

Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BRAHMS & DVOŘÁK

Directed by Richard Tognetti



Program in Short

Your five-minute read
before lights down

Musical Accents

Andrew Ford on
nationalism in music

Helena and the ACO

Kate Holden speaks
with Helena Rathbone



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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

For the ACO's final national tour of 2019 we have brought together 52 musicians from across the globe in a monumental celebration of two of the 19th century's most extraordinary orchestral works, Brahms's Double Concerto and Dvořák's Eighth Symphony.

Following music by Australian composer Andrew Ford and the Australian premiere of Andrew Norman's *Gran Turismo*, Richard Tognetti and our Principal Cello Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve, playing their spectacular Golden Age instruments, the 1743 'Carrodus' Guarneri del Gesù violin and the 1616 Brothers Amati cello, will take centre stage in the Double Concerto for their first performance together of this magnificent work in eleven years.

2019 has been a particularly successful year for the ACO. Amongst other highlights, we acquired the latest addition to our collection of fine instruments through the ACO Instrument Fund, a 1590 Brothers Amati violin played by violinist Ike See, embarked on extremely well-received international tours to the US in April and the UK and Paris just last month, and continued to present concerts that embolden, challenge and inspire, including a revival of our multimedia collaboration *Luminous*.

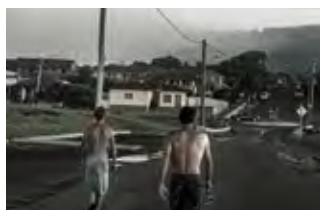
I hope you all have an enjoyable and rejuvenating festive season and look forward to seeing you in the concert hall in 2020, a year where we celebrate Richard's thirtieth year as the ACO's inimitable Artistic Director.



Richard Evans
Managing Director

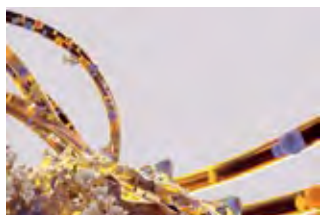
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News



Richard Tognetti & Erin Helyard Recording

ABC Classic have recently released a landmark recording of Mozart and Beethoven violin sonatas by Richard Tognetti and keyboardist Erin Helyard.



2020 Season Now On Sale

Full-Season Subscriptions, Flexi Subscriptions and single tickets to our exciting 2020 Season are now on sale. Visit aco.com.au for more information.



ACO Collective Regional Tour

ACO Collective recently returned from a six-stop tour of regional New South Wales and Queensland, led by Principal Violin Helena Rathbone.

Coming up

NOV



Breaking Ground

27 NOVEMBER & 4 DECEMBER

Sydney & Melbourne

Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto and composer-pianist Nico Muhly join forces for a program that combines the music of JS Bach with contemporary fare.

DEC



Nico Muhly and the New

4 DECEMBER

Melbourne

Pekka Kuusisto returns to Melbourne Recital Centre for a program of contemporary music built around a new violin concerto from American composer Nico Muhly.

FEB



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Richard Tognetti leads the ACO through Beethoven's first three symphonies, including the magnificent 'Eroica'.



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PROGRAM

Richard Tognetti Director and Violin
Timo-Veikko Valve Cello
Australian Chamber Orchestra

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



ACO concerts are regularly broadcast on ABC Classic.

Brahms & Dvořák will be recorded from Hamer Hall on 11 November for broadcast by ABC Classic on 16 November at 12pm, and then again on Boxing Day 26 December at 8pm.





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

Alastair McKean

Sat 9 November, 7.15pm

Melbourne

John Werteka

Sun 10 November, 1.45pm

Mon 11 November, 6.45pm

Adelaide

Kane Moroney

Tue 12 November, 6.45pm

Newcastle

Alastair McKean

Thu 14 November, 6.45pm

Sydney – City Recital Hall

Alastair McKean

Sat 16 November, 6.15pm

Tue 19 November, 6.15pm

Wed 20 November, 6.15pm

Fri 22 November, 12.45pm

Sydney Opera House

Alastair McKean

Sun 17 November, 1.15pm

Brisbane

Angela Turner

Mon 18 November, 6.15pm

Pre-concert speakers are subject to change.

Andrew Ford

(1957–)

Jouissance

This extremely short piece began life as a fanfare for two trumpets. The vibraphone was added to sustain the brass instruments' notes and to alter their timbre, which is further affected by the use of a range of mutes.

"Jouissance" is a French word whose literal meaning is "joy". It has had the same meaning in the English language since the mid-15th century. More recently, the French semiotician Roland Barthes employed the word to mean "the pleasure of the text" – the *physical joy* of reading. The composer notes that "this should have served as a warning to me, since I now learn that 'jouissance' is also one of the words the French have for orgasm. By the time I made that discovery it was too late to change the title of the piece, even if I had wanted to." With this in mind, one wonders if it is placed too early in the program.

Andrew Norman

(1979–)

Gran Turismo

Around the time American composer Andrew Norman began sketching this motoric, virtuoso piece for violin ensemble, he discovered Futurist art for the first time. At the same time, he encountered an addictive car racing video game that bears the name *Gran Turismo*.

Norman recalls: "I was experiencing one of those serendipitous moments when the disparate facets of my life fall into an unexpected resonance with one another. The musical ideas, the art, and the video game all shared things in common – most obvious among them

a preoccupation with really fast cars. They also shared a certain flamboyant machismo that I associate strongly with the Italian peninsula (it is the Italians, after all, who produced Vivaldi, Marinetti and Ferrari)."

Tropes of Futurist art (particularly those in Giacomo Balla's paintings) and racing games became the basis for the work's composition: visual drama, divided space, cut-and-splice juxtapositions, fragmentary motifs, limited colour palettes, competition between leader and followers. On combining these Norman remarks that the work "is headed along only one emphatic trajectory: HIGHER! LOUDER! FASTER!"

If Andrew Ford's *Jouissance* is this concert's opening fanfare, then *Gran Turismo*, here performed by eight virtuoso violinists of the ACO, sees the orchestra revving its engines before the full orchestra takes off.

Johannes Brahms

(1833–1897)

Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, Op.102 "Double Concerto"

The Double Concerto in A minor is Brahms's final concerto and the last of his major orchestral works, which included four symphonies, two concertos for solo piano, and a concerto for solo violin.

Brahms's violin works are closely connected to his relationship with the great violinist Joseph Joachim, the leading virtuoso of the day. Just as Brahms ran his piano works past Clara Schumann for her criticism and advice, so too did he seek the advice of Joachim, to whom he dedicated his violin concerto of 1878.

This concerto for violin and cello of 1887 is even more closely connected to Joachim than the violin concerto. The two men had fallen out several years earlier: Joachim had come to believe that his wife, Amalie, was cheating on him with Brahms's publisher, Fritz Simrock. During an ugly divorce proceeding, Brahms publicly defended Amalie's innocence, and the two men, once warm friends, did not speak for several years.

Joachim, not one to eschew good music, continued to play Brahms's compositions through these years of estrangement. On receiving the Double Concerto, commissioned by the cellist Robert Hausmann, Joachim relented, and decided to meet Brahms once again. Clara Schumann recognised the peace offering immediately: "It is a thoroughly original work. This concerto is, in a sense, a gesture of reconciliation – Joachim and Brahms have spoken to each other again for the first time in years."

The concerto received its premiere in Cologne on 18 October 1887 with Joachim and Hausmann as soloists, and Brahms himself conducting. The idea of friendship is clear in the concerto's many extended duet passages and cadenzas. Brahms even alludes to his friend thematically: F-A-E, based on Joachim's life motto "Frei, aber einsam" (free but lonely), a sentiment the two friends shared. In the Gypsy/Hungarian finale, the two friends yield only 60 of the 340 bars of music to the orchestra.

Despite Brahms's good intentions, friends and critics (including Clara Schumann) maintained reservations about the concerto. Fortunately, history has proven them wrong, and the work remains a beloved showpiece for its two brilliant soloists.

Antonín Dvořák

(1841–1904)

Symphony No.8 in G major, Op.88

Dvořák completed his Eighth Symphony in two and a half months during the late summer and autumn of 1889 at his country home at Vysoká u Příbramě. The process was fast, with the composer remarking at the time that “melodies simply pour out of me”. Dvořák conducted the premiere in Prague on 2 February 1890, and gave the publishing rights to the English company Novello after his usual German publisher Simrock offered him only a paltry sum for the work.

The Eighth Symphony stands apart in Dvořák's symphonic output as being remarkably intimate and idyllic. One may even think of it as his “pastoral” symphony, in a similar vein to Beethoven's Sixth, Brahms's Second or Mahler's Fourth. The German conductor and musicologist Hans-Hubert Schönzeler observed, “When one walks in those forests surrounding Dvořák's country home on a sunny summer's day, with the birds singing and the leaves of trees rustling in a gentle breeze, one can virtually hear the music.”

Dvořák said that he wanted to write a work different from the other symphonies, “with individual thoughts worked out in a new way”. The first two movements employ an unconventional approach, structure, and assortment of themes. The third movement, traditionally a scherzo, is a graceful waltz with a touch of melancholy – the theme of its middle section comes from Dvořák's comic opera *The Stubborn Lovers*, where the character Toník worries that his love, Lenka, will be married off. The distinctly Bohemian finale opens with trumpet fanfare, giving way to a series of exhilarating variations on a simple, memorable tune. In a rehearsal of the symphony, the conductor Rafael Kubelík famously said of the last movement's opening fanfare: “in Bohemia the trumpets never call to battle – they always call to the dance!”

A photograph of a woman with short dark hair, smiling as she plays a violin. She is wearing a grey sweater. In the background, other musicians are visible, including a woman with glasses also playing a violin. The setting appears to be a concert hall or rehearsal space with warm lighting.

Australian Chamber Orchestra

RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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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.



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. Richard is dressed by Ermenegildo Zegna.



Satu Vänskä
Principal Violin

Satu plays the 1726 'Belgiorno' Stradivarius violin kindly on loan from Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM & Belgiorno-Nettis. Her Chair is sponsored by Kay Bryan.



Aiko Goto
Violin

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



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.



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.



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.



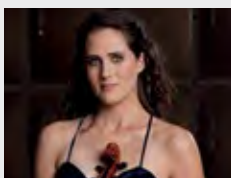
Ike See
Violin

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.



Stefanie Farrands
Principal Viola

The Principal Viola Chair is sponsored by peckvonhartel architects.



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.



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.



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.

MUSICIANS

Violin

Madeleine Boud
Caroline Hopson
Elizabeth Jones
Katherine Lukey
Courtesy of Opera
Australia Orchestra

Gemma Lee
Victoria Sayles
Sonia Wilson

Viola

Nathan Greentree
Andrew Jezek
Karina Schmitz

Cello

Anna Pokorny
Eliza Sdraulig
Eve Silver
Courtesy of West Australian
Symphony Orchestra

Double Bass

Steve Larson
Courtesy of Sydney
Symphony Orchestra

Jaan Pallandi
Courtesy of Sydney
Symphony Orchestra

Flute

Sally Walker #
Courtesy of The Australian
National University

Lina Andonovska

Oboe

Roni Gal-Ed #
Dmitry Malkin
Courtesy of Israel
Philharmonic Orchestra

Clarinet

Björn Nyman #
Courtesy of Norwegian
Radio Orchestra

Alexander McCracken

Bassoon

Brock Imison #
Courtesy of Melbourne
Symphony Orchestra

Simone Walters

Horn

Anneke Scott #
Courtesy of Orchestre
Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Joseph Walters
Patrick Broderick #
Martin Lawrence

Trumpet

Visa Haarala #
Courtesy of Tapiola Sinfonietta

Tim Keenihan

Trombone

Nigel Crocker #
Roslyn Jorgensen

Bass Trombone

Brett Page #
Courtesy of Opera
Australia Orchestra

Tuba

Scott Frankcombe #

Timpani

Brian Nixon #
Chair sponsored by Mr Robert
Albert AO & Mrs Libby Albert

Percussion

Daryl Pratt #
Courtesy of the University
of Sydney

Guest Principal



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RICHARD TOGNETTI - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR


NATIONAL CONCERT SEASON 2019







MUSIC/ ACCEN

An aerial photograph of a dense forest. The majority of the trees have turned vibrant shades of yellow and orange, indicating autumn. Interspersed among these are several tall, dark green evergreen trees. The forest extends to the horizon, where a valley with green fields and distant hills is visible under a clear sky.

Composer, broadcaster and
writer Andrew Ford on Johannes
Brahms, Antonín Dvořák
and nationalism in music.

AL TS



Why does history think less of Dvořák than of Brahms?

In the canon of Western music, should you believe in such things, Johannes Brahms is an automatic inclusion. He's one of the "three Bs", along with Bach and Beethoven. But when history speaks of music, even just 19th-century music, Antonín Dvořák is often left out.

It wouldn't be such a puzzle were the Czech composer not the creator of one of the world's most popular symphonies (No.9 in E minor, 'From the New World'), one of its most popular concertos (the Cello Concerto of 1895), one of its most popular works for chamber orchestra (*Serenade for Strings*), one of its most popular string quartets (the *American*), one of its most popular songs ("Songs My Mother Taught Me") and one of its most popular operatic arias (the "Song to the Moon" from *Rusalka*).

Back in the 20th century, when nearly all middle-class households still had a piano and a family member who could play it tolerably well, Dvořák's *Humoresque* was ubiquitous, acquiring more than one set of scatological lyrics.

So why is this composer regularly overlooked? Perhaps I should stress that it's not audiences who forget him, or musicians – over the decades he has been a regular feature of the Australian Chamber Orchestra's programming and is evidently a favourite of Richard Tognetti's.

Previous page.
Czech Republic.

Left. St Nicholas Church,
Prague, Czech Republic.

No. History is the culprit here, and lazy history at that. Glib history. History that likes to catalogue art neatly and thinks that the country of an artist's origin is a good way to do it.

I'm as guilty as anyone. When I first heard Andrew Norman's *Gran Turismo*, for example, I immediately noticed that it shared certain characteristics with John Adams's minimalist classic, *Shaker Loops* – the strings, the chugging semiquavers, the slow-moving harmonies. My conclusion, even before those eight minutes of music had ended, was that it was a typical slice of postmodernist Americana.

But, if it were, what would that mean? That Norman was influenced by Adams? Perhaps he is. That Adams and therefore Norman were somehow quintessentially American? This is much harder to prove. There is, after all, nothing American about energetic semiquavers.

Just as we can fall into the trap of explaining a composer's music with reference to biography (Beethoven's deafness gave his late music its intensity) or political circumstances (all Shostakovich's music is coded protest at the Soviet system), so nationality, it seems, explains away thousands of musical works. Modal tunes and dance rhythms, unusual playing techniques and exotic colours: that's nationalist composers drawing on folk song in their chauvinistic zeal. Or maybe they just couldn't help themselves – it was in their blood.

“History is the culprit here,
and lazy history at that. Glib
history. History that likes to
catalogue art neatly and thinks
that the country of an artist's
origin is a good way to do it.”

But music – at least great music – comes from composers' imaginations, and its motivation may have nothing to do with the events of their lives or politics or nationality. A professional composer, in any case, is likely to be motivated by the need to earn a living. Mozart, whose inspiration is popularly supposed to have been divine, seldom wrote a note before he'd seen the colour of his commissioner's money.

That said, nationalism itself is real enough, and since it appears to be making something of a political comeback, it is probably worth giving it some consideration. Musical nationalism is by no means free from politics.

It began as a late-19th-century phenomenon, and Dvořák, together with his older Czech compatriot, Bedřich Smetana, was among the first composers to be tagged with the nationalist label. Verdi, too, must be mentioned in this context. Then there's the Norwegian Edvard Grieg, the Finn Jean Sibelius and the Englishman Ralph Vaughan Williams, followed by two Hungarians, Kodály and Bartók, another Czech, Janáček, and the American Aaron Copland. In Russia and France, they came in groups: the "Mighty Handful" of Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin; the so-called "impressionists", Debussy and Ravel; "Les Six", consisting of Durey, Tailleferre, Honegger, Milhaud, Auric and Poulenc.

The first thing to say is that these composers have as many points of difference as commonality. Verdi's headline-making nationalism, giving voice to the Italian Risorgimento in his operas, was as much dramatic as it was musical. The composers of Les Six were more or less in opposition to Debussy and Ravel, although they all admired Satie. Bartók's nationalism, if such it was, led him to the forefront of 20th-century modernism, which was nothing if not cosmopolitan; Copland's cowboy music was a deliberate attempt at down-home populism, the musical equivalent of Roosevelt's New Deal.

The second thing to say – perhaps you've already spotted it – is that none of the composers on my list were German or Austrian. Mentioning nationalism in 19th- or early-20th-century music is a kind of code. Invariably, it means the



Top. Johannes Brahms



Bottom. Antonin Dvořák

“Mozart, whose inspiration is popularly supposed to have been divine, seldom wrote a note before he’d seen the colour of his commissioner’s money.”

composer wasn’t part of the unbroken chain of composers stretching from Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, via Schubert and Schumann, Wagner and Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler, to Schoenberg and the second Viennese school. This was the Austro-German mainstream flowing through a century and a half. Everything else was exotic – or, to put it another way, nationalist.

But if Austria and Germany dominated the musical and political landscape of the 19th century, it hardly meant that their own composers were immune to folkloric borrowing. Haydn and Beethoven arranged plenty of folk songs; the Hungarian bit of the Austro-Hungarian Empire furnished Schubert and Brahms with any amount of stylistic invigoration; Schoenberg included the popular Viennese tune “O du lieber Augustin” in his second string quartet; and, as late as 1925, even Anton Webern composed *Three Traditional Rhymes*, Op.17, not that the music sounded very traditional.

Was there a difference between what Germanic composers did with folkloric sources and what the Czechs and Russians and French did? The musicologist Richard Taruskin has pointed out that, since Brahms himself wasn’t Hungarian, no one ever assumed that his Hungarian Dances represented his “essential personality”. Yet precisely this assumption is made of Dvořák, even though, for all his use of the Slavic *dumka* and Bohemian *furiant*, the composer’s “Czech style” was, in Taruskin’s words, an example of “tourist nationalism” and “altogether unlike the Czech style that Czechs recognise as Czech”.

So why does the idea of Dvořák the folksy nationalist persist? It might simply be that the composer was a melodist. Taruskin links him to Schubert in this regard, suggesting, without quite spelling it out, that the difference between Beethoven's symphonies and Schubert's mirrors the difference between Brahms's and Dvořák's: in each case, the former constructed music from finely wrought motivic development, while the latter wrote melodies.

History has tended to regard a composer's use of short, pungent motifs – think of the opening of Beethoven's fifth symphony – as somehow superior to the writing of a tune. The former sounds like work, the latter merely inspiration. Not that short motifs and long melodic lines stand in opposition to each other. If you allow your motifs to develop and proliferate, you can produce melodies, as Brahms frequently did. It was specifically the tunes that Dvořák admired in Brahms's third symphony.

"What lovely melodies are there!" he wrote to the publisher Simrock in 1883, after Brahms had played the symphony's first and last movements for him on the piano. "It is pure love and on hearing it your heart melts within you!" This is exactly the sort of thing you'd expect to hear people say about Dvořák; few, especially at the time, would have said it about Brahms.

Brahms was just eight years older than Dvořák, but he had been something of a prodigy. Born in Hamburg to a moderately well-off family – his father was a jobbing musician, but always in employment – the boy gave public piano recitals while still in his teens. In 1853 he met his lifelong friend the violinist Joseph Joachim, was introduced to Liszt, and showed his early compositions to Robert and Clara Schumann, who were impressed. Clara included him in an article about the future of music. Brahms was still only 20.

Dvořák, a butcher's son, was born in Bohemia and was already 33 before his music was heard beyond Prague. That it began to become more widely known was largely down to Brahms, who was a juror for a prize to which the unknown Czech composer submitted a folio of work, including his third and fourth symphonies. The two became friends. When Brahms died in 1897, Dvořák was among



Top. Clara Schumann.

Bottom. Joseph Joachim.



“The musicologist Richard Taruskin has pointed out that, since Brahms himself wasn’t Hungarian, no one ever assumed that his Hungarian Dances represented his “essential personality””

the torchbearers who followed his coffin through Vienna. The following year, Dvořák wrote the eighth symphony, optimistic, compact and classical in proportion, if not in structure.

Both Dvořák’s Symphony No.8 and the Double Concerto of Brahms date from their composers’ final decades. The concerto, indeed, was its composer’s last orchestral work, though there is little about it that might be considered valedictory. It was written in 1887, and ahead of him lay songs and choruses, the late piano pieces and a considerable amount of chamber music, including all the pieces with clarinet – the trio, the great quintet and the two sonatas.

As it happens, chamber music prepared Brahms for work on the Double Concerto. At the time of its composition, he wrote to Clara Schumann insisting that he was out of his depth with the solo instruments. A piano concerto was one thing – he was himself a pianist – but he really didn’t know what to do with a violin and a cello. Clara was having none of it, pointing out in her reply that her old friend had already composed sonatas for both instruments (not to mention an earlier concerto for the violin).

In fact, Brahms had composed his second violin sonata and his second cello sonata in 1886, the year before he wrote the concerto. Not only that, but he’d also written his Piano Trio in C minor, in which a violin and a cello trade solo phrases while the piano very often fulfils the role of

an orchestra. So he was well prepared for the task at hand, except for one thing: there was no precedent for such a double concerto. There was Beethoven's Triple Concerto, of course, but in many ways that was a work for piano trio and orchestra. There was also the *Sinfonia Concertante* of Mozart, but it is a predominantly lyrical work in which the violin and viola soloists tend to co-operate with each other and the orchestra. There's not a whiff of Romantic heroism in the writing; and, of course, there's no cello.

Whether or not he was genuinely daunted by tackling the Double Concerto, Brahms found some novel formal solutions. The work bursts into life with an exploratory introduction in which the first vigorous theme, played by the orchestra, is truncated after only four bars, to make way for a short, ruminative cadenza from the solo cello. Next, the woodwind and horns play four bars of the second theme, taken over by the solo violin, and leading, in turn, to a second cadenza in which the violin is joined by the cello. Brahms's first theme now gets properly under way, its syncopated, often dissonant, first subject, always more associated with the cello, in contrast to the violin's lyrical second subject.

Dvořák's eighth symphony has an even more radical beginning. The symphony is in G major, and its first movement is marked *Allegro con brio* ("with brilliance"). The initial appearance of a solemn theme in G minor played by the cellos and low wind seems, at first, to be a straightforward case of a slow introduction, leading to a solo flute giving a premonition of an altogether perkier theme in G major.

Yet no sooner is the flute's teaser over than it is developed in the orchestra, the theme itself still unstated. And even when the full orchestra does have the theme, there remains the nagging feeling that it's all over too soon, that there is more to it than the composer is willing to let us hear. More themes turn up, more melodies; the slow introduction returns – and later returns again. By the end of this exhilarating first movement, which turns out to be *full* of "brio", we have no firm idea which, if any, were the main themes. The musical materials have generated their own form.

Above all, what a listener to Dvořák's symphony and Brahms's concerto will take away is a head full of tunes. In Dvořák's second movement, marked *adagio*, a flowing, rather carefree melody emerges, played by oboe and flute, while the strings have what sounds like a peal of bells; the third movement is one of its composer's loveliest waltzes, strongly recalling the waltz in the *Serenade for Strings*; and the finale takes the notes of its opening fanfare and reimagines them in a set of virtuoso variants for the full orchestra, now with counter-melodies, now with glittering new orchestral sonorities.

“Above all, what a listener to Dvořák's symphony and Brahms's concerto will take away is a head full of tunes.”

Brahms's concerto, likewise, is full of melody, as Dvořák would surely have wanted us to notice. In the slow movement of his Violin Concerto, the soloist's job had been merely to decorate the theme, commenting on it but never stating it. In the Double Concerto, however, the two soloists play the slow movement's big tune in octaves. As for Brahms's finale – it's another of the Vienna-based Hamburger's Hungarian Dances.

But what of Czech identity in Dvořák? Is there anything in his eighth symphony that might only have been written by a Czech composer? Taruskin mentions the composer's use of lombard rhythms. This is a short accented note, followed by a longer, unaccented note, occasionally called a "Scotch snap". In the first movement of Dvořák's ninth symphony, the presence of such rhythms is sometimes offered as evidence of the composer's drawing on American spirituals, particularly "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", which has that rhythm on the final syllable of "chariot", on "coming" and on "carry".

But Taruskin points out that the "front-stressed" accent of the Czech language is naturally full of these rhythms, and so, in consequence, are many Czech folk songs. They are also in Dvořák's eighth symphony, written before the composer had even thought of visiting the United States, so their appearance in the "New World" symphony hardly confirms the presence of spirituals.

The connection between the sound of a language and the traditional music to which it gives rise requires little explanation. We can readily accept that the rhythms of

“Simply to assume a folkloric connection and to account for that in terms of nationalism, is a slightly drear explanation for one of the 19th century’s most generous musical imaginations.”

a nation’s speech find a natural repository in a nation’s songs. But may we assume that there is an inevitable connection between traditional music and the “art music” of its composers? That involves drawing a longer bow.

It might be that we find lombard rhythms in Dvořák because the composer discovered they gave his music a certain dynamism, helping to propel his melodic lines. Simply to assume a folkloric connection and to account for that in terms of nationalism, is a slightly drear explanation for one of the 19th century’s most generous musical imaginations.

It might also be that Dvořák simply liked lombard rhythms. I like them too, these “Scotch snaps”. In fact, if you listen hard at the start of this concert you will hear quite a few of these “Scotch snaps” in my piece *Jouissance*. Of course, I do have Scottish ancestry...





A photograph of a classical library interior. In the upper section, a large wooden bookshelf with a central circular opening and a small white statue are visible. Below this, the title 'HELENA AND THE ACO' is written in large white letters. The lower section shows a dark wooden desk with a bookshelf filled with books in the background.

HELENA AND THE ACO

Kate Holden meets violinist
Helena Rathbone, who celebrates
25 years playing with the ACO.

A
E



Right. From the archive: a 2002 ACO concert poster featuring Helena Rathbone and ACO violinist Aiko Goto.

At the age of nine, Helena Rathbone began a yearly escape from London to the ruins of a Suffolk abbey. Here an intensive chamber music camp was held, as it still is, for young players. For a week the students would spend mornings practising quartets, then have a few hours to play tag among the ruins, then more quartets in the afternoons, and, after dinner, gather as a small chamber orchestra to play the repertoire. Helena enjoyed it hugely. "There was a social element; I couldn't wait to go and see my friends there. It's such an experience to go through together: being away from home, learning to live with other people, respect them. The friendships I formed then are still some of my strongest. Plus, I just adored the music, and music-making, and learning how to play with other people. It's probably the reason I'm still playing violin."

Forty years on, Rathbone is celebrating her 25th year with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. As Principal Violin, she's one of its leaders. And just as she was encouraged by her elders and colleagues as a student, Rathbone, as the founding director of ACO Collective, has established a renowned program of mentorship and education that has seen generations of musicians surface since 2005. "We decided to have a kind of mentorship program for string players who were already almost there – we call them the Emerging Artists. We audition all around the country, and they get individual lessons with us. They get insight into how we rehearse – they can sit in on any rehearsals they want to – they can come to concerts, they can ask us any questions, they can be part of the orchestra backstage, behind the scenes. On top of that, we play chamber music together."

"Afternoons would start with cake and, later, dinner and a few glasses of wine. Then, the students and their teacher would play until dawn."

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Top. Helena performing with ACO Collective.

Bottom. Helena performing with the ACO.

A Suzuki graduate, Rathbone is unimpressed by the emphasis in music training on virtuosity over the collaboration found in chamber performance. “It’s like being able to say a really complicated sentence without learning your alphabet first,” she says. “You have to be able to listen.” The Collective, like her childhood camp, has an intensive chamber music week. “It’s a treat to be able to spend a week just playing a quartet,” she says. “Lovely, really lovely. We get right into the guts of the music: we play together, and learn, well, *how* to play together.”

She remembers her own teacher at London’s Guildhall School of Music and Drama as something like a guru to her. “He just seemed to have endless hours of time for us, and we spent many weekends at his house, playing chamber music all through the night.” Afternoons would start with cake and, later, dinner and a few glasses of wine. Then, the students and their teacher would play until dawn. Rathbone and her viola-playing brother would get the first tube home. “It was very special and we were super, super lucky to have that teacher, who put in those hours. It’s something you never forget: your playing will never be the same.”

A few years after its establishment, there were enough Collective alumni to create a second ACO-sized orchestra, perfect for regional touring. Originally called ACO₂, it features “elders” from the main orchestra leading each section. Rathbone had stepped back from its directorship while she has been raising two boys; now she’s touring once more with the young students. “I do feel a bit like a mother hen,” she chuckles.

As one of the longest-serving members of the orchestra proper, she recognises her own graduation. “I wouldn’t want to be 25 again. Done that, been there. There’s a posse of us in the orchestra: we call ourselves the Old Ladies. I feel like the mother there now, too.” She began with ACO at the age of 23, after a teacher suggested she audition. “I just felt it would be good to do something different for a bit. I’d already mapped out what I was going to do in London, and I was quite happy there, playing with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, having lots of travel and a great concert experience with them.” She came for a three-week trial in Sydney. Some months later, she was invited to return and take the role. “I thought: Well. Why not?” She is still on a yearly contract, and promises herself

“There’s quite a group of us who’ve stayed for 15, 25 years. It’s like a family.”

that the day playing violin becomes a job she will quit. “I’m nowhere near that yet, so...” she laughs. “My motto is, go with the flow. I’m happy at the moment, I still love it; I still love playing with ACO, still find it exhilarating, inspiring, musically very satisfying. We’ve all grown together. There’s quite a group of us who’ve stayed for 15, 25 years. It’s like a family.”

She has her own family now and says it is “heart-wrenching” to leave them while she tours. “We work really hard, and we travel a lot, and it can get to the point where you think: Why am I doing this? Why am I away so much, why am I not with my family? But ultimately,” she reflects, “the conditions we work under are so good, and the standard of the music-making is so good, and you get on stage and you play a concert like we’ve just done at the Barbican, and you think: Okay, well, that’s why I do it.”

On tour with the Collective, she says, there’s still that collegial camp feeling. “You’ve been through a journey with them. They’re all such lovely people.” On the last night of tour a potluck dish is cooked by each member: “We take music with us, and bash through some chamber music together. I just remember how much I learned when I was a student, from my teacher, and I think it’s wonderful if you can give something, some *inkling* of that to somebody else.”

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





Timo-Veikko Valve

Timo-Veikko 'Tipi' Valve is known as one of the most versatile musicians of his generation. He performs as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral leader on both modern and period instruments.

Tipi studied at the Sibelius Academy in his hometown of Helsinki and at the Edsberg Music Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, focusing on solo performance and chamber music.

Tipi works closely with a number of composers and has commissioned new works for the cello. Amongst the works he has premiered are concertos by Aulis Sallinen, Olli Virtaperko, Eero Hämeenniemi and Olli Koskelin. He has also commissioned orchestrated arrangements of Olli Mustonen's Cello Sonata and the Debussy Cello Sonata.

In 2006, Tipi was appointed Principal Cello of the Australian Chamber Orchestra with whom he frequently appears as a soloist. He also curates the ACO's chamber music series in Sydney and is a founding member of Jousia Ensemble and Jousia Quartet.

Tipi plays a Brothers Amati cello from 1616, kindly on loan from the ACO Instrument Fund.

THE ACO

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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, *Haydn | Mozart*, and the soundtrack to the acclaimed cinematic collaboration, *Mountain*.

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L'INSTANT TAITTINGER

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Photo: Massimo Vitali



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Reims

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Spotlight on

TAITTINGER

We recently caught up with Clovis Taittinger to discuss family, inspiration, and of course, Champagne!

Taittinger and the ACO are aligned in the pursuit of excellence. What does excellence mean to Taittinger?

The pursuit of excellence for Taittinger begins with our Chardonnay, which is a very feminine, pure and softly delicate Champagne. This is our family signature. To maintain excellence, the best care we put in is our passion. With passion, you fight for every detail that can make you better and you never compromise. Never.

How do you, Pierre-Emmanuel and Vitalie work together to keep the family spirit strong?

As a family Champagne House, we invest with our heart. We are concerned with preserving and

developing a heritage built by previous generations for future generations. The name on the bottle conveys both the skills and knowledge of the past and a commitment to the future.

My father has embodied this commitment for 40 years, and my sister and I work beside him every day.

Tell us about the history and significance of the Champagne Taittinger House in Reims.

The Taittinger family has managed the Champagne House for nearly a century. Chateau De La Marquetterie is the ancestral home of our brand and was constructed in the Age of Enlightenment. Pierre-Charles Taittinger fell in love with it when

he joined General Joffre's chief of staff there in 1915. He bought the château in 1932 and, 200 years after its construction, it became the birthplace of our Champagne House.

Taittinger balances tradition with a fresh, youthful energy. How do you maintain this balance?

The vitality, legacy and reach of the Taittinger brand is based on the values of those who created the Champagne House. Over three generations, my family has left their mark on the history, spirit and style of Taittinger, and on the image of Champagne itself.



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