day I finished the work, a new white car arrived on my doorstep.



## Carlos Gardel

(1890-1935)

### Por Una Cabeza

*Arranged by John Williams. Transcribed by James Crabb.*

The French-Argentine singer and composer Carlos Gardel was the most famous singer of tangos, and a dominant figure in the history of tango. He was dubbed “The King of Tango” and composed many songs that remain popular to this day. One of his most famous songs is *Por Una Cabeza* (“By a Head”), in which a racetrack gambler compares his addiction for horses with his attraction to women. The version heard in these concerts was made by John Williams for the violinist Itzhak Perlman, as a vehicle to display his artistry on the violin.



## Gabriela Lena Frank

(1972-)

### **Leyendas – An Andean Walkabout: VI. Coqueteos**

*The Washington Post* listed Gabriela Lena Frank as one of the 35 most significant women composers in history. Her music reflects her own personal experience as a multi-racial Latina, as well as her studies of Latin American cultures, incorporating poetry, mythology, and native musical styles into her own unique framework.

*Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout*, composed for string quartet in 2001 and re-worked for string orchestra in 2003, draws inspiration from the idea of *mestizaje* as envisioned by Peruvian writer José María Arguedas, where cultures can coexist without the subjugation of one by the other. As such, this piece mixes elements from the western classical and Andean folk music traditions. “Coqueteos” is a flirtatious love song sung by gallant men known as *romanceros*. As such, it is direct in its harmonic expression, bold, and festive. The *romanceros* sing in harmony with one another against a backdrop of guitars which the composer thinks of as a *vendaval de guitarras* (“storm of guitars”).

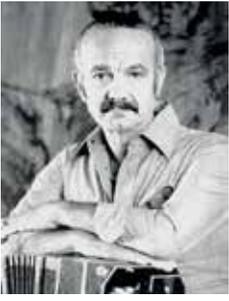


## Heitor Villa-Lobos

(1887-1959)

### **Bachianas Brasileiras No.9**

Villa-Lobos's output is often characterised by a willingness to harmonise elements from the European tradition with Brazilian folk music. The most significant of these endeavours is *Bachianas Brasileiras*, a series of nine suites written between 1930 and 1945, in which he applies Bach's techniques to the music of northern Brazil. The final suite, composed in New York in 1945, was originally scored for chorus but is frequently performed by string orchestra. It employs that most typical of Bach formulae: a Prelude and Fugue, and in doing so could be said to be a summation of the entire *Bachianas Brasileiras* series, turning the expansive melody in the Prelude into the theme for an ambitious fugue, thoroughly contrapuntal and expressively Brazilian all at once.



# Ástor Piazzolla

(1921-1992)

## Angels and Devils Suite

Arranged by James Crabb

Ástor Piazzolla grew up in New York, where he learned the bandoneón, experienced Harlem's jazz clubs, and met the great tango singer Carlos Gardel. In 1946 he formed the Orquesta Típica and composed what he considers his first formal tango, *El Desbande*. Three years later he disbanded his orchestra. He began to study jazz, as well as classical scores by Bartók and Stravinsky, and almost gave up the bandoneón and tango altogether.

Upon returning to his native Argentina, Piazzolla took lessons from Alberto Ginastera and won a competition that enabled him to study with Nadia Boulanger. Seeing little "Piazzolla" in his compositions, she asked him to play her a tango on his bandoneón, to which she proclaimed: "*This is Piazzolla, don't ever leave it!*" Immediately, he began to revolutionise tango into a new style known as nuevo tango.

In these concerts we present a suite of "Ángel" and "Diablo" works: *Milonga del Angel* (1965), written for a short film about the life of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, *La Muerte del Angel* (1962), a vigorous tango-fugue, *Vayamos al Diablo*, a grotesque piece in 7/4 time, and the sensual *Romance del Diablo*, one of the few pieces Piazzolla wrote in a major key.

# THE BRAVERY TO BE YOU

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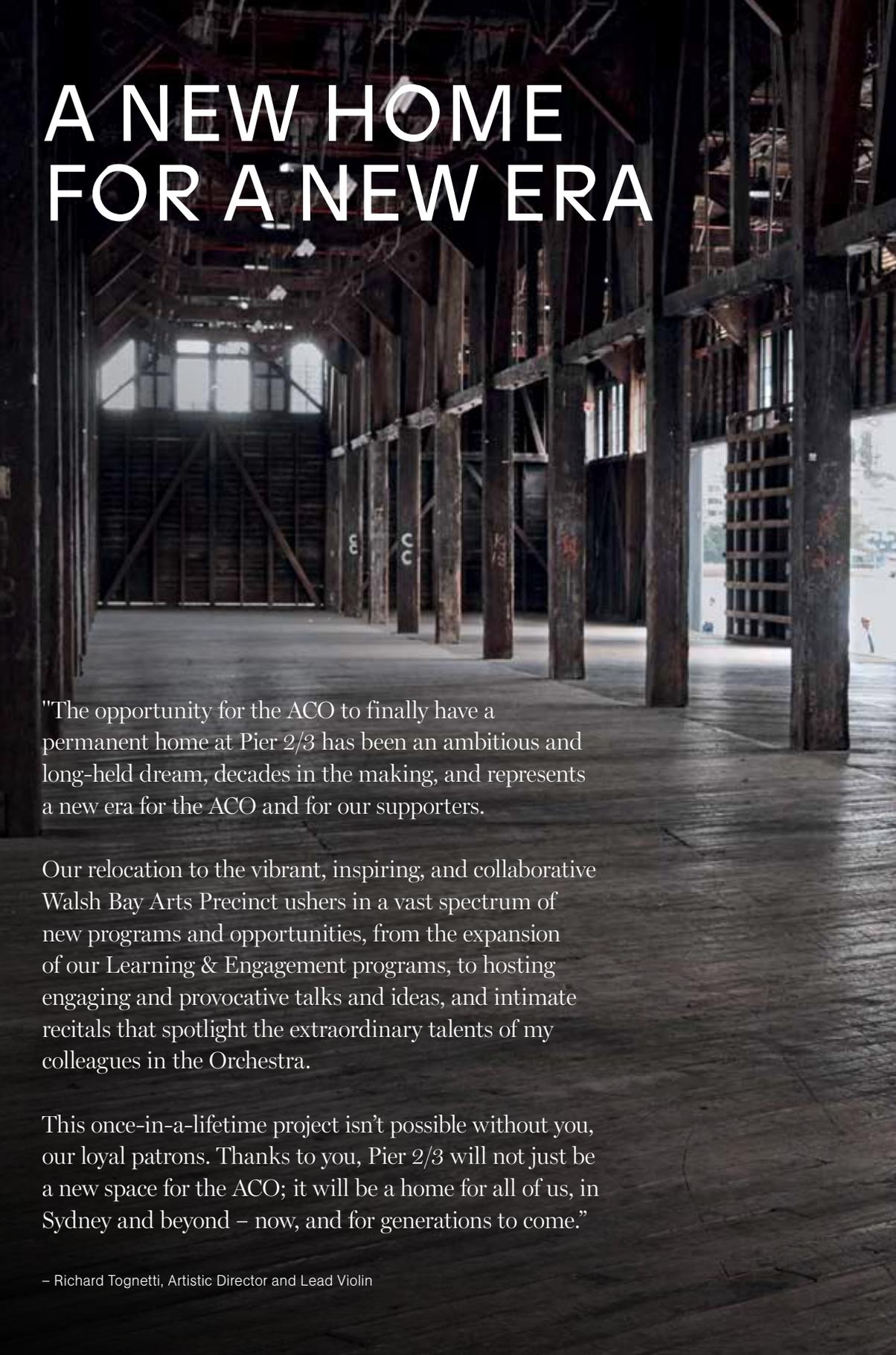
The University of Melbourne is the proud official university partner of the ACO.

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# A NEW HOME FOR A NEW ERA



"The opportunity for the ACO to finally have a permanent home at Pier 2/3 has been an ambitious and long-held dream, decades in the making, and represents a new era for the ACO and for our supporters.

Our relocation to the vibrant, inspiring, and collaborative Walsh Bay Arts Precinct ushers in a vast spectrum of new programs and opportunities, from the expansion of our Learning & Engagement programs, to hosting engaging and provocative talks and ideas, and intimate recitals that spotlight the extraordinary talents of my colleagues in the Orchestra.

This once-in-a-lifetime project isn't possible without you, our loyal patrons. Thanks to you, Pier 2/3 will not just be a new space for the ACO; it will be a home for all of us, in Sydney and beyond – now, and for generations to come."

– Richard Tognetti, Artistic Director and Lead Violin



# OUR NEW HOME

Responding to both the history of Walsh Bay's piers and the beauty of the natural surroundings, our new home is state-of-the-art, sustainable and architecturally sensitive, with a reach beyond its physical location in Sydney. The ACO will occupy the top two floors at the harbour end of Pier 2/3, affording audiences astounding bridge and harbour views, with easy access to the bustling cultural precinct.



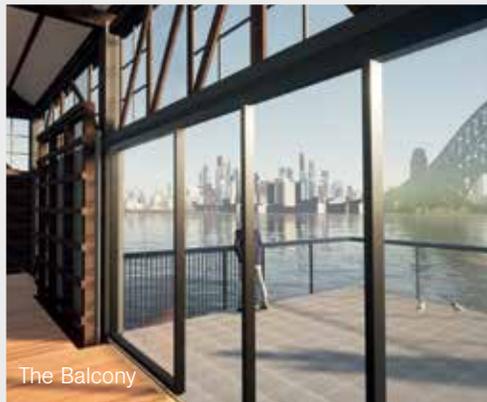
Rehearsal Room

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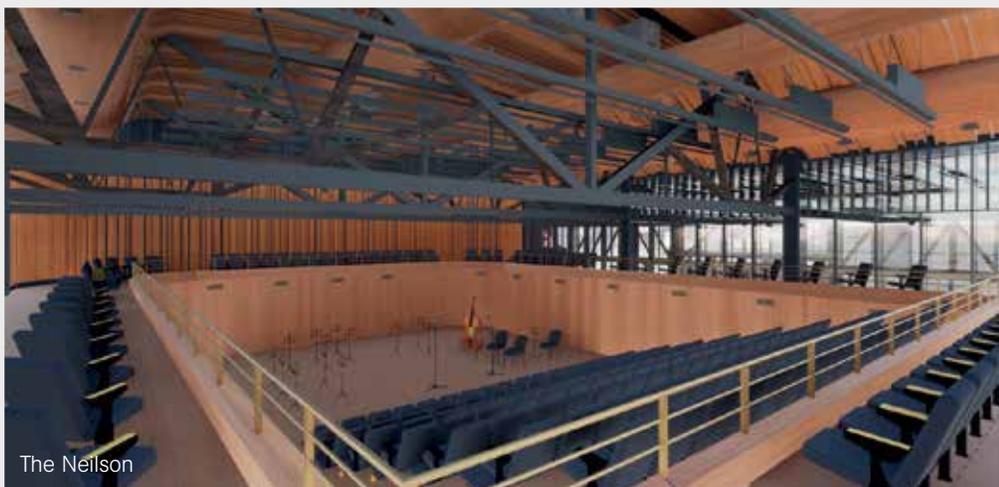




Belgioro Room



The Balcony



The Neilson

## MUSICAL CHAIRS

For the first time in our history, you can dedicate a chair in someone's name or with a special message in the ACO's new home with a fully tax-deductible donation. There are fixed seats in our state-of-the-art performance space, The Neilson, and loose chairs that will be used in both The Neilson and the Rehearsal Room. Your dedication will be acknowledged with an engraved plaque on the back of your chosen seat.

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22

# TANGO REVOLUTIONARY

Piazzolla took tango from the bordello to the concert hall, combining its spirit and energy with classical music and jazz.

**Written by Mahmood Fazal**

Mahmood Fazal is a Walkley award-winning writer on a mission to challenge our views.



Ástor Piazzolla, the man who took tango from dives to concert halls, once said, “for me, tango was always for the ear rather than the feet.”

As Piazzolla stretches his bandoneon – a type of concertina popular in Argentina and Uruguay – the moaning sound creeps beneath the skin and pulses with air that feels like light.

In 1965, writer Jorge Luis Borges and Piazzolla collaborated on an album of tangos and milongas called *El tango*, featuring Piazzolla’s smoking bandoneon. Borges writes: “To rhythmic playing, he could tell stories of the things he had seen, beneath the awnings of Adela, and in the brothels of Junín.”

The origin of the tango is mysterious. The musical gatherings of slaves in the Río de la Plata basin were called “tango” or “tambo” and were often banned by colonial authorities. In the late 19th century, tango began to emerge from the bordellos and dance halls of the impoverished areas of Buenos Aires, the home of large populations of African descendants.

By the early 20th century, tango had drifted from the slums to the cities on barrel organs and in theatres, rapidly shattering the conservative norms of the era with sexual energy. The dances were loaded with sensual thrusting and pulling. The musicians felt like they were gambling. And the lyrics were dusty and sad.

In 2002, classical accordion virtuoso James Crabb led a national tour of Piazzolla’s work with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. “That was probably the first national tour of a Piazzolla concerto in Australia. So the response of the audience was that it was absolutely spellbinding,” says Crabb. “There’s a lot of nerve in Piazzolla. It can be brutal, violent, and it can be incredibly romantic or sad. It’s an emotional rollercoaster.”

Left: James Crabb

By the early 20th century, tango had drifted from the slums to the cities on barrel organs and in theatres, rapidly shattering the conservative norms of the era with sexual energy.

Throughout his youth, James would hear his father play Scottish folk music on the accordion. “There was this sound of the instrument in my life from a very early age. There was something that attracted me to the buttons and the way the instrument moves.”

When he was four years old, James pestered his parents for a little red piano accordion and began attending music lessons. By the time he was a teenager, James was playing in folk bands and discovered the essence of his practice, “It wasn't camaraderie, because I was probably 40 years younger than everyone else on the stage, but it's that chemistry which is the magical thing. When the chemistry is there, this unwritten understanding of what you're trying to achieve together, that still follows me today.”

When Piazzolla was two years old, his family left their home on the port of Mar del Plata in Buenos Aires for the United States. The family eventually landed in Greenwich Village, Manhattan, where his father Don Vicente (Nonino) worked as a barber.

After his eighth birthday, Nonino bought him a bandoneon from a pawn shop. In an interview, Piazzolla said, “[My father] brought it covered in a box, and I got very happy because I thought it was the roller skates I had asked for so many times. It was a letdown because instead of a pair of skates, I found an artefact I had never seen before in my life. Dad sat down, set it on my legs, and told me, ‘Ástor, this is the instrument of tango. I want you to learn it.’”

On the streets of New York, surrounded by hustlers and gangsters, Piazzolla was raised on jazz of the 1930s. The swinging bars, nightclubs and dance halls roared with the music of Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Billie Holliday and Duke Ellington. At home, his father's record collection featured Carlos Gardel's tango records and Bach.

When he was 13, Piazzolla made his film debut with Carlos Gardel. “The only pleasure I had was appearing with him in some scenes of *El día que me quieras* – I played the role of a newspaper boy –



French music  
educator  
Nadia Boulanger.

“There’s a lot of nerve in Piazzolla. It can be brutal, violent, and it can be incredibly romantic or sad. It’s an emotional rollercoaster.”



Above: An early 20th-century postcard featuring a street scene of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

and backing him, on certain occasions, with the bandoneon that I was just beginning to study,” writes Piazzolla in his autobiography *A Manera de Memorias*. “To understand and love Gardel, you have to have stayed in Buenos Aires, to have visited the Mercado de Abasto, and I was only a 13-year-old kid that lived in New York.”

As an outsider, he was searching for who he was. He played in quintets and traveled back to Buenos Aires to join Aníbal Troilo in one of the greatest tango orchestras of that time. When Piazzolla was awarded the Fabien Sevitzyk award for *Buenos Aires Symphony in Three Movements*, a fight broke out in the audience because there were bandoneons in the orchestra. He was awarded a scholarship to study classical music in France and decided to leave tango and his bandoneon behind.

As James outgrew the limitations of the piano accordion, he discovered the classical accordion and followed a different path. He decided to part with the free spirit of folk bands and undertake classical training in the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with classical accordion pioneer Mogens Ellegaard.

“Well, even though [Piazzolla] didn't actually write to the classical accordion, you know, we just think of ourselves as members of the same family, members of the aerophone family,” says James.

On the streets of New York, surrounded by hustlers and gangsters, Piazzolla was raised on jazz of the 1930s. The swinging bars, nightclubs and dance halls roared with the music of Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Billie Holliday and Duke Ellington.

As a student, he came across Piazzolla's *Ballet Tangos* for accordion. "Our world was really transcriptions, mainly Baroque music, and then completely contemporary original work for classical accordion," he says. "[*Ballet Tango*] written for Four Accordions became a hit for accordionists as an introduction into that whole world. It was just such a hybrid form of music."

Piazzolla's music burst from the crossroads of classical music, tango and jazz. "I was asked to play in a band outside of the Conservatory with some freelance musicians. It was the *Romance del Diablo*. I thought, 'God, that is such a gorgeous tune.'"

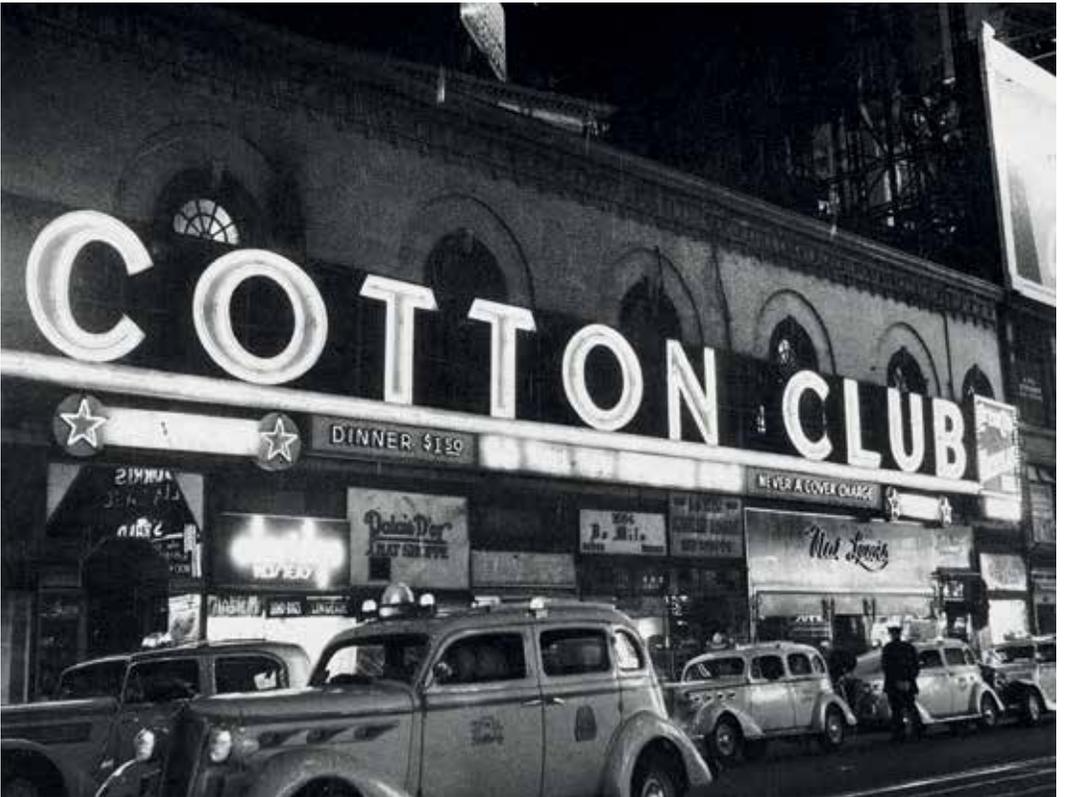
Piazzolla's *Romance del Diablo* sways, rises, and falls with a tone so fragile the entire piece feels like a single hesitant moment that balances on a decision that carries the weight of the world.

"I had an organist position in Paris for a year and there I was able to access a lot more of Piazzolla's sheet music and recordings," says James. "I was let into his world."

In Paris, Piazzolla was trying to rediscover who he was after abandoning the tango and the bandoneon, in pursuit of the "serious" classical music he had fallen for: Bartók, Ravel, Stravinsky and Bach.

While studying under Nadia Boulanger at the Fontainebleau Conservatory, he would develop counterpoint, in which multiple musical lines are harmonically interdependent yet independent in

Right: Scenes at The Cotton Club, one of the great night spots of the New York Jazz scene in the 1930s and 1940s.



rhythm, a motif of his later compositions. While struggling to see himself in the orthodoxy of classical music, one evening Piazzolla played Boulanger his tango piece *Triunfal* on the piano, and she told him, 'this is Ástor Piazzolla'. He was a man of tango.

From that moment on, Piazzolla began to revolutionise the Argentinian tango by introducing new instruments such as the saxophone and electric guitar, and innovative forms of harmonic and melodic structure into the traditional tango ensemble. In compositions such as *Vuelvo al sur*, the temperature of the music offered the dancers an opportunity to incorporate slower and larger moves. The old Argentine proverb, "Everything changes except the tango," was sliding into irrelevance.

For James, Piazzolla's lessons from Boulanger shifted the course of tango. "She was saying 'You have to work with your own voice. That's going to be your future. You have got to use everything else that you learn about. But don't turn your back on what's really you.'"

Piazzolla became the most important composer of Nuevo Tango, a revision that charged tango with the elements of his passion; the melting pot of Greenwich village, where jazz crosses over the orchestra, and how the reverb in a bordello might ring out in a concert hall. "He famously said, 'My music smells of tango.' He never said that his music was tango," quips James.

As James became increasingly allured by Piazzolla, he was presented with an opportunity to trace the ghosts of Piazzolla's sound when he was invited to play lead accordion in Piazzolla's original band at the Edinburgh Festival.

"We had Horacio Malvicino who was a jazz guitarist and probably Piazzolla's closest friend. We had Hector Console who was his double bass player. And Fernando [Suárez-Paz] as well," says James. "I probably learned more on [Piazzolla's] concepts in those rehearsals than any other time because there I was getting first-hand information about how Piazzolla worked, what was said about music and the mannerisms of who they are as people."

...one evening Piazzolla played  
Boulanger his tango piece  
*Triunfal* on the piano, and she  
told him, 'this is Ástor Piazzolla'.  
He was a man of tango.



Above: Piazzolla performing in Berlin in 1982.

In an interview with the BBC, Malvicino said of those rehearsals, “Playing for Ástor was something very special and when he died I always think that he is sometimes with us and sometimes not with us. The first time I talked to James, [Piazzolla] was not here, he was upstairs. But the second time, he was here. And we played different, and everything was so warm and wonderful.”

“In Piazzolla’s music there is a form of improvisation that is built into the music,” says James. “You can very quickly learn how far you can go, how you can ornament, what they did in each concert, and what the conversations were about.” James and Piazzolla’s band were trying to come together and articulate Piazzolla’s emotional language. “And there was a quiet nod. If there was that groove going on in an emotionally charged thing. You could see on their faces, they were pleased, they were satisfied. And I thought, this is in the spirit of the music.”



The spirit of the music can be traced back to those slums where hope could be heard in a rhythm and freedom could be experienced through dance. “For them, making music’s wonderful and just as wonderful as going out to the restaurant afterwards, talking together, and eating together. It’s a part of their social makeup.”

Piazzolla’s *Libertango*, which James will perform with the ACO for these concerts, merges the words liberty and tango to mark Piazzolla’s transition from tango to nuevo tango. The shift resulted in death threats – he was even shot at by tango extremists. It was music with meaning – and for Piazzolla, a man who described himself as both Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, meaning can’t be constrained.

In a live recording for a Swiss television program, Piazzolla raises his knee onto a box, lights from above cast long shadows down his face, and with the bandoneon in his hands, he stretches open sounds that distill the politics, places and people that shape him.

“The accordion can be a very soloistic instrument where you practise a lot on your own and you can perform on your own because it’s like a little portable orchestra the way you use it,” says James. “All the feelings which come out in a lot of the music, you know, you basically play the way you are.”

While traversing the tense, sensual and rocky mood of nuevo tango, tangled in Piazzolla’s patterns, James was able to play the way he is. “One of the main attributes of all my teachers was that I was never spoon-fed. So I had to work out myself, why things happen the way they happen.”

For Piazzolla it was on a piano stool at the Fontainebleau Conservatory beneath the gaze of Nadia Boulanger. For James, it was during rehearsals with Hector Malvicino, playing *Milonga del Angel*, when they could feel Piazzolla in the room.

Left: A mural depiction of Piazzolla in the city of Buenos Aires.

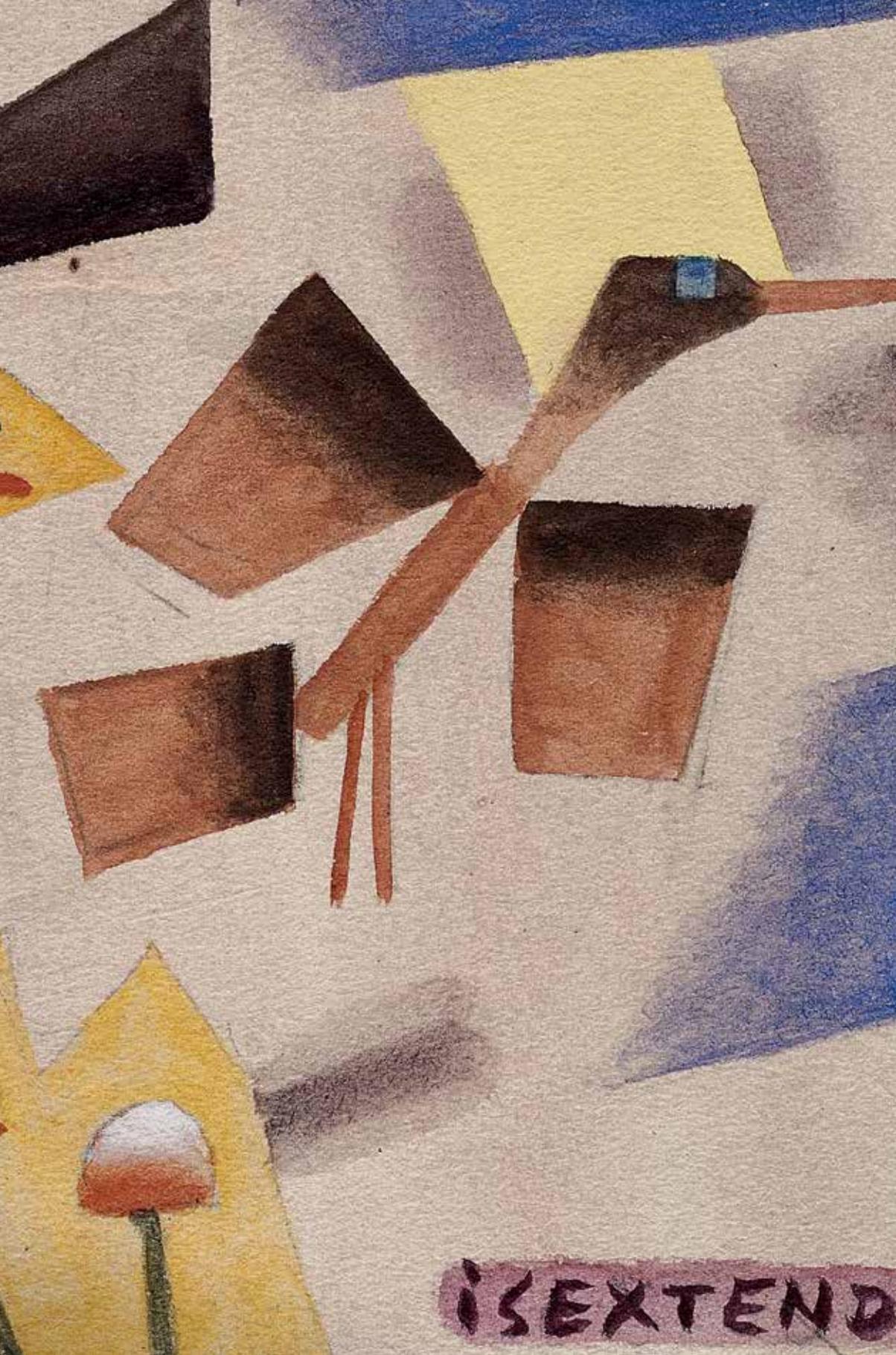
The spirit of the music can be traced back to those slums where hope could be heard in a rhythm and freedom could be experienced through dance.



RE SUBE

**Reptil que sube - 1920**

Artwork by Xul Solar (1887-1963), a renowned and influential Argentine painter, sculptor and writer. Reserved rights by Foundation Pan Klub - Xul Solar Museum.



ISEXTEND

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# A THOROUGHLY MODERN COMPOSER

The music of American composer Gabriela Lena Frank expresses her commitment to “a safer and more humane existence”.

**Written by Kate Holden**

Kate Holden is a writer and the author of two acclaimed memoirs, *In My Skin* and *The Romantic*, and nonfiction book *The Winter Road*.

**Photograph by Mariah Tauger**





“There’s usually a story behind my music,” American composer Gabriela Lena Frank has written. “A scenario or a character.” Her own scenario and character are behind some of the most exciting and charismatic works of new classical music.

Frank is a thoroughly modern composer. She is a woman who identifies as having a disability; she is a climate activist; she draws powerfully on her multiracial heritage to feature the music of non-Western cultures in traditional classical forms. She is ranked one of the most influential and acclaimed contemporary composers. She teaches and mentors across the world and has won many prestigious awards, including a Latin Grammy, a USA Artist Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship, and been nominated for Grammys as both a composer and as a gifted pianist.

Her apparently endless stamina and passion fling her outwards from the scholarly core of classical composition into conversation with the wider world. Frank blogs and speaks publicly about politics, culture and racism, the climate crisis and mentoring young artists. She’s equally open about the farm she shares with her partner, her lifelong exploration of her cultural heritage and her near-profound hearing loss.

In 2017 Frank founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, which brings minority or disadvantaged students together with classical music superstars, puts them in eco-lodges at Frank’s farm in California, hosts performances and generally encourages, as the website puts it, “the power of creativity and arts citizenship”. It opened defiantly at a time “when it seemed the country was going off the rails, driven by fear and resentment”. In 2020 she won the 25th anniversary Heinz Award, which recognised her exceptional efforts in musical inclusivity, and she put most of the US\$250,000 prize money into her academy.

Her apparently endless  
stamina and passion fling her  
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into conversation with  
the wider world.



Above: Gabriela Lena Frank and students at the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.

Frank appears thoughtful, funny and generous; her music, fired by her confidence and expanded by her curiosity and commitment to the music of South and Latin America, gives listeners a sense of an artist both questing and comfortable, original and formed, already a long way down her path of “artistic service as a cultural witness”.

*Leyendas* (“Legends”) was composed 20 years ago in her student days, she says, “in trepidation, wondering how the work would be received”. Frank was raised in California by a Peruvian/Chinese mother and Lithuanian/Jewish father, and had been exploring Latin America in search of her roots, “a mindblowing experience”. She had entered a composition course after she attended an introductory session in the last year of high school and didn’t see herself represented there. Undeterred by this – and by her hearing loss, which had been identified relatively late – she found herself confronting the European bias of her studies.

“Back then, very few people were talking about race or heritages of colonised people and immigrants within the classical music world. I always felt I was reconciling my interior life with exterior



realities,” she says. “For instance, while peers of mine in American universities could expect scholarships for creative study and music exploration abroad in Europe, I knew better than to expect a commensurate level of opportunities to venture to Latin America. (‘Who goes to Perú for classical music?’ a charismatic professor of mine once – devastatingly – mused.) So, my early forays to Latin America to understand how my many heritages travelled across continents and through my familial predecessors were under the radar.”

She encountered traditional music and contemporary cultures, learned language, made notes on family conversations and listened to ambient sounds, like bottles crashing at a recycling centre in the fishing village where her mother grew up. In a welter of inspiration – “So much material!” – she composed *Leyendas*, aptly subtitled *An Andean Walkabout*. Originally a string quartet, it was revised two years later for a string orchestra, as we hear it in this performance.

*Leyendas* is conceived around the idea of *mestizaje*, a Mexican term for mingling of ethnicity and culture, and associated with tensions, ambiguities, national identity, unity and contradiction. Frank considers it in the sense developed by the celebrated Peruvian scholar and novelist José María Arguedas, who examined colonial trauma in the Andes and the endurance of Indigenous culture.

Like Arguedas, Frank has studied Quechua, the native tongue of Peru, which Arguedas combined with Spanish into a new language with which to present his vision of a modern Latin America in which cultures might meet without loss or subordination. In her musical composition, Frank reprises the same sentiment of patois: European strings take the themes and character of panpipes like the zampoña and the toyo, the tarkas (a wooden flute), the

Above: Gabriela Lena Frank and students at the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.

“Back then, very few people were talking about race or heritages of colonised people and immigrants within the classical music world. I always felt I was reconciling my interior life with exterior realities,” she says.

bamboo quena flute, the guitar-like charango. Her admiration of 20th-century composers Alberto Ginastera and Béla Bartók meets the Latin folk music of the *romanceros* love song and the lamenting of the traditional mourning figure *la llorona*. All these elements are enfranchised within a completely modern work both forceful and fragile, mischievous and profound.

Two decades further into her career, as the work has its Australian premiere with the ACO, Frank is reflective. “The pandemic of the past couple of years has been a time for me to conduct a mid-life retrospective, coinciding with *Leyendas* finding a rich new performance life,” she says. “Since *Leyendas*’ humble beginnings, as I gained more mastery and more colleagues, and consequently more courage towards a 21st-century morality, a receiving public for my work has blossomed. I’m grateful.”

She espouses “music-making that is productive and humane, both” and she is uncomfortably aware of and adjusting to the ecological cost of musicmaking, while continuing her work with her academy. Her activism and her music cultivate concord, encouraging rather than subordinating, speaking to the world from a slower, less agitated place to deepen her commitment to “a safer and more humane existence”. Perhaps typically, her photograph on the Academy website shows not the composer in a concert hall, but Frank in a bee-keeping suit, proudly brandishing cells of honey.

One of Frank’s *Leyendas* notes was made 20 years ago in a small highland museum, “viewing a pre-Inca ceramic of a rotund panpipe player disconcertedly twisted in a quasi-yoga pose and wondering what he might think of *my* music”. As antique string instruments take up the even more ancient songs of the panpipes, we can all listen to what Frank has made of this question.

# RICHARD TOGNETTI

## Artistic Director

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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 of 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, he 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, most recently as soloist and director with the Melbourne and Tasmanian symphony orchestras.



Richard also performed the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutosławski's Partita. He was appointed the Barbican Centre's first Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall in London in 2016. 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 was the co-composer of the score for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, starring Russell Crowe; he co-composed the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's surf film *Storm Surfers*; and created *The Red Tree*, inspired by Shaun Tan's book. He also created the documentary film *Musica Surfica*, as well as *The Glide*, *The Reef* and *The Crowd*. Richard collaborated with Director Jennifer Peedom and Stranger Than Fiction to create the films *Mountain* and *River* for the ACO, the former of which went on to become the highest-grossing homegrown documentary in Australian cinemas ever following its release.

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. He performs on the 1743 'Carrodus' Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor.

# JAMES CRABB



## Classical Accordion

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Internationally praised for his breathtaking virtuosity and versatile musicianship, Scottish-born James Crabb is widely regarded as one of the world's leading classical accordionists. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen with accordion pioneer Mogens Ellegaard and became professor there from 1995 until 2010. He also held a long-standing guest professorship at the University in Graz, Austria. James was awarded the prestigious Carl Nielsen Music Prize, Denmark in 1991.

In 2019 James gave the world premiere of Brett Dean's accordion concerto *The Players* in Sweden, (recorded on the BIS label); featured in Co.3 Dance company's *In Line* production in Perth; play-directed Sinfonia Cymru, Wales; and performed the on-stage role in Dean's *Hamlet* with Cologne Opera.

Recent and upcoming return engagements include performances at the Australian and Tasmanian chamber music festivals, Canberra International Music Festival, a residency at Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, and UKARIA. James continues to inspire composers to write for him and maintains a busy schedule as a curator, soloist and chamber musician.

A passionate and sought-after music educator and mentor, James collaborates regularly with ANAM, Freedman Fellowship Trust, AYO, Musica Viva as well as music conservatories and universities both in Australia and abroad. He was Artistic Director of the Four Winds Festival in Bermagui, NSW, from 2016 to 2020 during which time he curated both the annual Easter and Youth Festivals and developed the music education programs in local schools. Since 2010 James has resided in Sydney with his wife and two sons.

# THE ACO



“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 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 instrumentalists, to vocalists, to cabaret performers, to visual artists and film makers.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the Orchestra has an active recording program across CD, vinyl and digital formats. Recent releases include *Water | Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, *Brahms Symphonies 3 & 4*, and the soundtrack to the cinematic collaboration, *River*.

In 2020 the ACO launched its inaugural digital subscription ‘ACO StudioCasts’, an acclaimed award-winning season of cinematic and immersive concert films.

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## ACO Special Initiatives

The ACO thanks Dame Margaret Scott AC DBE for establishing the Dame Margaret Scott AC DBE Fund for International Guests and Composition

## Chairman's Council

The Chairman's Council is a limited membership association which supports the ACO's international touring program and enjoys private events in the company of Richard Tognetti and the Orchestra. For more information please call Tom Tansey, Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships, on (02) 8274 3828.

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This philanthropic program for young supporters engages with Australia's next generation of great musicians while offering unique musical and networking experiences. For more information please call Celeste Moore, Philanthropy Manager, on (02) 8274 3803.

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Thank you to all the generous donors who contribute to our Learning & Engagement, Renewal, Instruments, International and Regional Touring and Commissioning programs. We are extremely grateful for the support we receive to maintain these annual programs.

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

*Program names as at 03 December 2021*

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The Instrument Fund offers investors the opportunity to participate in the ownership of a bank of historic stringed instruments. The Fund's assets are the 1728/29 Stradivarius violin, the 1714 'ex Isolde Menges' Joseph Guarnerius filius Andreae violin, the 1616 'ex-Fleming' Brothers Amati Cello and the 1590 Brothers Amati Violin. For more information please call Yeehwan Yeoh, Investor Relations Manager on (02) 8274 3878.

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The late Peter Weiss AO

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