Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Bryce Dessner's RÉPONSE LUTOSŁAWSKI

ACO HomeCasts | 9 May 2020





HOMECASTS: ACO IN CONCERT



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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MANAGING DIRECTOR WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for our ACO In Concert stream of *Réponse Lutoslawski*, which was filmed live at our 'Indies & Idols' concert at City Recital Hall in 2019.

Whilst we are unable to join you in the concert hall as we usually would, we are committed to providing you with innovative and inspirational music experiences through our digital season, **ACO HomeCasts**.

This concert is one of many that we will be bringing to you over the coming months, along with our Home to Home videos (direct from the homes of our musicians), our education videos and podcasts, musician-curated Spotify playlists, and so much more. If you haven't yet had the chance to explore ACO HomeCasts, I encourage you to visit our website to delve into some of our most recent releases and to discover what's coming up.

The COVID-19 crisis is devastating the economic and performance fabric of our national arts sector. We, like many others, find ourselves in a situation where our very existence is threatened while a timeframe for a return to the stage remains uncertain.

To ensure our survival through these unprecedented challenges, if you are in a position to do so, please consider making a taxdeductible donation to the ACO and our digital season. We are extremely grateful to you all for the steadfast support we have received, particularly those who have so generously donated back the value of your tickets to cancelled performances or who have already made financial donations to the Orchestra. This support is critical to our future and it is your direct messages of love and appreciation that are keeping our spirits high in these uncertain times.

On behalf of Richard Tognetti, myself, and all at the ACO, we thank our partner Wesfarmers Arts for their longstanding support of the ACO, which they have extended to our HomeCasts season and our In Concert series. We are indebted to Wesfarmers Arts for their ongoing financial and organisational support which is proving to be a cornerstone of our existence through this extremely challenging period.

I hope that you enjoy this performance; we are counting the days until we can join you all in the concert hall once again.





Wesfarmers Arts AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA & WESFARMERS ARTS / MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

Satu Vänskä, Principal Violi

NAY

PARTNER WELCOME

Welcome to this inspirational series, ACO in Concert, which forms part of HomeCasts, proudly presented by Wesfarmers Arts.

Perhaps now more than ever, as we live and work in the isolation of our homes, we all need the opportunity to take moments out of our day to come together and reflect on what unites and inspires us as individuals and as communities.

And what better way to do this than to listen to the beauty that only an orchestra can create.

Our wonderful, long-standing arts partner, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, lives and breathes the world of music and – undaunted by this unfamiliar era of social distancing – they're at the forefront of Australian art and culture, working alongside digital artists and filmmakers in increasingly innovative ways, to take their exceptional performances to the world through digital streaming.

After more than two decades of collaboration with the ACO, we're delighted to continue to support the superb musicians of this world-acclaimed orchestra as they keep their music alive during these unchartered social and economic times.

We hope you enjoy this HomeCast series in the comfort of your home, and until we can all join the musicians in the concert hall again, stay safe everyone.



Rob Scott Managing Director Wesfarmers HomeCasts: ACO in Concert





Please consider supporting the ACO and our free digital season with a tax-deductible donation.

We hope you enjoy ACO HomeCasts until it is safe for us to join you in a concert hall.



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PROGRAM

Richard Tognetti Director Australian Chamber Orchestra

BRYCE DESSNER

Réponse Lutosławski Australian Premiere20I. ResonanceII.II. PreludioIII.IV. Des TracesIV.IV. Warsaw CanonV.V. ResidueIV.

mins

This performance was filmed live at the City Recital Hall on Saturday 29 June 2019.



PROGRAM

Bryce Dessner (1976–)

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Réponse Lutosławski

Réponse Lutosławski was written as a homage to Witold Lutosławski's seminal composition *Musique Funèbre*. Dessner, who is best known as a member of rock band The National, spent months studying the work, as well as numerous others by the composer. He describes this period of immersion as "an amazing process of discovering one of the 20th-century's great musical minds and allowing his adventurous spirit to influence my own musical decisions." His *Réponse Lutosławski* is written in five movements, each of which is inspired either directly or indirectly by Lutosławski's score. Dessner writes: "I like to think that his music opened a window in a certain direction for me, or pushed open a door, through which I could then pass and take my journey with the music."



MUSICIANS

The musicians on stage for this performance.



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 Kate & Daryl Dixon.



Satu Vänskä Principal Violin

Satu plays the 1726 'Belgiorno' Stradivarius violin kindly on Ioan from Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM & Michelle Belgiorno-Nettis. Her Chair is sponsored by David Thomas AM.



Glenn Christensen Violin

Glenn plays a 1728/29 Stradivarius violin kindly on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Terry Campbell Ao & Christine Campbell.



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 contemporary violin made by the American violin maker David Gusset in 1989. His Chair is sponsored by Prof Judyth Sachs & Julie Steiner.



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 currently plays Helena Rathbone's violin which is a c.1760 Giovanni Battista Gabrielli. Her Chair is sponsored by The Melbourne Medical Syndicate.

Please note that the instrument and Chair listings are as at May 2020.

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 & Ruth

McMullin, Louise Myer &

Martyn Myer Ao, Andrew

& Andrea Roberts.

MUSICIANS



Maja Savnik Violin

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



Ike See Violin

Ike plays a 1590 Brothers Amati violin kindly on Ioan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Di Jameson.



Christopher Moore Guest Principal Viola

Christopher appears courtesy of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Christopher plays a 1610 Giovanni Paulo Maggini viola affectionately known as "Madge" kindly on loan from an anonymous benefactor. The Principal Viola Chair is sponsored by peckvonhartel architects -Robert Peck AM. Yvonne von Hartel AM. Rachel Peck & Marten Peck.



Elizabeth Woolnough Viola

Elizabeth plays her own 1968 Parisian viola by Pierre M. Audinot. Her Chair is sponsored by Philip Bacon AM.



Timo-Veikko Valve Principal Cello

Tipi plays a 1616 Brothers Amati cello kindly on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Peter Weiss Ao.



² Eliza Sdraulig

Guest Cello

Eliza plays a 2011 Roberto Cavagnoli cello made in Cremona, Italy.



Julian Thompson Cello

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



Maxime Bibeau Principal Bass

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



Bronek Cison viola. Her Chair is sponsored by Ian Lansdown.

A LESSON IN INHERITANCE

Anwen Crawford on the thread that runs between Szymanowski, Lutosławski, Penderecki and contemporary musicians Sufjan Stevens, Bryce Dessner and Jonny Greenwood.

Words. Anwen Crawford

Anwen Crawford is a writer and author. She is the music critic for *The Monthly* magazine.

Indies & Idols is a program about musical inheritance, inheritance over time and across boundaries that may be more porous than they first appear"

This essay was published in the printed program for the ACO's 2019 Indies & Idols national tour.



Above. ACO Artistic Director Richard Tognetti.

I his program does not look friendly on paper," laughs Anna Melville. Artistic Administrator of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Cast your eye down the running order and you'll find "a lot of names": consonant-heavy Polish names that carry with them the faint threat of atonality and avant-gardism, and other names that may look familiar but are possibly, in this context, out of place.

Melville says "this is one of those programs that's greater than the sum of its parts. It's really about how it's all going to work together." And that, Artistic Director Richard Tognetti says, is "the idea - this was really the genesis of the program, not any particular piece - of bringing a generation of contemporary composers together with their influences". Indies & Idols is a program about musical inheritance, inheritance over time and across boundaries that may be more porous than they first appear. Some of those boundaries are between the "classical" and "popular", for instance, a boundary that Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead thinks has "been blurred for decades".

Musical inheritance can manifest in all sorts of ways: overtly or subtly; predictably or bizarrely; steadily, over the course of generations, or seeming to erupt up out of nowhere. Tognetti thinks that the contemporary composers of *Indies* & Idols - Greenwood, Sufjan Stevens and Bryce Dessner are the inheritors of what has been a "slow-motion response" to the upheavals of Modernism. "This generation that I'm part of, and younger, have all responded to Modernism in a sort of slow dance, if you like," he says. "It's taken a long time." The protracted absorption of Modernist innovation has happened. Tognetti observes, because "people are really cynical and suspicious and sceptical of anything new. They always have been." But it's also because the

'The altered name and shifting national status of Szymanowski's birthplace is evidence of decades... of turmoil and innovation, some of it incredible, much of it terrible beyond words."

changes wrought by musical Modernism – fundamental alterations of tonality and rhythm; a rigorous questioning of what counted as music at all – were, in turn, responses to a time of unprecedented change.

Take the life of Karol Szymanowski, "one of the great Modernist composers", in Tognetti's words, whose String Quartet No.2, Op.56 anchors this program. Szymanowski was born in 1882, into a wealthy family whose landed estates were to be found in the Polish village of Tymoszówka, which was a part of the vast Russian Empire. That village is now Tymoshivka, in central Ukraine. The altered name and shifting national status of Szymanowski's birthplace is evidence of decades – almost a whole century – of turmoil and innovation, some of it incredible, much of it terrible beyond words.

Cars, aeroplanes, widespread electric lighting, radio, phonographic recording, telephones, cinema: all these things came to be during Szymanowski's lifetime. He and his peers lived through the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the dissolution of empires – Russian, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian – that had existed for centuries. Lameness prevented Szymanowski from military service during the First World War, and so, unlike countless other men, his life was not ended in the trenches. By the time Szymanowski composed his second string quartet in 1927, the sheltered world of European gentry into which he had been born was gone, never to return. By the time of his death in 1937, from tuberculosis, another world war was edging closer.

Then there was music. Szymanowski "sits in an interesting

place," says Tognetti. "He's a Neo-Romanticist at the same time as being a Modernist." Szymanowski drew upon a wide range of influences, from the deeply felt Romantic lyricism of his Polish countryman Chopin (Szymanowski, too, was a pianist) to the shimmering tonal innovations of Debussy and the driving rhythms of Stravinsky. He also wove the melodies of Polish folk music – particularly the music of the Goral people, of the Tatra Mountains – into his work. Fellow composer Michał Kondracki, a generation younger than Szymanowski, once recalled overhearing his friend "at his old, trusty piano, working on the second Quartet ... He would repeat one musical phrase a number of times, looking, perhaps, for the appropriate shape or harmonic background for it. It was a reminiscence of some Highland melody ..."

A passion for folk music was not unique to Szymanowski. Before him, Chopin had worked to bring the waltzes and mazurkas of Polish folk tradition to the salons of 19thcentury Europe. In his brilliant survey The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century, music critic Alex Ross places Szymanowski among those of the composer's peers, such as the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, or the Finnish Jean Sibelius, who attempted to forge various "national" - though not necessarily nationalistic - music out of the folk traditions of their home countries. Tognetti adds the Hungarian Béla Bartók, and "our very own Percy Grainger", to this list of Modernist folk enthusiasts, while also pointing out that Szymanowski listened, and travelled, beyond the borders of Poland, visiting France, England, Italy and North Africa for inspiration. "The popular music that was from the Ottomans," Tognetti says, "let's not forget, was a very, very important part of his [compositional] language."

That synthesis of music – Polish, Byzantine, Romantic, Modern – can best be heard in Szymanowski's celebrated opera, *King Roger (Król Roger*), which took him six years of painstaking work, from 1918 to 1924, to complete. But one can also hear it in String Quartet No.2, particularly the second movement, "Vivace scherzando", in which melodic phrases from Polish folk song are snatched up and then shattered, only to be put back together at a hectic pace. The quartet is a personal favourite of Tognetti's, and one he has previously performed, recorded, and toured internationally. It is presented in this program in Tognetti's own arrangement for string orchestra. "People sometimes



Top. Karol Szymanowski. Above. Nowy Świat 47 Street, Warsaw, where Szymanowski lived and composed in 1924–29.

think that arranging a piece means rewriting it – it doesn't mean that at all," he says. Instead, this arrangement of Szymanowski's quartet underlines its existing dynamism, its roving musical intelligence.

"All the Polish repertoire on the program is really folk driven," Melville says, which may come as a surprise to anvone who more readily associates Krzysztof Penderecki. for one, with the disquieting compositions that made his reputation in the early 1960s, among them Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima (1960) and Polymorphia (1961). This was music made from dense and swarming microtonal clusters; "it captured the horror of the 20th century," says Tognetti, which is one reason listeners remain drawn to it. Witold Lutosławski, too, while he lived, drew deeply upon Modernism, working with 12-tone rows in his Musique funébre (1958) and aleatoric, or chance, techniques in Jeux vénitiens (1961). And yet both of these composers turned at different points in their careers - Lutosławski early on. Penderecki well after his name had been established towards the melodic clarity of folk music.

This breadth of influence among Poland's leading musical Modernists has a parallel, Tognetti thinks, with the work of contemporary composers such as Greenwood, Dessner and Stevens, who are now creating an even newer sound in the concert hall. "After two or more generations, we now find musicians who accept Modernism as more than just a trope," he says. "And they're responding to it. I mean, look at Bryce's piece: it's a response to Lutosławski. Jonny's music is a response to the music of Penderecki." Combining their interest in Modernism with their experience in the world of popular music, these composers, Tognetti remarks, "have been liberated in their own art form of the rock, indie world, and they've also grown up as serious, art music connoisseurs. Now they're finally in a position where they have the craft and education" - not least in formal notation, a historically uncommon skill among popular musicians -"to express themselves in the world of so-called fine art music".

Of the three contemporary composers whose work is included in this program, it is Jonny Greenwood who has the most well-established relationship with the ACO. His work has featured in the Orchestra's concert repertoire several times, and in 2012 he undertook a three-month



Above. Krzysztof Penderecki. Following page. Bryce Dessner.



appointment as the ensemble's composer-in-residence, during which time he wrote *Water*, a "hypnotic piece", in Tognetti's words, for flute, upright piano, chamber organ, tanpura and string orchestra.

"I was so lucky to write for them," Greenwood reflects, "and to hear them perform and practice. Such a privilege. They have this intensity and energy – like an insane mixture of enthusiasm and certainty – which makes for the most overwhelming performances." Tognetti is equally complimentary, enthusing about Greenwood's 2011 homage to Penderecki, *48 Responses to Polymorphia*, which he calls "a brilliant work".

"Violins are so glorious," Greenwood says, when asked about his facility for strings, the unusual, dramatic arrangements he writes for Radiohead, and his own compositions for film and orchestra. He learned to play the viola as a teenager and was a member of the Thames Vale Youth Orchestra. "I was once taught that all instruments aim to replicate the human voice – to sing. With string instruments, I think they surpass the human voice. Or put another way, I listen to lots of classical singers, and wish they had the warmth, agility and beauty of, say, a cello."

Though he is best known as a flamboyant electric guitarist – and an indefatigable multi-instrumentalist – Greenwood's lengthy engagement with classical music is well documented. He was a teenager in Oxford during the 1980s when he first heard Olivier Messiaen's 1949 *Turangalîla Symphonie*, and, as he told the aforementioned Alex Ross in a 2001 *New Yorker* profile of Radiohead, "I became round-the-bend obsessed with it". So much so that he would eventually teach himself how to play the ondes Martenot, a rare and early electronic instrument that featured in Messiaen's work and which can be heard, in all its wailing weirdness, on several recordings by Radiohead, including "How to Disappear Completely" (2000), a song Tognetti singles out for the vertiginous beauty of its string arrangement.

Greenwood also had a formative encounter with the music of Penderecki, which he was introduced to during his brief tenure as a tertiary-level music student. He quit his degree in a matter of weeks after Radiohead signed a recording contract with EMI, but "in those few weeks





Top. The cover art for the ACO's Water / Night Music vinyl recording. Above. Richard Tognetti with Jonny Greenwood.

"I didn't know you were allowed to be that free, and you could just think of these 48 musicians as being able to do anything. Suddenly all these possibilities opened up."

> I was lucky enough to be shown a Penderecki score, and played *Polymorphia*, by a tutor," he recalled. "I didn't know you were allowed to be that free, and you could just think of these 48 musicians as being able to do anything. Suddenly all these possibilities opened up."

> It is this liberation from the orthodoxies of both popular and classical music that Greenwood has brought to his career in composition, which is already extensive, encompassing eight film scores and nearly a dozen concert works. *Suite from There Will Be Blood* is arranged by the composer from his score to Paul Thomas Anderson's 2007 film *There Will Be Blood*, a dark drama of the American West starring Daniel Day-Lewis as oil prospector Daniel Plainview. If, as Tognetti says, it has been the achievement of composers such as Penderecki to express the violence of the 20th century through sound, then it is no surprise that Greenwood's score bears Penderecki's influence, giving voice as it does to the rise and fall of a ruthless fuel baron at that century's dawn.

> There Will Be Blood was Greenwood's first film score for Anderson; he has since scored an additional three films for the director, including last year's widely acclaimed *Phantom Thread. Suite from There Will Be Blood* is striking in its range of mood and textures: descending glissando lines that sound, in their sinisterness, like the musical equivalent of Salvador Dali's melting clocks; tense and bristling pizzicato sections; yearning moments of melody. It was written, Greenwood says, "mostly to stills of the landscape and the script. There were a few scenes to go on, too. The sweeter music was all written about H.W. – Daniel's child in the film – and the bigger, darker music was all meant to be for the landscape. And one

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cue was, essentially, *Jaws* – Daniel as voracious oilman buying up all the land." Listen and you can hear it: John Williams' famous two-note shark theme transposed into the opening moments of Greenwood's *Suite*, fit for another kind of carnage.

Anna Melville, too, notes the correspondence between the Polish composers on this program who challenged – and, in Penderecki's case, continue to challenge – the structures of the academy and "this next generation of composers, who have access to people and influences outside the traditional conservatoire world." Greenwood, she says, with his range of influences, "isn't separate as a composer from who he is as a musician in Radiohead".

The man himself would – to some degree – seem to concur, amenable to the suggestion that his work in composition, which is characterised by a lively tension between individual melodic lines and the ensemble en masse, has been influenced by his time as a member of a band. "I like the complexity of all the individual voices, and any element of controlled chaos that ensures no two performances - or even two bars - can sound the same," he says. "Unison playing makes me think of keyboard presets. I guess maybe this does come from the mentality of playing in a band. Or perhaps because in the first Radiohead string section we could only afford one cello and one violin – and it's been a long wait to get access to a whole room of players."

For Bryce Dessner, things were rather the other way around. "My background in music is classical," he told *Salon* in 2013. "I did graduate school in music." Dessner studied at Yale School of Music, after an adolescence spent studying classical guitar. But becoming a composer was not an altogether straightforward path. A band called The National, which formed in the late 1990s just as Dessner was finishing music school, and in which he plays guitar, has ended up occupying a good amount of his time. Drawing upon a range of indie and art rock influences, from Joy Division to The Strokes, The National have released eight studio albums, their most recent just this year; their 2017 album *Sleep Well Beast* won them a Grammy for Best Alternative Music.

The National has also delved into more outré musical

activities, including a 2013 collaboration with visual artist Ragnar Kjartansson, which saw them perform their song "Sorrow" at New York's MoMA PS1 gallery for six hours straight. "Watching them, as different members take centre stage, stand back for another's solo or pick up the slack while someone takes a break is marvelous," *The New York Times'* chief art critic, Roberta Smith, wrote in a review of Kjartansson's resulting video installation.

Dessner never felt he had to choose between popular and classical music. "I've always been in rock bands," he told *Salon.* "I was in a rock band with my brother in high school. Then I was playing classical guitar recitals, and people said, 'You know, you can't really do both things.' My intuition told me they were wrong." Speaking last year, Dessner observed that "the Stravinskys and Debussys of the world, they also had so much information in their music – it's not just Western classical music informing them but folk music, Spanish music, music from the East".

Réponse Lutosławski, which is receiving its Australian premiere on this program, is Dessner's answer to Lutosławski's *Musique funébre*. Co-commissioned by the National Audiovisual Institute of Poland and the Mexico National Orchestra, and first performed by the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2014, the work pays tribute to a composer who, Dessner says, "opened a window in a certain direction for me, or pushed open a door, through which I could then pass".

Witold Lutosławski, born in 1913, represents the generation of Polish composers who came between Szymanowski and Penderecki, the latter born in 1933. Szymanowski was an early influence on Lutosławski, and the younger composer's early work, written in the 1930s and '40s, carried the imprint of Polish folk music. Like Szymanowski before him, Lutosławski was born into the Polish upper class, but his father, Józef, was also active in the Polish independence movement that aimed to liberate Poland from Tsarist Russia. Following the Russian Revolution, Józef's political organising brought him into conflict with the Bolsheviks; he and his older son, Marian, were imprisoned and then executed in 1918. Witold Lutosławski was just five years old.

Lutosławski lived most of his life amid political conflict. As a



Above. Witold Lutosławski

young composer he earned a living playing piano in Polish bars during the Nazi occupation of Poland, risking his safety by playing Polish music – which had been banned – and Resistance songs. Many of the draft scores of his early compositions, including sketches for his first symphony, were lost when he fled Warsaw in 1944, shortly before the Warsaw Uprising. But the Russian powers that eventually seized Poland in the wake of the Nazi occupation provided little relief to Lutosławski; Symphony No.1, which was completed in 1947, was condemned under the strictures of Stalinism for being "Formalist".

Overture for Strings, first performed in 1949, represents an early attempt by Lutosławski to compose using melodic "cells" – short, recurring note patterns in which one can still hear, at this point, the sprightly trace of Polish folk music. According to Polish musicologist Andrzej Chłopecki, the overture "heralds, in many ways, the things that will happen with Lutosławski's music after *Musique Funèbre*". These included his experiments in aleatoric composition – a path that Lutosławski was prompted to explore thanks to his reading of John Cage.

Dessner, too, has been shaped as a composer by the innovations of Minimalism, and like Lutosławski before him he is interested in that space where strict repetition meets indeterminacy: the score of *Réponse Lutosławski* begins with the instruction "Slightly out of time".

Written in five movements, each section of *Réponse Lutosławski* is, Dessner says, "inspired either directly or indirectly" by Lutosławski's score for *Musique Funèbre*. The first movement, "Resonance", opens softly but arrestingly, with col legno passages in alternating duplet and triplet time on the cellos, and undulating, tremolo melodies on the violins, played high in the treble register. Triplet passages emerge again in the work's third movement, "Des Traces", which also has the cellists and contrabassists striking the sides of their instruments for percussive effect. But the overall effect of *Réponse Lutosławski* is ruminative, not aggressive; by the end of its closing section, "Residue", Dessner's piece has achieved a mood of poignant, fragile repose.

Like Greenwood, Dessner has also composed for film. He worked with Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alvo Noto on the

score for Alejandro Gonzáles Iñárritu's 2015 feature *The Revenant* – another drama of American frontier violence. Dessner has also worked with the third contemporary composer on this program, Sufjan Stevens, on an album called *Planetarium* (2017), a suite of songs about the solar system.

For her part, Melville is particularly looking forward to hearing Stevens' work *Suite from Run Rabbit Run* being played in front of an audience. Arranged for strings by Michael Atkinson, from Stevens' 2001 electronic album *Enjoy Your Rabbit*, the piece "is just such a party", Melville says. "It's one of those pieces that takes you by surprise: it's uplifting, moving, and gets people moving in a way that you weren't expecting. I love watching the audience in some of these moments, rather than the musicians."

Tognetti concurs. "Suite from Run Rabbit Run, we've now played a lot," he says, "and it's really high energy, the audience responds in a rapturous way, which is according to the energy of the music."

Both of them also agree on the fact that the live concert is an unsurpassable way to experience all of these works: attentively, and collectively, without the distraction of being able to click through to something else. "Being forced to listen is a wonderful thing," Tognetti says. "You don't just listen to 30 seconds and say, 'I don't like it.'"

Greenwood, too, who has played in countless settings and to millions of people for more than 30 years, is a passionate advocate of the live experience.

"If you've not seen a piece live, you've not heard it, and can't make a judgement," he says. "Penderecki, for example, is, on recordings, harsh, loud, abrasive, all the cliched things contemporary music is meant to be. In the concert hall, it's softer, stranger and far more colourful than the sound coming out of your speakers.

"All these players put so many years of their life into learning to play," he continues, "and that's all distilled into one performance ... and then their sound is just diffused into the room and soaked into the walls. If you aren't in that room, you can't experience the same feeling. That's the sensation I'm constantly chasing."

Following page. Jonny Greenwood



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, Beethoven, a collection of the ACO's legendary Beethoven recordings, and the soundtrack to the acclaimed cinematic collaboration, Mountain.

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ACO HOMECASTS

We launched ACO HomeCasts, our digital season, to ensure we can continue to make music and perform for you while we are out of the concert hall. Sign up to our eNews and follow us across our social channels to enjoy new recordings, live streamed performances, access to archival and never-released footage, specially curated playlists, in-depth interviews and more.

In case you missed it

Coming up



Helena Rathbone Mother's Day Special Performance SUN 10 MAY, 12PM AEST

Join ACO Principal Violin Helena Rathbone and her two sons for a special Mother's Day performance.



Brahms's Double Concerto ACO In Concert WATCH ON FACEBOOK

Relive this exhilarating performance of Brahms's Double Concerto, featuring Richard Tognetti and Timo-Veikko Valve.



The Balkan Express ACO Backstage WATCH ON FACEBOOK

ACO violinist Maja Savnik pays homage to the Balkans in this stirring video featuring the folk music of her homeland.



Richard Tognetti & Satu Vänskä in Recital ACO Home to Home WATCH ON FACEBOOK

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We look forward to joining you all in a concert hall as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, enjoy ACO HomeCasts.

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