

Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LUMINOUS

Directed by Richard Tognetti

AUGUST 2019



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PRINCIPAL PARTNER







Bill Henson
Untitled, 2000/2003
CL SH 453 N9A
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

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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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WELCOME

It's been ten years since we last performed *Luminous*, Richard Tognetti's evocative cross-artform collaboration with photographer Bill Henson. I can still clearly remember the first time I saw this work in Melbourne many years ago. We are delighted to bring it back, revived and refreshed and to welcome the wonderful singer-songwriter Lior in his ACO debut.

On behalf of us all at the ACO, I thank Patrons Leslie & Ginny Green and all the generous individuals within the Luminous Circle who have made the restaging of this ambitious work possible.

I thank our audience who contributed to our end of financial year Annual Giving Campaign. Your support ensures the ACO will continue to bring world-class music to classrooms, regional centres and concert halls around Australia and abroad for many years to come.

It's a busy time of year for the ACO as on Wednesday 14 August, in the midst of this national tour, we will be announcing our 2020 Season. If you haven't already, I urge you to sign up to our eNews on the website to be amongst the first to explore next year's exciting season.

Thank you for joining us in the concert hall and I hope you enjoy this wonderful collaboration.



Richard Evans
Managing Director

Join the conversation [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [YouTube](#) #ACO19

Thank you to the Luminous Circle for supporting this National Tour:

PATRONS

Leslie & Ginny Green

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Craig Kimberley OAM
Naomi Milgrom Foundation
Martyn Myer AO &
Louise Myer
Peter & Victoria Shorthouse

FRIENDS

Andrew Clouston
Detached Hobart
Peter Jopling AM QC
Patricia Mason &
Paul Walker



COVER IMAGE
Bill Henson

Untitled
2000/2003
LMO SH177 N2A
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

News



ACO Academy

12 JULY, CITY RECITAL HALL

Congratulations to all those involved in the 2019 ACO Academy program and for their spectacular performance!



Thank you

ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all who supported our Annual Giving Campaign. Your contribution will bring music to classrooms and concerts halls around Australia, inspiring the next generation of musicians.



University of Melbourne Partnership

ANNOUCEMENT

We are delighted to announce that the University of Melbourne has become our official University Partner. The partnership is made possible by the support of Martyn and Louise Myer through the Sidney Myer University Trust.

Coming up



AUG

2020 Season Announced

14 AUGUST

We will announce our exciting 2020 Season on Wednesday 14 August.



SEP

Celebrating Mozart

5-17 SEPTEMBER

Wollongong, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney

Pianist Dejan Lazic reunites with Richard Tognetti and the Orchestra for a celebration of Mozart's symphonies and concertos.



OCT

Barbican Residency

3-5 OCTOBER

London

We return to London for the second of our three seasons in residence at the Barbican Centre.



Intimate Bach

19-30 OCTOBER

Sydney, Brisbane, Wollongong, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth

Richard Tognetti is joined by Brett Dean, Erin Helyard and ACO Principal Cello Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve for a celebration of Bach's genius.



Serenades For Strings

19-29 OCTOBER

Cairns, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Lismore, Bellingen and Armidale

ACO Principal Violin Helena Rathbone leads ACO Collective with works by Beethoven, Elgar and Mendelssohn.



NOV

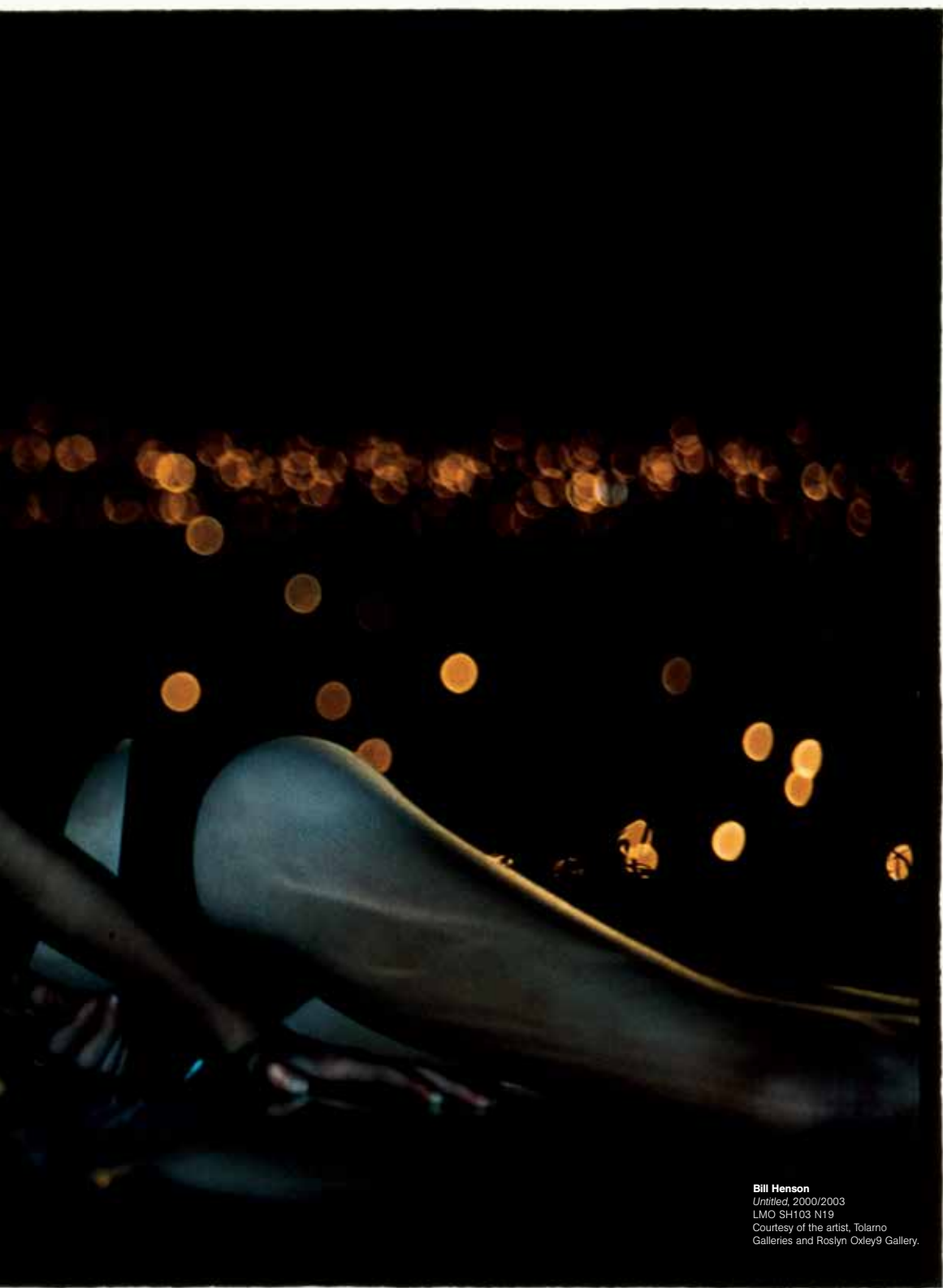
Brahms & Dvořák

9-22 NOVEMBER

Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Newcastle, Sydney and Brisbane

An exuberant end to our 2019 concert season!





Bill Henson
Untitled, 2000/2003
LMO SH103 N19
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno
Galleries and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.



Australian
Chamber
Orchestra

New Season announced 14 August

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2020 Season announcement straight
to your inbox aco.com.au/signup

ACO 2020



BOOKINGS

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    #ACO20

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



PROGRAM

Richard Tognetti Director and Violin
 Bill Henson Photography, Cinematography, Editing
 Lior Vocals
 Australian Chamber Orchestra

PRE-CONCERT 45 mins prior to the performance mins
TALK See page 12 for details

PAUL HEALY	Sound Sculpture	5
SCHNITTKE (arr. Bashmet)	Trio Sonata: II. Adagio	15
BRITTEN (arr. Tognetti)	Corpus Christi Carol	3
SCHNITTKE (arr. Bashmet)	Trio Sonata: I. Moderato	17
GABRIEL YARED (arr. Tognetti)	The Talented Mr Ripley: Lullaby for Cain	4
R.E.M. (arr. Tognetti)	I've Been High	4
PAUL HEALY	Sound Sculpture	3
PURCELL	King Arthur, Z.628: "What power art thou?"	3

INTERVAL 20

PAUL HEALY	Sound Sculpture	3
PĒTERIS VASKS	Concerto for Violin and Strings "Distant Light"	33
PAUL HEALY	Sound Sculpture	1
JANÁČEK (arr. Burghauser)	On an Overgrown Path: Good night!	3

Creative and Production

Paul Healy Sound Sculptor
 Bob Scott Sound Engineer
 Nigel Jamieson Stagecraft Advisor
 Hayley Miro Editing and Cinematography (Purcell)
 Joseph Nizeti Multimedia Producer
 Suzy Brooks Lighting Designer
 Callum Walker Video Systems Operator

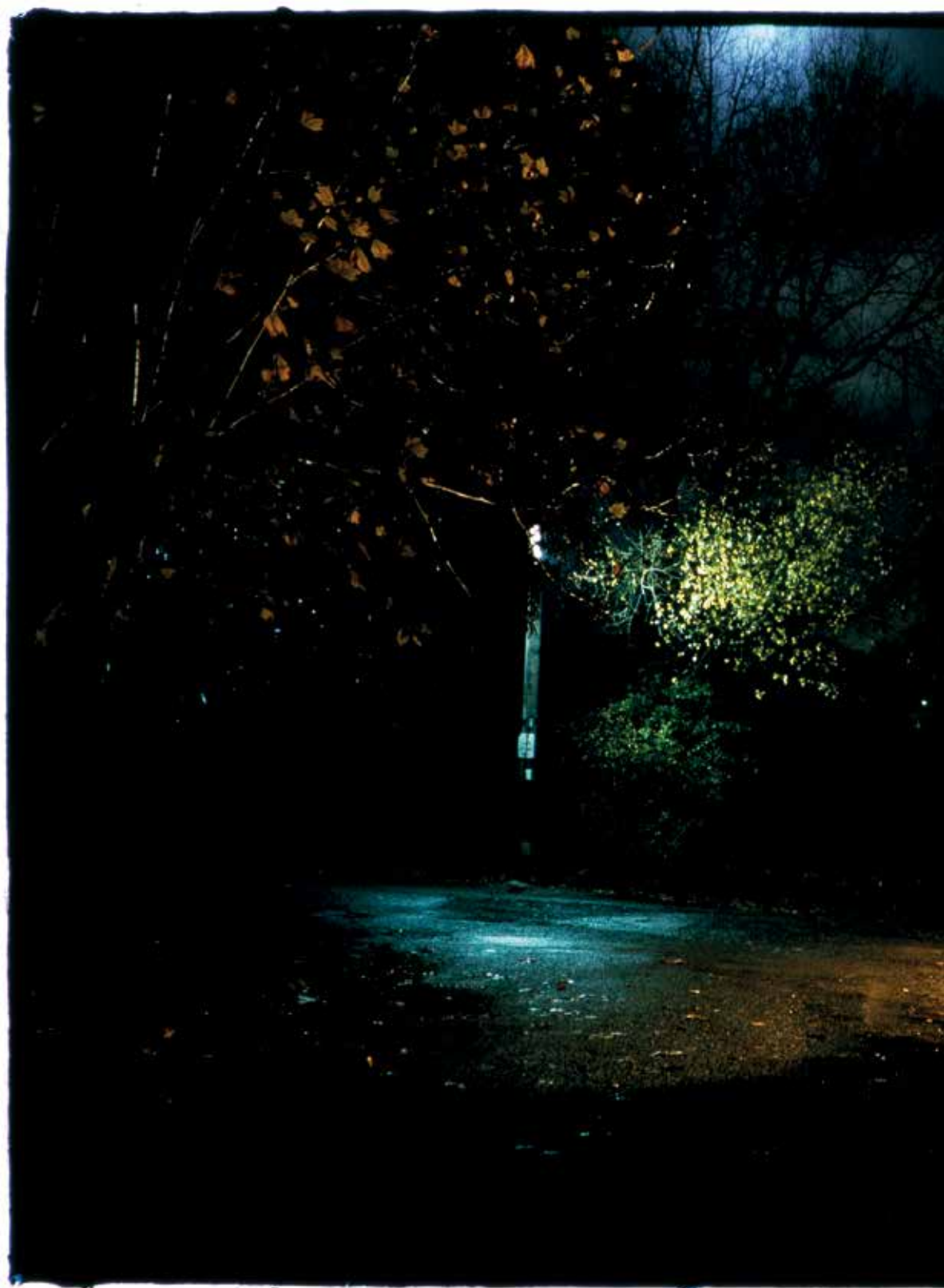
Please note that the works in each half will be played without a break.

The concert will last approximately two hours, 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.





Bill Henson
Untitled, 1998
CL SH 237 N17
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

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PROGRAM IN SHORT

Your five-minute read
before lights down.

Pre-concert talks

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

Canberra
Kim Cunio
Sat 10 August, 7.15pm

Arts Centre Melbourne
Lucy Rash
Sun 11 August, 1.45pm
Mon 12 August, 6.45pm

Adelaide Town Hall
Kane Moroney
Tue 13 August, 6.45pm

Perth Concert Hall
Roslind Appleby
Wed 14 August, 6.45pm

Sydney – City Recital Hall
Anna Melville
Sat 17 August, 6.15pm
Tue 20 August, 7.15pm
Wed 21 August, 6.15pm
Fri 23 August, 12.45pm

Sydney Opera House
Anna Melville
Sun 18 August, 1.15pm

Brisbane – QPAC
Gillian Wills
Mon 19 August, 6.15pm

Pre-concert speakers are
subject to change.

The Music of *Luminous*

Luminous is a harmonious marriage of music and image. The **sound sculptures** of **Paul Healy** were commissioned for this project to be the tissue that binds music and imagery. The industrial and cityscape backdrops of Bill Henson's imagery serve as Healy's sonic inspiration, as well as the feelings one has when contemplating Henson's photographs: "I have laced these environmental sounds with distant fragments of the musical phrases and human voice, both whispers and singing."

Just as Henson's images are contemporary works that reference traditions of visual art, so too does the music of **Alfred Schnittke**, whose "polystylism" encompasses many musical traditions. His **Trio Sonata**, composed in 1985 to mark 100 years since the birth of Alban Berg (and 50 years since his death), is inspired by the Viennese tradition, from the dark serialism of Berg to its light café waltzes.

Benjamin Britten's setting of the **Corpus Christi Carol** serves as an interlude between the two movements of Schnittke's Trio Sonata. The words of this ancient carol are rich in the imagery of Christ's Passion, the Holy Grail and the Eucharist, intertwined using the Medieval image of a bleeding knight laying at his final resting place, mourned by a grieving maiden.

Gabriel Yared's haunting "**Lullaby for Cain**" from *The Talented Mr Ripley* explores the relationship between the sociopathic Tom Ripley and playboy Dickie Greenleaf, whom Ripley murders in order to assume his identity. The song explores this through the parallel Biblical story of Cain and Abel, where Cain murders Abel in an envious rage. Their mother, Eve, sings the lullaby: grieving her loss, still loving her murderous son.

The American rock band **R.E.M.**, formed in 1980, was one of the pioneers of alternative rock, earning initial success with their 1987 single "The One I Love" and worldwide fame with their albums *Out of Time* and *Automatic for the People*. "**I've Been High**", from their 2001 album *Reveal*, is a song of beautiful ambiguity, expressing the pains of a drug user who's lost everything but still needs his fix, and the ups and downs in all our lives.

“The industrial and cityscape backdrops of Bill Henson’s imagery serve as Healy’s sonic inspiration... “I have laced these environmental sounds with distant fragments of the musical phrases and human voice, both whispers and singing.”

The “Frost Scene” of **Henry Purcell**’s 1691 opera *King Arthur* has been hailed as one of Purcell’s most famous achievements. The entire scene is a vision conjured by the heathen magician Osmond in order to seduce Emmeline, King Arthur’s abducted fiancée. In it, the Cold Genius is reluctantly awoken by Cupid to acknowledge love’s power. Osmond fails, but the chilling aria “**What power art thou?**” has remained one of Purcell’s finest.

Latvian composer **Pēteris Vasks** says “most people today no longer possess beliefs, love and ideals. The spiritual dimension has been lost. My intention is to provide food for the soul”. Vasks’ music is an enduring pledge of service to humanity, positioning ideals like beauty, faith and joy in opposition to repression and violence. What is the ***Distant Light*** that gives his 1997 violin concerto its title? “Childhood memories”, says Vasks, “but also the glittering stars, millions of light years away.”

Like many of **Leoš Janáček**’s works, ***On an Overgrown Path*** is programmatic, indeed autobiographical. Hukvaldy, Janáček’s birthplace, was a place of natural beauty and comforting familiarity, but also a place of great sorrow. It was where his beloved daughter Olga spent her last days, dying of typhoid fever. It is Olga to whom Janáček is saying “Good night!” in a merciful interlude between “Words fail!” and “Unutterable anguish!”

Corpus Christi Carol

He bare him up, he bare him down,
 He bare him into an orchard brown.
Lully, lullay, lully, lullay
The falcon hath borne my make away.

In that orchard there was an hall
 That was hangèd with purple and pall.
 And in that hall there was a bed,
 It was hangèd with gold so red.
Lully, lullay...

In that bed there lieth a knight,
 His woundès bleeding, day and night.
 By that bedside kneeleth a may
 And she weepeth both night and day.
Lully, lullay...

And by that bedside there standeth a stone,
 Corpus Christi written thereon.

Text: traditional

Lullaby for Cain

From the silence, from the night
 Comes a distant lullaby.
 Cry, remember that first cry,
 Your brother standing by
 and loved, both loved,
 Beloved sons of mine.

Sing a lullaby,
 mother is close by.
 Innocent eyes, such innocent eyes.

Envy stole your brother's life,
 came home, murdered peace of mind.
 Left you nightmares on the pillow
 Sleep now.

Soul, surrendering your soul
 the heart of you not whole
 for love, but love,
 what toll?

Cast into the dark,
 Branded with the mark
 of shame, of Cain.

From the garden of God's light
 to a wilderness of night.
 Sleep now, sleep now.

Text © Anthony Minghella

I've Been High

Have you seen? Have not, will travel.
Have I missed the big reveal?
Do my eyes, do my eyes seem empty?
I've forgotten how this feels.

I've been high
I've climbed so high
But life sometimes it washes over me.

Have you been? Have done, will travel.
I fell down on my knees.
Was I wrong? I don't know, don't answer.
I just needed to believe.

I've been high
I've climbed so high
But life sometimes it washes over me.

So I dive into a pool so cool and deep
That if I sink I sink and when I swim I fly
So high...

What I want, what I really want is
Just to live my life on high.
And I know – I know you want the same
I can see it in your eyes.

I've been high
I've climbed so high
But life sometimes it washes over me
Washes over me
Close my eyes so I can see
Make my make-believe believe in me.

*Words and music © Peter Lawrence Buck, Michael Mills
and Michael Stipe*

What power art thou?

What Power art thou,
Who from below,
Hast made me rise,
Unwillingly and slow,
From beds of everlasting snow!
See'st thou not how stiff,
And wondrous old,
Far unfit to bear the bitter cold.
I can scarcely move,
Or draw my breath,
I can scarcely move,
Or draw my breath.

Let me, let me,
Let me, let me,
Freeze again...
Let me, let me,
Freeze again to death!

(Text: John Dryden)



Wesfarmers Arts

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COLLECTIVE

PEKKA KUUSISTO ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Richard Tognetti AO, ACO Artistic Director & Lead Violin and Pekka Kuusisto, ACO Collective Artistic Director

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



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.



Lior
Vocals



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 loan from Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM & Michelle Belgiorno-Nettis. Her Chair is sponsored by Kay Bryan.



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.



Maja Savnik

Violin

Maja plays the 1714 'ex-Isolde 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 loan from the ACO Instrument Fund. His Chair is sponsored by Di Jameson.



Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba

Violin

Thibaud currently plays Liisa Pallandi's violin which is a 1946 Charles Clarke.



Hyobi Sim

Guest Principal Viola

Hyobi appears courtesy of Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Hyobi plays her own 19th Century Italian viola by Giovanni Pistucci. The Principal Viola Chair is sponsored by peckvonhartel architects – Robert Peck AM, Yvonne von Hartel AM, Rachel Peck & Marten Peck.



Nicole Divall

Viola

Nikki plays a 2012 Bronek Cison viola. Her Chair is sponsored by Ian Lansdown.



Elizabeth Woolnough

Viola

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



Kaori Yamagami

Guest Principal Cello

Kaori plays Julian Thompson's cello which was made in Bern in 1898 by Swiss maker, Gustav Methfessel.



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

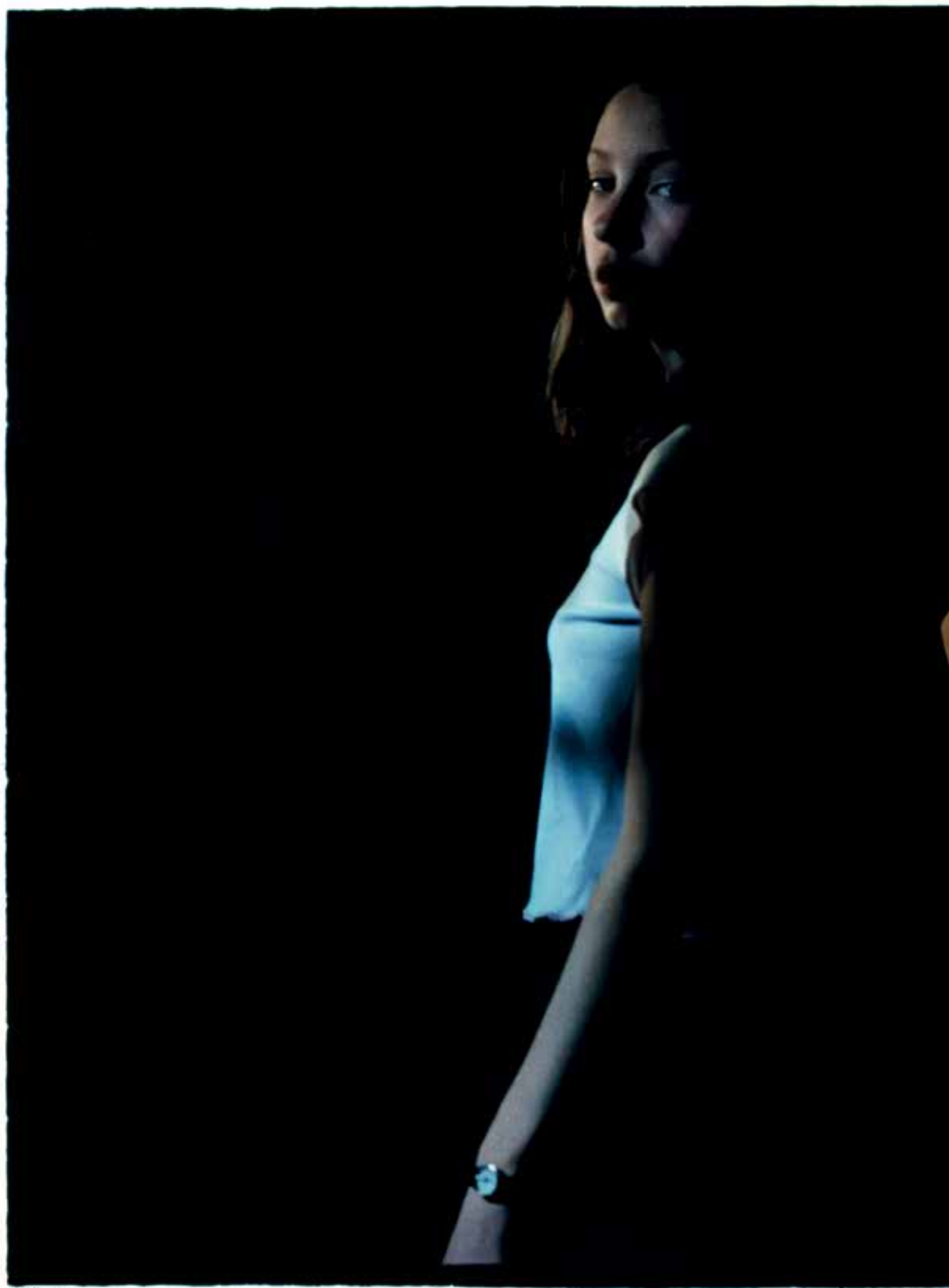
Julian plays a 1729 Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andreæ cello with elements of the instrument crafted by his son, Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, kindly donated to the ACO by Peter Weiss AO. His Chair is sponsored by The Grist & Stewart Families.



Maxime Bibeau

Principal Bass

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





Bill Henson
Untitled, 2004/05
AB SH28 N13
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

Peter Craven talks to Richard Tognetti and Bill Henson about the shape of their collaboration for *Luminous*

Words. Peter Craven

Peter Craven is a writer and critic. He reviews theatre for *The Saturday Paper*.

Photo. Nic Walker

TWO WORLDS, STANDING TOGETHER AND APART





There's something deep and dazzling about the idea of Richard Tognetti and the Australian Chamber Orchestra collaborating again with Bill Henson in a rerun of *Luminous*, which was a revelation when it was first staged in 2005, not long after the massive and masterful retrospective of the great photographer's career in Sydney and Melbourne and then put on again in 2009 in the wake of the controversy that had then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd declaring dangerously and on little knowledge that Henson's photographs were "revolting". Henson's fame skyrocketed, fuelled by confected scandal, but it was assured because he was already a photographer with a reputation like that of a great painter. And the ACO's reputation is a runaway thing and their repertoire can range from Tognetti himself doing Bach's works for violin to that bizarre enthrallment of a show in which Meow Meow and the now-octogenarian Barry Humphries performed the music of the Weimar Republic that had meant so much to Humphries as a Camberwell boy in long-ago Melbourne.

Ten years ago, in Sydney, *Luminous* had an eerie majesty and its revamp suggests as rich and strange a thing for the ear and the eye and whatever lies between.

A couple of Italianate boys, Caravaggio runaways, one somewhat older than the other, fiddle at something. A girl is poised in expectation, not apprehension exactly, at God knows what. Youth scampers sensuously, is sodden, begrimed. A sunset flames in a luminescent radiance of orange and gold. A wind blows sideways through a greyer, paler landscape: is it edging towards rain, or dusk?

That's Henson and he's there to abide with and sometimes eliminate himself to blackness or blankness alongside such things as Tognetti on violin, soaring, maybe stupefying, as he does Pēteris Vasks' Violin Concerto with its revolutions and comings together and further Sunderings. This



black Russianism is there together with the *Adagio* from Schnittke's Trio Sonata, to indicate or inflect the tradition he comes out of, but also with that air from Purcell, "What power art thou?", sung modern, sung down – though Henson likes to remember the phrasing of the countertenor Andreas Scholl – by the contemporary singer Lior. Is Britten's *Corpus Christi Carol* there to indicate the lines on which the British genius sees the development of song? Is Janáček there for the greater reverberation of the Slavs? In any case, it's a modern program, partly a Modernist one, and Henson is there with his high and moody literary amplitude of manner and momentum, as if life were forever recapitulating a novel of Thomas Mann where the Lido beckons like the mouth of death and the mountain is marvellous because disease is something to be meditated on and the drum of war is over the hills but not far away.

Tognetti knows what he's doing, with Henson looking like a presence commensurate with the vision of the music. And Tognetti is also histrionically, vibrantly, a man of style and a showman of classical beauty. "We have to get back to beauty," he says, as if we'd ever left it. He is packaging as he is pacing and the insinuation with Henson in concert is to deepen the conviction that art, whichever and whatever

Bill Henson

Untitled, 1998/1999/2000
CL SH 366 N18A

Courtesy of the artist,
Tolarno Galleries and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

“the insinuation with Henson in concert is to deepen the conviction that art, whichever and whatever way it happens to express itself, is the biggest kind of deal, not a mere shuffle or an indulgence of taste”

way it happens to express itself, is the biggest kind of deal, not a mere shuffle or an indulgence of taste. I asked Tognetti what made him look for a visual artist and how does he see the history of the visual-cum-musical.

“There was Scriabin. And then movies come along, and a whole stream of synaesthesia, of music and colour, and a sort of abstracted vision that took a back seat for many years. People got swept away by the moving image. And we were looking at working with artists ... It had to be silent and it had to be a deeper prelude – a forepath to music. I think it was Jan Minchin who said that what would be perfect would be Bill.”

Tognetti talks of the friendship that came from being thrust together to come up with the idea. “Bill started immediately talking about music and I realised he had a profound knowledge of music. I'd go as far as to say his work, most of his work, is informed by his hankering for the abstracted and emotional quality of pure music. Sometimes it's just one phrase of some music that he can recall and it stays there for him as a sort of dream.”

Here, Tognetti cites David Malouf saying that with certain elements of art you want it, at one extremity, to stay

mysterious. The novelist with the polymath aesthetic said: "I don't want to know how it's done. I need the magic to keep it believable." On this, Tognetti says: "And so Bill, although he's sophisticated, can sometimes talk with an autodidactic passion: you know, he'll say 'This is the best art.'"

Tognetti has a deep respect for Henson's feeling for music. He says he is profoundly moved by Henson's reaction to things. But why does he need the images, Bill Henson's or anyone's? Doesn't music have its own aesthetic autonomy? "An excellent, necessary question," he says, gathering breath. "It's a fine arc of inspiration. Just in terms of art, we are in such deft hands with Bill. One very important thing is that very early on Bill said, 'If the vision will bring the music down then the image should be black, so when the music is such that the images distract from that pure abstract emotion we go black.'"

For Bill Henson, it has always been a solitary thing, a hermit-in-the-wilderness thing, being the kind of photographer he is. To talk to Henson even in the context of a show like *Luminous* is always to enter that thoughtful introspective space from which he makes his work. Henson is not a photographer's photographer – photography is for him a window on a world in which every light shines, every darkness dazzles – and you can hear how his sense of the aesthetic – his sense of music, his sense of literature, his sense of drama – all cohere.

"The thing about objects," he says, "– and I make objects – is that it's not a time-based thing. Music is time-based – it's like the cinema, it's like theatre. When you look into it, in their highest state they seem almost to attain a stillness so that a great moment in the cinema feels as though it's still. This is true of literature, too, and the words of literature. It's as if they're no longer just symbols of something, they're objects. And so the power of objects is very important, but they rely on stillness and silence for that power. It's not like music at all. And it's what you need for contemplation – stillness and silence. So there's a lot of power there, but it's different. That's why I'm not with Walter Pater at all in his belief that art strives for the condition of music."



Above. Bill Henson and Richard Tognetti in Henson's studio.



“It was about turning these two universes into parallel universes which reflected each other but didn’t illustrate each other.”

So we’re getting a denial of the art for art’s sake doctrine as a way of defining the nature of the relationship between a photographer, who is sometimes thought of as having the ambitions of a painter, attempting to clarify the nature of what he does, and the music of a musician he’s working with.

Suddenly, not quite predictably, he introduces the idea of painting at its grandest and he does so in terms of depth of life, of truth, the highest moral claim for art.

“So if I’m standing in front of Rembrandt’s *Return of the Prodigal Son* you get the sense of the lumpy paint in this very large, late Rembrandt at the Hermitage in St Petersburg. The paint is the physical manifestation of pathos. It’s like you could pick a bit of pathos off the surface of the painting. It’s quite incredible. And, you know, the way we relate to photographs is entirely different to the way we relate to paintings. And that’s true of music and pictures, as well. But there’s a way in which you can have a dialogue between these two. And the way you do that is to use both methods all the time: what happens is that you give each medium the space in which it can be all it can possibly be. That was the key to making this thing with Richard work.”

He talks about meeting with Tognetti back in 2005, and how they played each other the famous Haydn symphonies and generally got on like a house on fire. Then, after a sea of examples, he enunciates something like the central principle of the collaboration.

"And," he says, "I thought, 'Yes, I can really do something with this or *not* go with this.' The whole point of the enterprise is that you don't want the music to illustrate the pictures and you don't want the pictures to illustrate the music. A mistake most people make when they do these collaborative things is that they don't give the music the space it needs. So I'm producing all these great big stretches of blackness where there is nothing on the screen, because it can't work when Richard is doing an energetic cadenza on his violin. I'm not going to have something struggling away in the background on the screen. But when there are passages in the music where it's coming and going and asking for silence, you know, that's when the images should occupy the space and you just have to understand how the ebb and flow works."

He has thought about the whole principle of how, in practice, independence, collocation, separateness can work. "You have to get rid of all that stuff, so that they don't echo each other. They almost seem like two parallel universes, but somehow the sum is greater than the parts, and it's got a lot to do with understanding how to introduce space into the whole thing so that you're not being trapped in a kind of lift for the weekend with two arguing artforms."

His sense of how to allow each form a parallel integrity involved the most elaborate process of filming the pictures and soundtracking the process of the music's interplay and the isolation of them. The upshot, in Henson's description of how he set about shaping and effectively choreographing *Luminous*, by shooting the image in relation to the presence and withdrawal of the music, is extraordinary in the telling, just as it is extraordinary in the stasis and movement of *Luminous*.

"I can explain it and the process," he says. "Once we decided on the music for the programs 10 years ago, I got my hands on some recordings and put them on my stereo, in my studio, and I had a movie camera sitting on a tripod, with one of those fluid heads that makes it move very slowly and smoothly. And I had the photographs that I was interested in put together with these pieces of music. What I did then was play the music in my studio, turned the microphone on the moving camera on so you could record whatever was going on. It picked up the music and it also picked up my spoken work next to the camera."



Above. *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, depicting the moment of the prodigal son's return to his father in the Biblical parable. Oil painting by Rembrandt van Rijn.



“It was the weirdest and most elaborate system for co-ordinating word and image imaginable and it offered the ACO both the key to a remarkable show and a needful tour de force of co-ordinated playing.”

I would move the camera down across the image and at a certain point would seesaw the camera up and down gently, where the music was doing something that made me think that was how the image should move.

“So I had all these tapes from the camera which were the final imagery they would digitise and put up on the screen, with all my spoken instructions. But all the images were accompanied by the music at exactly the point where I was doing things with the camera or in response to the music or in anticipation of something, whether the silence or the noise. And you’d see the way the camera stuttered slightly and then it started to pull back – it was zooming out of this thing, it was drifting off, and that’s exactly where that goes because you would hear the music they had to play at that second. And so we put together a digital tape with all of this stuff including the black spaces.”

It was the weirdest and most elaborate system for co-ordinating word and image imaginable and it offered the ACO both the key to a remarkable show and a needful tour de force of co-ordinated playing.

“And the orchestra had this big challenge,” Henson says, “which was to play to the tape so they had to begin and do the things they did as musicians at exactly the right time so the images would work in tandem. It was about turning these two universes into parallel universes which reflected each other but didn’t illustrate each other.”



Above. Paul Thomas Mann was a German novelist, short story writer, social critic, philanthropist, essayist, and the 1929 Nobel Prize in Literature laureate. His highly symbolic and ironic epic novels and novellas are noted for their insight into the psychology of the artist and the intellectual.

One of the abiding fascinations with Bill Henson is the way he muses about something of which he is confident intellectually and practically. He knows *Luminous* and he likes it, and he knows exactly what he's doing with it, though there is always with him a kind of abiding sense of mystery.

And when Henson is asked to comment on Tognetti's beauty line, he says: "I can't see that it's been anywhere but at the centre of the most compelling and interesting things that have been written."

He adds, not at all dismissively, just by way of distinction, that the compositional mind and the performative one are different beasts. "I say to Richard, you're in a performative headspace. I'm just dreaming my dreamy dreams, as they say in Monty Python. There's a necessary and absolute disconnectedness between someone who's composing and someone who's performing. If I was to say anything apposite then it would be the thing Bob Hughes popularised: meaning comes from feeling. It is hard for people to allow themselves to feel something without analysing it and justifying it and giving it a political dimension. That's a great pity."

With Henson there's always a sense of the shock and scandal of art, which is at the furthest extreme not from moral power but from moral attitude. His way of articulating this leads him from Looney Tunes to his beloved Thomas Mann at his most apparently decadent.

"This is where you reclaim your 'poisonal space' as Bugs Bunny would say. Remember how in *Death in Venice* Aschenbach gets into the lift for the first time. He looks up and there's Tadzio standing right in front of him and it's the first time he's been close to the boy and he notices he has jagged bluish teeth of the kind that chlorotic people have, and he muses to himself that this beautiful creature will not live to grow old and it gives Aschenbach a twinge of pleasure which he chooses not to investigate. You can just choose to go in this direction or that direction. But, of course, that would be seen as a very ambiguous turn."

For Henson, one suspects, it's a violation of the holiness of the heart's affections to walk away from ambivalence. Then he takes a shot at anyone who would disagree with

“I say to Richard, you’re in a performative headspace. I’m just dreaming my dreamy dreams, as they say in Monty Python”

him about this. It could hardly be more deadly or more self-assured. “It’s the lowest rung on art’s ladder to heaven, politics,” he says.

It’s natural to return to Tognetti. He’s hyperconscious, he says, of Henson as “a king of chiaroscuro” and his selections for *Luminous* tally with this: the darkness of the Schnittke and then the radiant transition to the lightness of Britten’s *Corpus Christi Carol*, which was massively popularised by Jeff Buckley in his *Hallelujah* mode, and Lior has precisely the sort of supple, popular voice to carry this bit of crossover from darkness into light. Then back into the dark with Schnittke to emerge into Gabriel Yared’s *Lullaby for Cain*, forever associated with Sinéad O’Connor singing one of the great, arty post-Dylan songs, again with Lior. Then *I’ve Been High* from R.E.M., a song that thrilled Tognetti when he heard it performed on The Panel years ago. And then, by way of another contrast, Purcell at his most dramatic and plangent with Lior singing “What power art thou?” from *King Arthur*.

After the interval, the Concerto for Violin and Strings by the Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks allows the ACO its maximum range of colouration and impassioned tenebrous power, with Tognetti on violin and Henson summoning up a wilderness of worlds of dark and light.

We end *Luminous* with Janáček’s *On an Overgrown Path: Good night!*, adapted for strings. “It was originally written for piano,” Tognetti says, “but it is his equivalent to one of Schubert’s song cycles.”

So with the prospect of such dramatic variation and overriding unity there is just the invitation *Luminous* presents: two art forms, two worlds, standing together and standing apart. ●





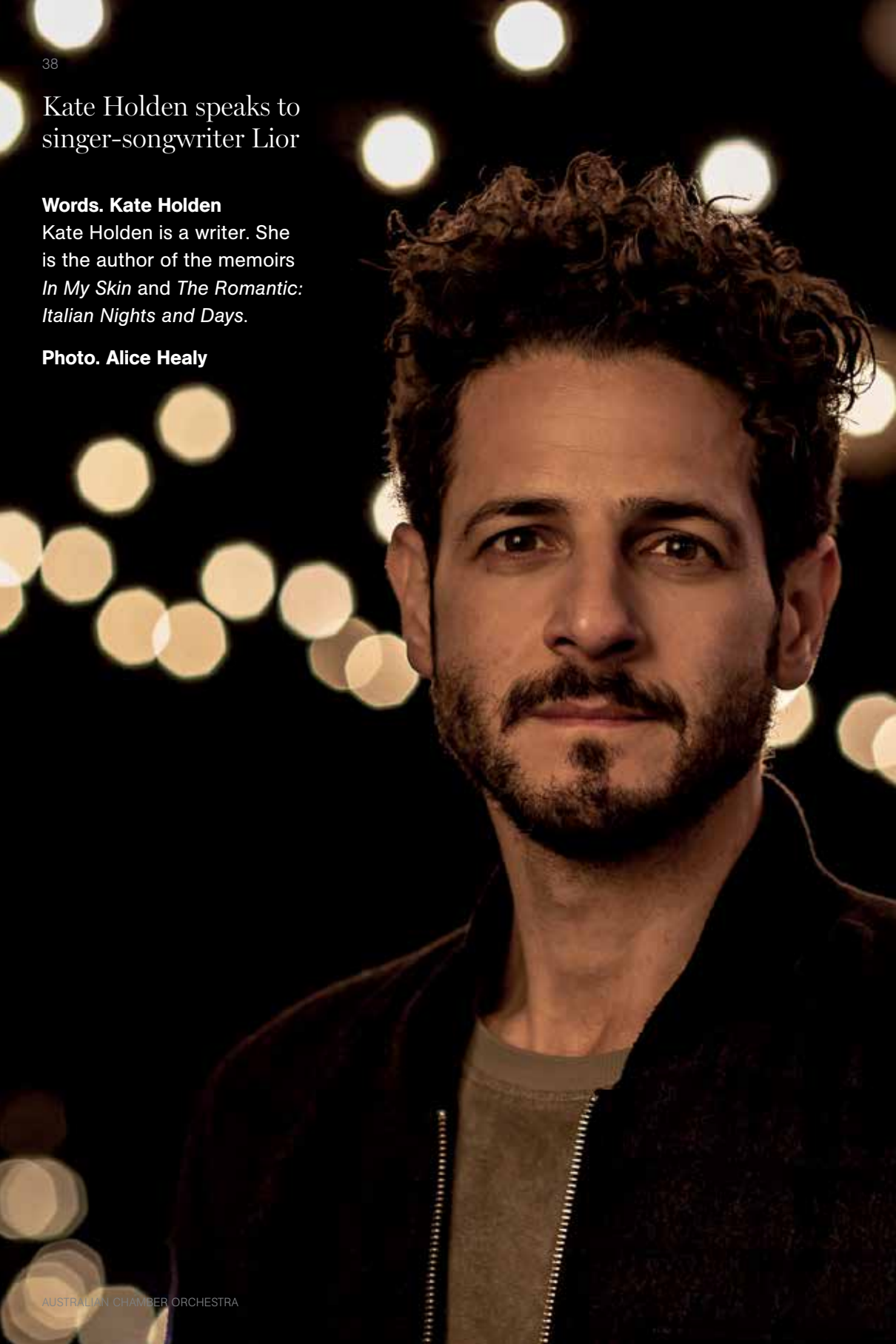
Bill Henson
Untitled, 1998
CL SH 366 N18A
Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

Kate Holden speaks to singer-songwriter Lior

Words. Kate Holden

Kate Holden is a writer. She is the author of the memoirs *In My Skin* and *The Romantic: Italian Nights and Days*.

Photo. Alice Healy





A BEAUTIFUL COHESION

The voice is sweet and unstrained: the voice of a relaxed man. It comes from his young face effortlessly, although his brow creases with feeling, and it arrives in the ear as kindly as if someone were telling good news.

For the past 15 years, this voice of Lior Attar's has been singing his own music, since the success of his debut album, *Autumn Flow*. That body of intimate, thoughtful missives from the gentler side of pop balladry, independently produced and fully realised, brought Lior to the public in his late 20s after a long, modest preparation for singer-songwriting. "I spent my later teenage years in bands and learning the craft and how to communicate with other musicians. I always say," he starts to laugh, "I'm just so fortunate that YouTube wasn't around when I was a beginner. For me to have artistic control was most important. I built up to it and by the time I put out a whole album it was a body of work I was really proud of. I never thought it would have any success commercially so I thought, at least I can do something I can be proud of for the rest of my life." Since the surprise of national success in 2005, he has released six albums of his own material, is a multi-ARIA award winner, toured internationally, and written the beloved closing lullaby of ABC Kids' *Giggle and Hoot*.

With songs of love, of relationships and his own maturing, the tenderness of his voice expresses the candour of his art. "You think, my work's probably always going to be a private little thing that I do for myself, and maybe a few people will like it and hear it, and suddenly it's part of the public arena: it's kind of weird. Especially when you think that that's never going to be you. There's a beautiful transfer of ownership," he confides. "You write a song and it's yours; and then someone tells you it's theirs. That's the greatest compliment really." Indeed, his "This Old Love" is a favourite for weddings and crooned by the lovelorn; both fans and fellow musicians cherish his melodies, his lyrics and his unassuming troubadour demeanour.

But Lior has worked his vocal range down some demanding byways. "I look at it like a kind of straight line: the core of me is a singer-songwriter, then I branch off to do musical collaborations as side projects. One reason is to satisfy other aspects of my musical curiosity, that perhaps don't have a place in my singer-songwriter world. And being a



Above. The cover art for the album *Autumn Flow* by the artist Lior. The cover art copyright is believed to belong to the label, Independent, or the graphic artist(s).

“You write a song and it’s yours; and then someone tells you it’s theirs. That’s the greatest compliment really.”

solo artist can be solitary. I enjoy the collaborative element of working together with people like Nigel Westlake and Paul Grabowsky, people I’ve embarked on major collaborations with over the past few years.”

It was in 2013 that the *Compassion* symphonic song cycle – composed with Westlake, “one of the most beautiful and humble human being I’ve ever met” but in grief following the death of his son – was first performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Drawing on Lior’s Israeli heritage and devised to braid Hebrew and Arabic poetry, its central hymn, “Avinu Malkeinu”, is a showstopper, that sweet voice growing in power to a stupendous clarion crescendo, declaring that compassion is the way to liberation. Lior sat in shirtsleeves, acoustic guitar in hand, on a concert hall stage among an orchestra for the first of what has proven many times, as the work has toured Australia and the United States. It won the 2014 ARIA Award for Best Classical Album.

Since then, he has collaborated with shadow puppet artists, appearing again at the Sydney Opera House; performed as Motel Kamzoil in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Melbourne’s Princess Theatre; and written the score for a play about Charles Darwin, *The Wider Earth*. In 2017, he collaborated with vocal group The Idea of North and composer Elena Kats-Chernin on an album for the HUSH Foundation, which records music for hospital-bound children. He has worked with Bangarra Dance Company, the Australian Youth Orchestra and, this year, with Paul Grabowsky as part of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival. And, of course, with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

“So when there’s that moment, when you know, something in you rises and you feel it happening around you, that beautiful magical moment – when that happens, it’s like a miracle”

With this history of genre-leaping, he is a nice choice for a program that includes an indie pop song and a baroque icon. For Lior himself, his encounters with classical music have brought him to a repertoire he might not have discovered: he knew the Britten carol but not the Purcell piece. He is a long admirer of the ACO, however, and was thrilled when they expressed interest in having him as a guest. “The ACO are incredible and held in such high esteem,” he says. “I’ve wanted to work with them and collaborate with them for quite a while now. You feel the dedication and perseverance in their performance.” Likewise, he is a lover of Bill Henson’s work, and says the visual half of the *Luminous* concept was another lure. Appearing in the program for four works, which spans a “lullaby” originally performed by Sinéad O’Connor and another usually sung by a baritone, he happily anticipates pushing his voice further, giving breath to new emotions. “I’m looking forward to working with Richard and the Orchestra to play around and work out where the pitch is in the range that strikes the greatest emotional resonance.”

After years of work with orchestras, he muses on the elements that go into creating what he calls “a beautiful cohesion”. He says, “You don’t realise that when you’re on the other side: the intricacies and intimate workings of an orchestra. So when there’s that moment, when you know, something in you rises and you feel it happening around you, that beautiful magical moment – when that happens, it’s like a miracle. How did *all those things* happen?” ●

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RICHARD TOGNETTI

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 ACO, and that November was appointed as the Orchestra's lead violin and, subsequently, Artistic Director. He was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

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 a 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 has also composed for numerous film soundtracks, including the ACO's documentary films *Mountain*, *The Reef* and *Musica Surfica*.

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 'Carroddus' Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor

BILL HENSON

Bill Henson is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists. Born in Melbourne in 1955, he had his first solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1975. He has since exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas, including New York, London, Paris, Beijing, Tokyo, Montreal, Barcelona, Vienna and Amsterdam. In 1995 Henson represented Australia at the Venice Biennale, with his celebrated series of cut-screen photographs. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of NSW.

In 2003 Henson's work appeared in *Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video* at the International Center of Photography, New York and he had a solo exhibition at the Centro de Fotografia, University of Salamanca, Spain. In 2005 a comprehensive survey of his work was held at Art Gallery of New South Wales and National Gallery of Victoria. This landmark event attracted record visitor numbers for a contemporary art exhibition in Australia. In 2006 Henson exhibited a major body of work in *Twilight: Photography in the Magic Hour* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Bill Henson's work is to be found in every major public collection in Australia. Overseas collections include the Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, the Houston Museum of Fine Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, the Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, the Sammlung Volpinum, Vienna, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.





LIOR

Lior is one of Australia's most treasured singer-songwriters, renowned for his beautiful voice and songs that radiate truth and sincerity. He burst on to the Australian music scene in 2005 with his debut album *Autumn Flow*, which has become one of the most successful independent debut releases in Australian music history. Lior has since released a further six albums and has toured extensively both in Australia and internationally. He is a multi-ARIA Award winner as well as an APRA Screen Award winner for his songwriting work for film and television.

In 2014 Lior collaborated with Nigel Westlake on a symphonic song cycle for voice and orchestra called 'Compassion'. The work consists of original orchestrations set to ancient texts in both Hebrew and Arabic centred around the wisdom of compassion. Lior and Westlake toured 'Compassion' with the major state orchestras and won the ARIA for 'Best Classical Album' in 2014. In 2016 Lior premiered 'Compassion' in the US with the Austin Symphony Orchestra and subsequently went on to win the 2016 Austin Table Critics' Award for 'Best Symphonic Performance'.

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