



 The Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir performing at City Recital Hall Angel Place. Picture: Maria Boyadgis

**WENTWORTH COURIER**

# Awe inspiring start to ACO's season

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• Grim tale, but spectacular

The awe came not just from the feted musicianship of Richard Tognetti and his band, but also from listening to the world-renowned Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir in their second collaboration with the orchestra after a 20-year hiatus.

The inspiration was the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and the world's most performed living composer Arvo Part, who has written several pieces for his compatriots making the EPCC the last word in interpreting his works.

The Part element of the program covered works choral and instrumental from different eras of the composer's life. The Toccata from Collage based on the notes BACH was written in his experimental atonal phase when Estonia was still under Soviet domination, while Summa is an early example of his famed "tintinnabulation" style, along with the Berlin Mass that closed the evening.

Bach was represented by four of his motets, including the wonderful Komm, Jesu, komm and Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, which featured solo spots for several of the choristers.

The program was rounded out by Peter Sculthorpe's Djilile, or "whistling-duck on a billabong", based on an Aboriginal chant, and another EPCC showcase in Ukrainian composer Galina Grigorjeva's In Paradisum.

## POWERFUL

The first thing that strikes you about the EPCC is the blending of timbres, seamless control of dynamics and how the choir breathes as one.

This was beautifully illustrated in the opening work, Part's Da pacem Domine, his achingly beautiful and powerful memorial to the victims of the 2004 Madrid terrorist train bombings. Hilliard Ensemble founder and former EPCC conductor Paul Hillier describes the work as carefully placed stones in a Zen garden and it gave the listener the chance to hear the individual beauty of each of the 25 voices as well as the peerless sound of the ensemble.

Tognetti conducted the program with characteristic attention to detail and there was a feeling of joy and celebration in all he and the musicians around him brought to the evening.

The concert is repeated at City Recital Hall Angel Place on Tuesday, February 5, at 8pm and at 7pm on Wednesday, February 6. I strongly recommend you try to get there — you won't hear singing and playing like this for a long time to come

• **WHEN:** Saturday, February 2

