



# Advance Program Notes

Australian Chamber Orchestra  
Sunday, April 7, 2019, 4 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

## Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti, artistic director and lead violin  
Inon Barnatan, piano

*Movements (for us and them)*

Samuel Adams  
Born 1985  
Composed 2018

Piano Concerto no. 12 in A major, K. 414  
Inon Barnatan, piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Born Salzburg, 1756  
Died Vienna, 1791  
Composed 1782

*I. Allegro*  
*II. Andante*  
*III. Rondeau (Allegretto)*

## INTERMISSION

String Sextet no. 2 in G major, op. 36  
*I. Allegro non troppo*  
*II. Scherzo: Allegro non troppo*  
*III. Poco Adagio*  
*IV. Poco Allegro*

Johannes Brahms  
Born Hamburg, 1833  
Died Vienna, 1897  
Composed 1864-1865

# Program Notes

## SAMUEL ADAMS MOVEMENTS (FOR US AND THEM)

The music that affects Samuel Adams the most is experimental. It is the kind of music, he says, where you feel the psychology of the artist changing over time. When he started composing *Movements (for us and them)*, he didn't know what would happen, or which direction the piece would take. "I try to keep things open as I write. I find that the more flexibility I give myself, the more interesting the piece becomes."

He says that what fascinates him about creating a new piece of music is that it can mean something to one person, and something completely different to someone else. "With every piece of mine I try to create flexibility and volubility with the music. I never try to be too specific about my intentions."

Every piece he writes is a response to the world at the moment, some obliquely, others purely through abstraction. He likes the idea of using the dynamic of a group to potentially model a utopian vision.

There are universal syntonic ideas in art, Adams says. When composing the piece, he was inspired by Italo Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. The series of lectures outlines the virtues in literature to which the novelist aspired, as a way to handle the weight of the world. In the writing of his own piece, Adams searched for the same: quickness, exactitude, and levity.

The piece is a response to the tradition of investigating the relationship between the composer, the orchestra, and the audience. "I am really interested in the possibilities of working in a kind of musical context that explores interpersonal relationships. What fascinates me about the concerto grosso is that it suggests a different kind of narrative—it isn't necessarily about one individual trying to overcome or join some kind of opposing force, but much more about cooperation and fluidity. That's what I explore in this piece."

Adams forced himself to reimagine the process of material generation. He spent a lot of time improvising. The material came out of the process of listening to himself improvise, transcribing those dramatisations, playing different ascriptions, and improvising again.

The piece has a lot of forward momentum and energy, much like some music from the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. "It is built on repetitive triplet motifs, which, with the exception of one part, drive the piece forward. One thing I really wanted to explore was the concept of role fluidity. You will hear passages where the two ensembles are very gradually morphing into one another. Movements flow very easily from one section to another."

Adams sought to explore "emotionally available" melodies. He wanted to give the musicians something deeply expressive to play. "What strikes me about the [Australian Chamber Orchestra] is the personality of the ensemble. They have a wonderful profile when they come on stage. So much of this piece is about exploring interpersonal dynamics. I would be happy if an audience member leaves the concert feeling like they understand something, that they didn't previously, of the personality of the ensemble."

# *Program Notes, continued*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 12 IN A MAJOR, K. 414

"If Haydn surprises you with the unexpected, then Mozart manages to surprise you with the expected." —Alfred Brendel

At first it seemed like Mozart might be able to achieve the kind of freelance existence in Vienna that he apparently wanted. A mixture of composing, teaching, and performing kept the wolf from the door. Indeed, he proudly wrote to his father that some of his concerts were selling at the extravagant price of six ducats a ticket.

The group of three "little" concertos, K. 413, 414, and 415, were written for this kind of semi-public performance (no riff-raff). Mozart composed them with an eye to publication, and this is probably why he made a point of advertising their suitability for performance with forces as small as a string quartet and piano—it implied that these could be handy works to have in the house for a bit of domestic post-dinner entertainment. Although the full score includes oboes and horns, he was obviously comfortable with flexible scoring options, and the clarity of the music when performed with strings only is charming. Some feel this scoring works best of all in K. 414. Concertos are usually an opportunity for soloist and ensemble to compete, but K. 414 is friendlier and almost conversational, in the way of much good chamber music.

In another letter to his father, Mozart discussed the three works:

"These concertos are a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult; they are very brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural without being insipid. There are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why."

We're not entirely sure what Mozart meant by this. The concerto on this program includes what seems to be a quote from Johann Christian Bach, his early teacher, who had recently died—would this have been recognised by an educated audience? Or perhaps it was a reference to certain characteristics of form and style which hint at the kind of Baroque influence (there were some serious early music enthusiasts in Vienna at the time).

The composer himself was almost certainly the premiere soloist, perhaps at one of the events sponsored by the Auernhammer family. Two versions of the cadenzas have come down to us in his own hand, although unfortunately a complete autograph manuscript score is lost. A set of manuscript parts found in Salzburg have been the most helpful items for musical scholars trying to discover more about these wonderful little concertos.

The first movement of K. 414 opens with the orchestra introducing the lively but gentle principal themes. The pianist then gets an opportunity to present this music their own way, solo. As the music heads into the development section—where both parties get to comment on the themes, fragment them, expand on them, and so forth—and then into the recapitulation, the demands on the pianist increase, culminating in the joyous brilliance of the final cadenza. A tiny orchestral ritornello finishes the movement in the accepted style.

The theologian Karl Barth once famously said he thought angels in heaven played Bach when God was around, and Mozart at all other times. The second movement of this concerto seems like a case in point, with its celestial principal theme. This is the very music which it has been suggested comes from an overture by J.C. Bach—if so, Mozart gave him a eulogy second to none.

The third movement has all of that effortless character we so often associate with Mozart. As tends to be the case with artistic matters, though, it hides some hard work, as it was almost certainly his second try at writing a finale for this concerto. A similar Rondo, now known as K. 386, seems to date from exactly this time, and it seems highly likely that Mozart discarded it in favour of the exuberant charm of this one.

# *Program Notes, continued*

JOHANNES BRAHMS

STRING SEXTET NO. 2 IN G MAJOR, OP. 36

There is a photograph of Brahms taken around 1858 or early 1859, where, if you know to look for it, you can just discern a ring on his engagement finger. The ring belonged to Agathe von Siebold, and we know that at that time a matching ring was on her finger too.

Von Siebold was the daughter of a law professor in Göttingen and studied singing with Julius Otto Grimm. Grimm was probably the best and most constant friend Brahms ever had, and the composer took great pleasure in visiting the Göttingen household—not least because of a certain singing student with dark eyes, black hair, and (according to Joachim, who should know) “a voice like an Amati violin.” She was evidently a very capable musician, and Brahms wrote various songs for her, including op. 14, 19, and 20. He also wrote a *Bridal Song* which was later, like so many of his works, withdrawn and destroyed.

These days he would be written off as a hopeless commitment-phobe, continually running back to the reassuring safe haven of his friendship with Clara Schumann. Even then, his eternal bachelorhood was “almost a social scandal.” It wasn’t as if he couldn’t find anyone willing to marry him.

In 1859 it looked likely that Brahms could walk into the kind of job that would make him perfectly capable of supporting a wife (although he said otherwise). His friends, the Grimms, were enthusiastic supporters of the growing affection between Brahms and von Siebold. They noted with pleasure the sudden appearance of a ring on her finger, and Julius wrote to Brahms urging him to make his intentions clear and formal, as Göttingen society was beginning to gossip.

It was at that point Brahms wrote to von Siebold. “I love you, I must see you again, but I cannot be bound,” was his stance; and being a respectable girl of her time, she must have felt she had no real choice other than to call a halt. Marriage was the only possible development from a relationship, and he had now made it clear that wasn’t on the cards. It is easy to imagine her intense pain and mortification. As many as 10 years later, she married someone else.

It seems it wasn’t easy for Brahms to forget her, either. Six years after they parted company he confided to a friend that he had “finally said goodbye” in his new Sextet no. 2. Brahms’ friend and mentor [Robert] Schumann was almost obsessively fond of encoding words as musical notes, so it is reasonable to find (as Brahms’ biographer Kalbeck did) AGATHE lurking in the Sextet: A-G-A-[no T, although there’s a similar-sounding letter D in another part]-H [B in English musical notation]-E. This little motto appears repeatedly, passionately, and often underpinned by an unusually harmonised sighing motif. Some commentators also identify A-D-E, “Ade” being a common word for farewell in Romantic German poetry.

Why was she on his mind again at this time? Was it because his parents’ marriage was coming to a long-foreseen and ugly conclusion? His father was preparing to leave his 73-year-old wife, who was nearly blind. Brahms’ siblings also seemed ill-equipped to take care of themselves, and the young composer took on a lot of emotional and financial responsibility. Taking a summer break at Lichtenthal, he composed the first three movements of the sextet; and the next year returned and finished the finale.

The sextet is a Romantic work, dense in texture and with the extended irregular phrasing and harmonic development that is a hallmark of the time. Yet, behind it all is Brahms’ anachronistic interest in earlier music—in this case, that of the Baroque era and works such as Bach’s *English* suites.

The first movement, though, draws more on the models of Schubert’s Quintet in C and Beethoven’s chamber music. The arching, lyrical principal theme delighted Clara Schumann when she was sent an early copy of the work in progress. The scherzo is placed second instead of third and draws on a gavotte Brahms had written as part of a piano suite, in 1855. Like so much of his music, the suite itself was consigned to the furnace, but parts of it reappear here, and in the first String Quintet and the Clarinet Quintet. The gavotte theme evolves into a

# *Program Notes, continued*

fugue-like secondary subject, and the dance-like feel gains pace with a remarkable *Presto giocoso* trio-section.

The slow movement was described by someone as “variations on no theme.” It’s a bit harsh but you know what they meant—even as superb a musician as Clara Schumann found it hard to discern at first. Familiarity with the rather chromatic “melody” allows the listener to appreciate Brahms’ confidence in using the Baroque skills of imitation and counterpoint. The last movement likewise contains hints of that Classical favourite, the fugal finale, and is broadly structured around an entirely Classical sonata-form. But once again Brahms takes an original approach to his task, and borrows techniques freely from the past 200 years.

Much later, Frau Dr. Agathe Schütte née von Siebold wrote a little memoir for her children, from which this excerpt is taken:

“I think I may say that from that time until the present, a golden light has been cast on my life, and that even now, in my late old age, something of the radiance of that unforgettable time has remained. I loved Johannes Brahms very much, and for a short time, he loved me.”

© Australian Chamber Orchestra

# *Australian Chamber Orchestra*

## **VIOLIN**

Richard Tognetti, artistic director and lead violin

Satu Vänskä \*

Glenn Christensen

Aiko Goto

Mark Ingwersen

Ilya Isakovich

Liisa Pallandi

Maja Savnik

Ike See

Victoria Sayles

## **VIOLA**

Hanna Lee #

Nicole Divall

Elizabeth Woolnough

Nathan Greentree

## **CELLO**

Timo-Veikko Valve \*

Melissa Barnard

Julian Thompson

## **BASS**

Maxime Bibeau \*

## **OBOE**

Dmitry Malkin #

Michael Dessler

## **HORN**

Alexander Love #

Alexander Kienle

\* *ACO Principal*

# *Guest Principal*

# Biographies

## AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*"The Australian Chamber Orchestra is uniformly high-octane, arresting and never ordinary."* —The Australian

The Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) travels a remarkable road. Founded by cellist John Painter in November 1975, this 17-piece string orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for their explosive performances and brave interpretations. Steeped in history but always looking to the future, ACO programs embrace celebrated classics alongside new commissions and adventurous cross-artform collaborations.

Led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti since 1990, the ACO performs more than 100 concerts across Australia each year. This intrepid spirit isn't confined to the country it calls home, as the orchestra maintains an international touring schedule that finds it in many of the world's greatest concert halls, including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, London's Barbican Centre and Royal Festival Hall, Vienna's Musikverein and Konzerthaus, New York's Carnegie Hall, Birmingham's Symphony Hall, and Frankfurt's Alte Oper. In 2018 the ACO commenced a three-year London residency as International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court in partnership with the Barbican Centre, with whom the orchestra shares a commitment in presenting concerts that inspire, embolden, and challenge audiences. Whether performing in Manhattan, New York, or Wollongong, New South Wales, 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 Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Olli Mustonen, Brett Dean, and Ivry Gitlis; to Neil Finn, Jonny Greenwood, Barry Humphries, and Meow Meow; to visual artists and film makers such as Michael Leunig, Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jon Frank, and Jennifer Peedom, who have co-created unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the orchestra has an active recording program across CD, vinyl, and digital formats. Its recordings of Bach's violin works won three consecutive ARIA Awards. Recent releases include *Water | Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, and the soundtrack to the acclaimed cinematic collaboration, *Mountain*. Documentaries featuring the ACO have been shown on television worldwide and won awards at film festivals on four continents.

For more information, please visit [aco.com.au](http://aco.com.au).

### **RICHARD TOGNETTI**, *artistic director and lead violin*

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

Richard Tognetti is artistic director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Tognetti has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

Tognetti began his studies in his hometown of Wollongong with William Primrose, then with Alice Waten at the Sydney Conservatorium, and Igor Ozim at the Bern Conservatory, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he led several performances of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and that November was appointed as the orchestra's lead violin and, subsequently, artistic director.

Tognetti performs on period, modern, and electric instruments, and his numerous arrangements, compositions, and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. As director or soloist, Tognetti has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music, Slovene Philharmonic Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Nordic Chamber Orchestra, and all the major Australian symphony orchestras, most recently as



# *Biographies, continued*

soloist and director with the Melbourne and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. Tognetti also performed the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutosławski's *Partita*. In November 2016 he became the Barbican Centre's first artist-in-residence at Milton Court Concert Hall in London. He created the Huntington Festival in Mudjee, New South Wales and was artistic director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

Tognetti was the co-composer of the score for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, starring Russell Crowe; he co-composed the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's surf film *Storm Surfers*; and created *The Red Tree*, inspired by Shaun Tan's book. He also created the documentary film *Musica Surfica*, as well as *The Glide*, *The Reef*, and *The Crowd*. Most recently, Tognetti collaborated with director Jennifer Peedom and Stranger than Fiction Films to create the film *Mountain* for the ACO.

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

## **INON BARNATAN**, *piano*

The 2017-2018 season saw American-Israeli pianist Inon Barnatan debut with the London Philharmonic (under Andrés Orozco-Estrada), Helsinki Philharmonic (Alexander Shelley), Aalborg Symfoniorkester (Rafael Payare), Trondheim Symfoniorkester (Guy Braunstein), Philharmonie Zuidnederland (Hans Graf), and National Symphony Orchestra Washington (Gianandrea Noseda), and return to Cincinnati Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and the BBC Proms with Minnesota Orchestra.

Highlights of the 2018-2019 season include debuts with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, a U.S. tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and returns to the Pittsburgh and Houston symphonies. In recital, Barnatan will make his International Piano Series debut at the Southbank Centre London, and return to Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center; he also continues his longstanding collaboration with cellist Alisa Weilerstein as part of the *Transfigured Nights* project alongside violinist Sergey Khachatryan and percussionist Colin Currie. This season also sees Barnatan begin his tenure as music director of La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest.

Since giving his first concerto performance at the age of 11, Barnatan has performed with the Baltimore Symphony, BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Symphony, and San Francisco Symphony. He has built strong relationships with conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Manfred Honeck, Susanna Mälkki, Rafael Payare, Thomas Søndergård, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Jaap van Zweden. He served as the New York Philharmonic's inaugural artist-in-association for three years during Alan Gilbert's tenure.

A passionate advocate for contemporary music, he has premiered works by Matthias Pintscher, Sebastian Currier, and Avner Dorman, as well as music by Thomas Adès and Ronald Stevenson featured alongside Ravel and Debussy on his critically acclaimed *Darknesse Visible* album, which made the *New York Times*' "Best of 2012" list. Barnatan recorded the complete Beethoven Piano Concertos with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, whom recently he led on a play-direct tour of the U.S.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1979, Barnatan went on to study at London's Royal Academy of Music. He is a recipient of both the Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, and currently resides in New York.



# *Engagement Events*

Monday, April 8, 2019

## **SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE: AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

Students in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades in public, private, and homeschools will enjoy a free matinee performance from the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Attendees include students from Botetourt, Montgomery, Tazewell, Pulaski, Craig, Giles, Floyd, and Roanoke counties, as well as the cities of Radford and Roanoke.

## *Go Beyond*

The Australian Chamber Orchestra's program seems to foreground relationships and communication (e.g. Adams' work that explores "role fluidity," Mozart's "conversational" piano concerto, etc.). How would you describe ACO members' relationships and communication with each other onstage? What attributes of the performed pieces make it more or less difficult to maintain clear and consistent communication as an ensemble?

# *In the Galleries*

## **SOVA FACULTY TRIENNIAL**

Thursday, April 4-Saturday, May 4, 2019

*Ruth C. Horton Gallery, Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery, and  
Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery*

This inaugural faculty triennial exhibition highlights new work by current faculty in Virginia Tech's School of Visual Arts (SOVA). Spanning a wide variety of media, subject matter, and scale, these works and site-specific installations explore and expand upon both traditional and cutting-edge approaches to artmaking, highlighting the creativity, ingenuity, and skill of SOVA faculty.



## **GALLERY HOURS**

Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

To arrange a group tour or class visit, please contact Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager, at [megh79@vt.edu](mailto:megh79@vt.edu).

Michael Borowski

*Through the Swift, Black Night, 2018*

Archival pigment print

30 x 40 inches

Image courtesy of the artist