

NICOLE CAR HEROINES

AUSTRALIAN
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

Richard Tognetti
Satu Vänkä

LIVE IN CONCERT



From the Artistic Director

If you are reading this message, it is likely that you are in the rare position of having purchased this recording as a CD; therefore, you are able to press play and experience this live concert as a whole, the format for which this program has been devised.

The *classical* music world has been a microcosm of misogyny, making mindless Schopenhauerian statements throughout the centuries about the inferiority of women. Some of the most revered orchestras of Europe held on to these beliefs until just a few years ago, when they were dragged kicking and screaming into allowing women amongst their ranks.

The criticisms levelled at women were that they weren't made to play, conduct or compose music, but, self-evidently, women never garnered criticism for inhabiting their roles as female sopranos. And furthermore, or most importantly, many of these roles, especially the heroines of Mozart, exhibit the most striking, sagacious and understanding traits of humankind, to say nothing of the technical skills required to perform them. And there was never any issue with them being the gentler, weaker sex in roles such as *Elektra* or *Alcina*.

So here we present Nicole Car, a singer at the top of her game, to portray these heroines: courageous Queen Dido, wrathful Deidamia, the doomed Desdemona. These are characters who face the very depths of human expression – joy and hope, grief and despair – with resilience and strength. Do not underestimate these women; they are resolute in their conviction, and their voices demand to be heard.

Richard Tognetti

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685–1759

Overture and Dances from Alcina, HWV34

[10'43]

Overture

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------|
| [1] | I. [Grave] – | 1'29 |
| [2] | Allegro | 1'43 |
| [3] | II. Musette: Un peu lentement | 0'55 |
| [4] | III. Menuet: Allegro | 0'52 |
| | Dances | |
| [5] | Gavotte | 0'47 |
| [6] | Sarabande: Adagio | 1'33 |
| [7] | Menuet | 1'40 |
| [8] | Gavotte | 0'35 |
| [9] | Tamburino | 1'09 |

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756–1791

Symphony No. 27 in G major, KV199

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------|
| [10] | I. Allegro | 4'30 |
|-------------|------------|------|

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

- | | | |
|-------------|---|------|
| [11] | Basta, vincerai ... Ah non lasciarmi, no, KV486a | 6'28 |
|-------------|---|------|

Words by Pietro Metastasio 1698–1782

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770–1827

- | | | |
|-------------|--|------|
| [12] | Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 2 in F major, Op. 50 | 7'28 |
|-------------|--|------|

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-------|
| [13] | Ah! perfido ... Per pietà, non dirmi addio, Op. 65 | 11'59 |
|-------------|---|-------|

Words by Pietro Metastasio

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813–1901

- | | | |
|-------------|---|------|
| [14] | Ave Maria, piena di grazia from Otello | 5'34 |
|-------------|---|------|

Words by Arrigo Boito 1842–1918

	GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858–1924	
[15]	Crisantemi (Chrysanthemums) Arranged for string orchestra	6'13
	GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813–1901	
[16]	Act III Prelude from La traviata	3'35
	WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756–1791	
[17]	Misera, dove son! ... Ah! non son io che parlo, KV369 Words by Pietro Metastasio 1698–1782	6'20
	WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART	
	Symphony No. 27 in G major, KV199	
[18]	II. Andantino grazioso	4'35
[19]	III. Presto	3'48
	WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART	
[20]	Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia, KV582 Words attributed to Lorenzo da Ponte 1749–1838	3'11
	<i>Encore:</i>	
	LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770–1827	
[21]	Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?, WoO92a Words by Pietro Metastasio	3'18
	Total Playing Time	77'42

Nicole Car *Soprano* [11], [13], [14], [17], [20], [21]
Satu Vänskä *Violin* [12]
Australian Chamber Orchestra
Richard Tognetti *Artistic Director & Lead Violin*



Violins

Richard Tognetti
Artistic Director & Lead Violin
 Satu Vänskä *Principal*
 Glenn Christensen
 Aiko Goto
 Ilya Isakovich
 Liisa Pallandi
 Maja Savnik
 Ike See
 Benjamin Adler
 Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba

Violas

Florian Peelman
Guest Principal
 Caroline Henbest
 Thomas Chawner

Cellos

Joel Laakso* *Guest Principal*
 Melissa Barnard
 Julian Thompson

Double Bass

Maxime Bibeau *Principal*

Flutes

Sally Walker# *Guest Principal*
 Andrew Macleod†

Clarinets

Olli Leppäniemi∞
Guest Principal
 Alexei Dupressoir

Bassoons

Jane GowerΔ *Guest Principal*
 Simone Walters

Horns

Ben Jacks+ *Guest Principal*
 Jennifer McLeod-Sneyd

* Courtesy of The Royal Danish Orchestra
 # Courtesy of The Australian National University
 † Courtesy of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
 ∞ Courtesy of Turku Philharmonic Orchestra
 Δ Courtesy of Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique
 + Courtesy of Sydney Symphony Orchestra

The Cry

There is a woman on stage, communicating with us. She is betrayed; she is grieving; the arm sweeps in a familiar gesture, the eyes are raised to heaven, the head bows in graceful surrender. It is a code. We understand. We grieve with her.

Essay by Kate Holden, in conversation with ACO Principal Violin Satu Vääskä

We come to hear her cry. This is an evening of lamentations, of reproaches, of women, abandoned and betrayed, calling out, bemoaning their desolation. ‘Do you have the heart to betray me?’ they sigh. ‘I will die of grief.’

Australian soprano Nicole Car is Mozart’s Dido, imploring Aeneas not to leave her; she is Verdi’s Desdemona, quietly preparing for death. An exquisite voice is raised in despair, lowered in sorrow. The gorgeously of the music caresses its women as they suffer and sing, as they ache and accede. They cry for themselves, for the suffering of other women; they speak of loneliness and agony, of fear of death and of the patience to wait for it; they tell us of men’s perfidy, their jealousy and intrigues. Car sings of ‘indignation, jealousy, fear, suspicion, love’. The women characters of this program lift their voices to share with us their pain and their philosophy. And their resilience.

Among the world’s earliest music is the lament, often for the dead, sometimes for the forlorn self. The ‘Kulturkreis theories’ of 20th-century Austro-German scholars suggested that ritual sounds survive from a prehistoric emotion: the trills, howls and dirges of folk are as ancient as our hurting hearts. The Seikilos epitaph from Greece, 2000 years old, is the oldest surviving notated piece, and it seems to be a mourning. The Romans paid women to weep, to rend their clothes and keen at a funeral. And the medieval world was softened by the *planctus*, a song of sorrow. If the audience couldn’t understand the Latin words, they heard the sense, the sonorous notes of the world’s grief. People have cried and keened aloud since our beginnings: what is the first utterance of a baby but a sharp cry to be heard and pitied and answered?

There is a woman on stage, communicating with us. She is betrayed; she is grieving; the arm sweeps in a familiar gesture, the eyes are raised to heaven, the head bows in graceful surrender. It is a code. We understand. We grieve with her. The descending ostinato, the formal, solemn tones falling steadily from under her voice: they are steps into shadow that we have taken, too.

Women have forever had to embody the suffering of the world: they are pained for their lovers, husbands, sons, fathers, daughters, friends. They are permitted, at times, to mourn for themselves.

From Persephone to Clarissa, wronged women have been made to weep before the gaze of others. The walls of galleries glisten with the tears of heroines. Churches do, too. Our spectator discomfort is soothed by the sweetness and the familiarity. The distressed subjects seem to pose, to linger. Tragic heroines multiply like raindrops on the stage: Dido is their divine. In the noisy, complicated plots of *opera seria* since Monteverdi there is almost always room for the hush of a sad woman’s solo: the heroine, the maid, the madwoman, the quiet sister, even Mozart’s Lucilla in *Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia*, who appears in an otherwise comic opera. We should be grateful, really: from soggy, sniffing misery composers have made the most elegant of forms, the soprano aria, its purity and its grace above the deep notes a lesson to us all on how to behave in agony. A corrective lecture or an inspiring prototype? Tears are wet, but they do shine beautifully.

The opening work in the program is taken from Handel’s opera of 1735, **Alcina**, and its overture and dances serve tonight as an entrée, as they did to the original opera. We hear no woman’s voice yet, but Alcina is a cruel sorceress, luring men to her island, transforming them spitefully into beasts, then coming undone by falling in love. In her scorn and humiliation she is less magus, more a wretch. Her ignominy makes her simply a woman like us. All this is to come after our Overture and Dances, but keep her in mind, because she is the bitter woman brought low, and we are allowed to pity her.

Following the first movement of Mozart’s **Symphony No. 27** (which serves as an overture), the first voice we hear is Dido’s. From Virgil’s 2000-year-old recounting, to Purcell’s unforgettable incantation of courage in the face of death, to the bedsit ballads of the modern singer of the same name, Queen Dido has stood bravely for a long time. She is always, now, tipped from her proud throne in ancient Carthage to sing, instead, of a man, Aeneas, who is her undoing. ‘Enough, you have won,’ she sings in the sweet notes of Mozart’s **Basta, vincesti**: all her virtue and power is helpless, in the end, faced with an ambitious man with a destiny more marvellous than hers. She can only make the most of her moment, wring our hearts: ‘Ah, do not leave me. Life I would lack...’ But he does, and she dies.

And there is silence. Into which steps another woman: Principal Violin Satu Vääskä, bearing on her arm a thing of lovely solace, the 1726 ‘Belgiorno’ Stradivarius, on long-term loan to the ACO and having its public debut in this program. It gives us Beethoven’s **Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F major**, a work apparently written in the composer’s late 20s, when his hearing was beginning to deteriorate. It was perhaps written on commission, but also served for Beethoven to practise a major work for violin in anticipation of his bravura Violin Concerto of a few years later. The grace of the Romance gives us a reprieve. Vääskä had not performed this work since her youth in Finland; now

she revisits it as a mature artist, a woman more wry, more confident and forgiving than she was. Vänskä is full of sympathy for Beethoven: ugly, in pain, clumsy and bad in society, even before his deafness. He loved women, and she paints a vivid picture of a grimy, dishevelled, hairy man in the street, quietly watching the grace of women, hoping not to repulse them. 'I have a feeling his life, his whole life, was translated into music,' Vänskä says. 'That's all he had, the poor fellow.'

So this work is not unhappy, but it is the art of a solitary, saddened soul. It is the work of an artist already on the path to greatness, the work of a young man whose yearning would write, a decade and more later, his famous letter to the 'Immortal Beloved'.

Beethoven's love of women and his sympathy with their distress comes roaring out in the next work, **Ah! perfido**. The piece is a standalone work, from a few years before the composition of the Romance. 'He was one of those composers who could do it all,' Vänskä says. 'He could do political music. He could write really extreme, dramatic music. He could write beautifully intimate music. He could write music that was apolitical. He could write the big showpiece for the huge orchestra that can entertain a whole nation, but he could also write the most intimate of pieces.'

Dedicated to Countess Josephine Clary-Aldringen, it is the only concert aria by Beethoven in the singing canon. (One of his later essays in the genre, *Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?*, is featured as an encore to the concert.) *Ah! perfido* takes us from horror to fury. Car scorches us with the scorn of Deidamia, a Greek princess raped and seduced by the hero Achilles before the Trojan War. She keeps secrets for him, forgives him; but when he prepares to leave her and their child, she can no longer stay stoic. 'Ah! You treacherous, barbaric traitor, you leave? And is this your last farewell?' Car's voice swoops and hushes, trembles and croons. Rage turns to spite, spite to distress. So full of feeling, Deidamia is left, in the end, with only a question. 'Tell me,' she implores, 'if in such a grief I do not deserve pity?'

Pietà: we approach a new radiance now. Golden queens, fragrant princesses, they are the most ripe for ruin. But the greatest queen of sorrows is the Madonna. Pity is her blood, anguish her bones. She pities the world, and consoles it, too. Thus, 'Hail Mary,' sings Car now as Desdemona in Verdi's penultimate opera, 1887's **Otello**. 'Pray for the sinner, for the innocent, and show thy mercy to the weak and oppressed.' Help the sad ones, the others who suffer, the ones who are silent; pray for us, sings Desdemona, for she has been hurled to the ground by her beloved, 'fallen,' as she sings in the opera, 'in the foul mud'. She has recalled an abandoned woman who too sang sadly. She knows that Othello will kill her soon, and she has laid out her bridal dress to be buried in. Now she sings her last moments of peace in another 'Ave Maria', and sleeps.

Two instrumental works follow – Puccini's mournful and yearning **Crisantemi**, and the Prelude to Act III of Verdi's **La traviata**, presaging the death of its betrayed heroine, Violetta – before Car returns with **Misera, dove son!** A woman at the brink of doom: Fulvia, a Roman maiden beset with rival lovers and imperial intrigues, feels very alone as she prepares to sacrifice herself. 'I am in the land of the dead,' she mourns. 'The cruel gods have no concern for the anguish I suffer.' Mozart's works for female singers, Vänskä says, are exceptional. He knew and understood female voices, and enjoyed writing for them.

'This might be a little controversial,' she continues, 'but you could say that there is something about those female characters, and that female lamenting, that men like to appropriate: that feeling.' She observes that an abject woman is revered in opera; a man in the same situation is 'just a loser'. 'In their masculinity they're not allowed to express it in a similar way – it doesn't come across as beautifully as when women do it.' Nevertheless, many a man has taken the opportunity of a darkened opera hall to shed a quiet tear.

So as the ensemble takes us into the wordless beauty of the final two movements of Mozart's Symphony No. 27 reflect on this: the words and settings give us pathos – a pathos we may no longer quite enjoy. But the music was made by different men, who gave the pathetic their voice. Have they tormented their heroines, made them cry and shudder for our satisfaction? Or have they, perhaps, in fact, given voice to their own unsexed, human intimations of worldly sorrow? Is the beauty they have made of tears a travesty, or the gleaming gift it seems?

A last work by Mozart, who adored women so much: **Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia** was written for the character Lucilla, who appears in an opera by another composer. Mozart gives us a woman in a farce, wondering at her husband's distraction; we hear loveliness, but Lucilla too is troubled, and she sings of 'bitter doubt' and she tells of the very stuff of opera: wrath, jealousy, fear, suspicion, love...

So many women, so many voices raised in dismay, despair, injury. How they've suffered, how they have wept. But they will also resist. We may brim a tear for Dido, for Desdemona as she gently prays before her last sleep, but listen to the power of their voices. Listen to them speak for themselves, taking their moment, lingering, not apologising; hear these women insist they be heard, that their feelings are important, that we should hush to hear them. An aria is, after all, a woman raising her voice: raising her voice as high and pure and strong as it may go, releasing it into the air, so we can catch it, and take it with us.

[1-9] HANDEL Overture and Dances from Alcina

Handel's opera premiered on 16 April 1735 and was written for his first season at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, London. Based on Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso*, it is the story of Alcina, a cruel sorceress who lures men to her island and transforms them into beasts.

[10, 18, 19] MOZART Symphony No. 27 in G major

Written in 1773, this symphony is one of four Mozart composed after returning to Salzburg following performances of his opera *Lucio Silla* in Milan. It is influenced by the Italian style, following the pre-Haydn, Italian overture format of three movements, as in Handel's overture to *Alcina*.

[11] MOZART Basta, vincerai ... Ah non lasciarmi, no

A concert aria written in 1773 for the German soprano Dorothea Wendling, for whom Mozart also wrote the role of Ilia in *Idomeneo*. The aria sees Dido trying to convince the Trojan hero Aeneas that she will die if he departs, for she cannot live with such suffering. The librettist is the Italian poet Pietro Metastasio, whose texts were heavily inspired by Greek and Roman mythology.

Basta, vincerai; eccoti il foglio.
Vedi quanto t'adoro ancora ingrato.
Con un tuo sguardo solo
mi togli ogni difesa e mi disarmi;
ed hai cor di tradirmi, e poi
lasciarmi?

Ah non lasciarmi, no, bell'idol mio,
Di chi mi fiderò, se tu m'inganni?
Di vita mancherei nel dirti: addio,
Che viver non potrei fra tanti affanni!

*That's it, you've won; here's the letter.
See how much I still adore you, you ingrate!
With just one look you break through
all my defenses and leave me helpless;
and you've got the heart to betray me and then
leave me?*

*Ah, don't leave me, no, my beautiful love,
who can I trust, if you deceive me?
Saying goodbye to you would kill me
because I couldn't live with so much pain!*

[12] BEETHOVEN Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F major

Billed as Beethoven's second Romance, the F major Romance is actually his first, written in 1798 but not published until 1805. Beethoven was in his late 20s at the time, coming to terms with the deterioration of his hearing. Other works from this period include his 'Moonlight' Sonata, Second Symphony and the concert aria *Ah! perfido*, which we hear next.

[13] BEETHOVEN Ah! perfido ... Per pietà, non dirmi addio

'Ah! deceiver' is Beethoven's only published concert aria and one of just a few forays into vocal operatic music. Deidamia is a Greek princess dressing down her 'barbarous betrayer' Achilles over his intended farewell.

Ah! perfido, spergiuoro,
barbaro traditor, tu parti?
E son questi gl'ultimi tuoi congedi?
Ove s'intese tirannia più crudel?
Va, scellerato! va, pur fuggi da me,
l'ira de' Numi non fuggirai.
Se v'è giustizia in ciel, se v'è pietà,
congiureranno a gara tutti a punirti!
Ombra seguace, presente, ovunque vai,
vedrò le mie vendette;
io già le godo immaginando;
i fulmini ti veggio già balenar d'intorno.
Ah no! fermate, vindici Dei!
Risparmiate quel cor, ferite il mio!
S'ei non è più qual era, son io qual fui;
per lui vivea, voglio morir per lui!

Per pietà, non dirmi addio,
Di te priva che farò?
Tu lo sai, bell'idol mio!
Io d'affanno morirò.
Ah crudel! Tu vuoi ch'io mora!
Tu non hai pietà di me?
Perchè rendi a chi t'adora
Così barbara mercè?
Dite voi, se in tanto affanno
Non son degna di pietà?

*Ah! You treacherous, faithless,
barbaric traitor, you leave?
And is this your last farewell?
Where did one hear of a crueler tyranny?
Go, despicable man! Go, flee from me!
You won't flee from the wrath of the gods.
If there is justice in heaven, if there is pity,
all will join forces in a contest to punish you!
I follow your trail. I am wherever you go,
I will live to see my revenge;
I already take my delight in it in my imagination;
I already see you surrounded by flashes of lightning.
Alas! Pause, avenging gods!
Spare that heart, wound mine!
If he is not what he was, I am still what I was;
For him I lived, for him I want to die!*
*Have mercy, don't bid me farewell,
what shall I do without you?
You know it, my beloved idol!
I will die of grief.
Ah, cruel man! You want me to die!
Don't you have pity on me?
Why do you reward the one who adores you
in such a barbaric way?
Tell me, if in such a grief
I do not deserve pity?*

[14] VERDI Ave Maria, piena di grazia from Otello

Based on Shakespeare's play, *Otello* premiered at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan in 1887. The Ave Maria sees Desdemona deep in prayer, placing her trust in the Virgin Mary and praying for all people who suffer as much as she does.

Ave Maria piena di grazia, eletta
Fra le spose e le vergini sei tu,
Sia benedetto il frutto, o benedetta,
Di tue materne viscere, Gesù.
Prega per chi adorando a te si prostra,
Prega pel peccator, per l'innocente,
E pel debole oppresso e pel possente,
Misero anch'esso, tua pietà dimostra.
Prega per chi sotto l'oltraggio piega
La fronte e sotto la malvagia sorte;
Per noi, per noi tu prega, prega sempre
E nell'ora della morte nostra.
Ave Maria...
...nell'ora della morte.
Ave! ... Amen!

*Hail Mary full of grace, chosen
among wives and maidens art thou,
O blessed one, blessed be the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Pray for the one who kneels in prayer before you,
pray for the sinner, for the innocent,
and show thy mercy to the weak and oppressed,
and to the mighty, who are also wretched.
Pray for the one who bows her head
under injustice and under misfortune;
pray thou for us, pray for us always
and in the hour of our death.
Hail Mary...
...in the hour of our death.
Hail! ... Amen!*

[15] PUCCINI Crisantemi (Chrysanthemums)

Puccini wrote *Crisantemi* in a single night in 1890 upon hearing of the death of his friend the Duke of Savoy. Originally written for string quartet, like Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, it is more widely accepted as an arrangement for string orchestra. Puccini re-used two melodic themes from *Crisantemi* in the last act of his opera *Manon Lescaut*.

[16] VERDI Act III Prelude from La traviata

'La traviata' is Italian for 'the woman who strayed'; the opera's heroine, Violetta, is a courtesan whose pursuit of freedom and pleasure makes her the toast of every party, but an embarrassment to decent society. She is also dying of consumption. Her love for Alfredo seems to offer one last chance of happiness, but her scandalous reputation proves too much for Alfredo's well-to-do provincial family. In the Prelude to Act III, we hear Violetta's loneliness and misery as she lies dying.

[17] MOZART Misera, dove son! ... Ah! non son io che parlo

A concert aria written in 1781 to a libretto by Pietro Metastasio. Fulvia is a Roman maiden beset with rival lovers and imperial intrigues. Faced with the prospect of marrying someone she does not love and acknowledging her father as a traitor, she feels alone and prepares to sacrifice herself.

Misera, dove son!
L'aure del Tebro son queste ch'io respiro?
Per le strade m'aggiro di Tebe e d'Argo?
O dalle greche sponde,
di tragedie feconde,
le domestiche furie vennero a questi lidi,
della prole di Cadmo, e degli Atridi?
Là d'un monarca ingiusto
l'ingrata crudeltà m'empie d'orrore:
d'un padre traditore
qua la colpa m'agghiaccia;
e lo sposo innocente ho sempre in
faccia.
Oh immagini funeste! Oh memorie!
Oh martiro!
Ed io parlo, infelice, ed io respiro?
Ah no!
Ah! non son io che parlo,
È il barbaro dolore
Che mi divide il core,
Che delirar mi fa.
Non cura il ciel tiranno
L'affanno, in cui mi vedo:
Un fulmine gli chiedo,
E un fulmine non ha.

*Oh woe is me, where am I?
Are these the mists of the Tiber that I'm breathing?
Am I wandering the streets of Thebes and Argo?
Or from Greek shores
bursting with tragedies,
did the Furies of my homeland come to the lands
of the children of Cadmus and Atreus?
There, the unwarranted cruelty of an unjust ruler
fills me with horror:
Here, the guilt of a treacherous father,
makes my blood run cold
and I constantly see before me my innocent
husband.
Oh, death-filled images! Oh, memories!
Oh, pain and torment!
Can I speak, in my sadness, or can I breathe?
Ah, no!
Oh! It's not me speaking,
it's this brutal sorrow
that breaks my heart,
driving me crazy.
The cold distant heavens don't care
about my suffering:
I pray for a thunderbolt [to strike me down],
but there's only silence.*

20 MOZART **Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia**

Written in 1789 to a libretto thought to be by Mozart's great collaborator Lorenzo da Ponte, who wrote the libretto for three of Mozart's greatest operas – *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*. In this aria Lucilla wonders at her suitor's surly indifference to her and sings of her own bitter doubt.

Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia
L'affanno del mio bene,
Se sdegno, gelosia,
Timor, sospetto, amor.
Voi che sapete, o dei,
I puri affetti miei,
Voi questo dubbio amaro
Toglietemi dal cor.

*Who knows, who knows
what's upsetting my lover?
Is it rage, jealousy,
fear, suspicion, love?
O Gods above, you who know
that my feelings are pure,
banish this bitter doubt
from my heart!*

21 BEETHOVEN **Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?**

The headstrong young Beethoven was not an easy student to teach, but he was eager to learn. Not content with his achievement in the concert aria *Ah! perfido*, in his early 30s he turned to Antonio Salieri for lessons in Italian prosody and vocal writing. *Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?* was composed under Salieri's supervision, but its drama and wit are all Beethoven. The aria captures the determination of the poet to pursue his amorous ambitions with the shepherdess Nice – all the while protesting his honourable intentions – as the two take shelter together from a thunderstorm.

Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?
Ma tu palpiti, cor mio?
Non tremar; con te son io,
Nè d'amor ti parlerò.
Mentre folgori e baleni
Sarò teco, amata Nice;
Quando il ciel si rassereni
Nice ingrata, io partirò.

*But, my treasure, are you trembling?
Are you shaking, my love?
No more trembling; I'm here with you,
and I won't say a word about love.
While the thunder roars and the lightning flashes,
I shall be here with you, dear Nice;
and when the sky is once again serene,
ungrateful Nice, I shall leave.*

Richard Tognetti *Artistic Director & Lead Violin*

'... it's our job to bring the listener in through our portal. A numinous moment when, hopefully, we can make time stand still.'

Richard Tognetti is the Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. After studying both in Australia with William Primrose and Alice Waten, and overseas at the Bern Conservatory with Igor Ozim, he returned home in 1989 to lead several performances with the ACO and was appointed the Orchestra's Artistic Director and Lead Violin later that year. He was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015. As director or soloist, Richard has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, and in 2016 was the first Artist-in-Residence at the Barbican Centre's Milton Court Concert Hall.

Richard is also a composer, having curated and co-composed the scores for the ACO's documentary films *Mountain*, *The Reef* and *Musica Surfica*. In addition, he co-composed the scores for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* and the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's film *Storm Surfers*.

He 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.

Nicole Car *Soprano*

Nicole Car is one of the most outstanding singers to emerge from Australia in recent years.

She first appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2015, singing Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* and Micaëla in *Carmen*; she has since appeared as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for Deutsche Oper Berlin and Semperoper Dresden, Mimi (*La bohème*) at Covent Garden, and Tatyana for the Paris Opera. She has also sung all these roles for Opera Australia, as well as Marguerite (*Faust*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Leïla (*The Pearl Fishers*), The Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Donna Anna and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) and the title roles in *Thaïs* and *Luisa Miller* – winning her first Helpmann Award for the latter. A second Helpmann followed in 2018, for her performance as Violetta in *La traviata*. Nicole has also sung Donna Anna for West Australian Opera and Adalgisa (*Norma*) for Victorian Opera.

Engagements in the 2017/18 season included Mimi in Paris and Dresden and Marguerite in Berlin; in 2018 she also makes her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, as Mimi.

After completing her Bachelor of Music degree at the Victorian College of the Arts, Nicole won the 2007 Herald-Sun Aria; she went on to win the 2012 ASC Opera Awards and the 2013 *Neue Stimmen* competition in Germany. Her major role debut occurred in 2009 performing Donna Anna in Victorian Opera's *Don Giovanni*; she made her American debut in 2014 as The Countess for Dallas Opera, and her European debut the following year as Tatyana for Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Concert engagements have included Brahms's *A German Requiem* with the Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras; Mahler's *Das klagende Lied* with the QSO; *The Last Night of the Proms* with the TSO; Mozart's Requiem with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra; Bach's *St John Passion* for Sydney Philharmonia and a major program of Strauss and Mozart with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Her recordings for ABC Classics include Brahms's *A German Requiem* with the MSO and *Rule Britannia!* for the TSO, and she features as Micaëla in the DVD of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour's *Carmen*. Nicole's solo album of operatic arias *The Kiss*, also available on ABC Classics, debuted at No. 1 on the Australian classical charts.

Satu Vänskä Violin

Satu Vänskä is Principal Violin of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She regularly performs as lead violin and soloist with the ACO, and in 2017 gave the Australian premiere of Locatelli's *Harmonic Labyrinth* violin concerto with the Orchestra.

Satu has performed as Orchestra leader and Principal Violin in the 2018 London production of Barry Humphries' *Weimar Cabaret* with the Aurora Orchestra, as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and in recital at the Sydney Opera House. She is the curator, frontwoman, violinist and vocalist of electro-acoustic ensemble ACO Underground, and as a violinist and singer has collaborated with artists including Barry Humphries, Meow Meow, Jonny Greenwood, The Presets, Jim Moginie, and Brian Ritchie.

Satu was born to a Finnish family in Japan where she began violin lessons at the age of three. Upon her family's relocation to Finland, she studied with Pertti Sutinen at the Lahti Conservatorium and the Sibelius Academy in Finland, and later, as a pupil of Ana Chumachenco, at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich where she finished her diploma.

She was named 'Young Soloist of the Year' by Sinfonia Lahti in 1998, and a few years later was prize winner of the 'Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben'. From 2001 she played under the auspices of Lord Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now Foundation.

She is the custodian of the 1726 'Belgiorno' Stradivarius violin, kindly on loan from ACO Chairman Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM and Michelle Belgiorno-Nettis.

Australian Chamber Orchestra

'The Australian Chamber Orchestra is uniformly high-octane, arresting and never ordinary.'
– The Australian, 2017

The Australian Chamber Orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for their 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 their commitment to creating transformative musical experiences.

Testament to their international reputation, the ACO was invited to commence a three-year residency as International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court in partnership with London's Barbican Centre from the 2018/19 season.

The Orchestra regularly collaborates with artists and musicians who share their 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 Michael Leunig, 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 their national and international touring schedule, the Orchestra has an active recording program across CD, vinyl and digital formats. Their recordings of Bach's violin works won three consecutive ARIA Awards. Recent releases include the award-winning *Water / Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades; *Mozart's Last Symphonies*; *Bach / Beethoven: Fugue*; and the soundtrack to their acclaimed cinematic collaboration, *Mountain*.

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Publications Editor Natalie Shea

Booklet Design Imagecorp Pty Ltd

Photography Georges Antoni (cover); Nic Walker (p19)

Aria Translations Matthew Absalom ^[11], ^[17], ^[20], Raff Wilson © Symphony Australia 2005 ^[13], Natalie Shea ^[14], ^[21]

Recorded live in concert 14, 18, 20 and 24 April 2018 in City Recital Hall, Sydney.

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Artistic Director Richard Tognetti

Managing Director Richard Evans

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The ACO's National Tour with Nicole Car in April 2018 was supported by Robert Albert AO & Libby Albert.

ABC Classics thanks Lisa Mullineux, Alexandra Cameron-Fraser and Anna Melville (Australian Chamber Orchestra), Patrick Togher (Patrick Togher Artists' Management), Toby Chadd, James Limon, Joel Spiteri, Caleb Williamson and Natalie Waller.

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