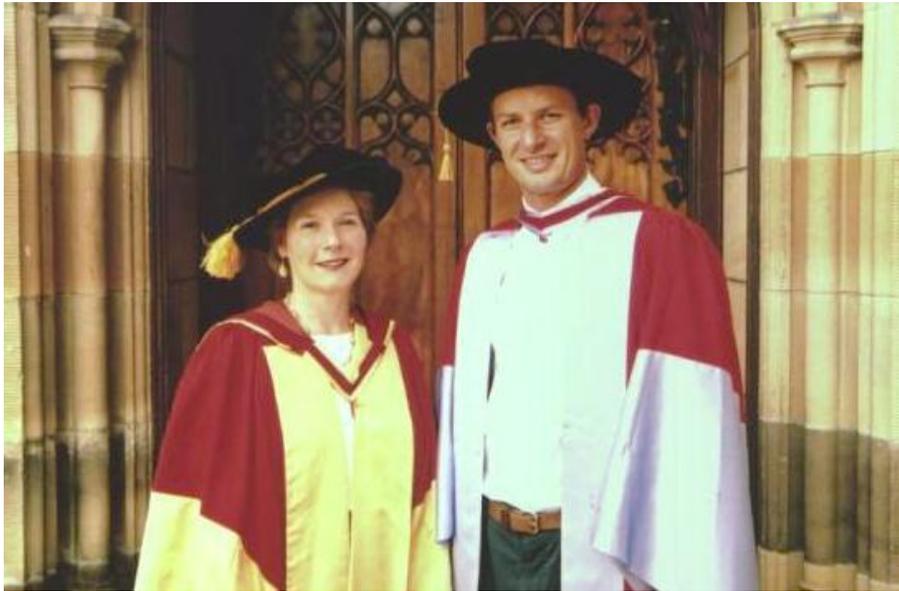


## Mr Richard Leo Tognetti

The degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa) was conferred upon Richard Leo Tognetti at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music ceremony held at 9.30am on 8 April 2005.



Dean of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Professor Kim Walker, with Mr Tognetti after conferral of the honorary degree, *photo, courtesy University of Sydney Publications.*

### Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Richard Leo Tognetti for the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa).

With a mathematician as father, Richard Tognetti was born in Canberra and raised in Wollongong. After gaining his Diploma at the Sydney Conservatorium, he went to the Berne Conservatoire, where he undertook post-graduate study and won the Tschumi Prize.

On his return to Sydney at the age of 25, the Board of the Australian Chamber Orchestra showed remarkable faith in the young Richard when it made him the Orchestra's artistic director and lead violin. In the 15 years since then, that faith has been very amply rewarded. Under Richard's leadership, the Orchestra has won an exceptional international reputation.

After playing with the Orchestra, famous soloists have offered their praises. For example the Canadian pianist Angela Hewitt was reported recently as saying '[The ACO's] commitment, energy, technical proficiency and musicality make them stand out.' '[When I play] with the ACO, our collective musical imaginations take flight and produce thrilling results.'

Even the music critics have joined in the praise. In London in 1999, The Times closed a review with the (now-famous) words: 'This group must be the best chamber orchestra on earth'. Note the canny critic did not rule out the notion that there may be a superior band in heaven.

Since that time, many critics in London, New York and other world cities have bestowed their praises upon the Orchestra, thereby indicating that they have caught up with knowing audiences in Australia.

Of course, music critics have their foibles. So let us note the view of an expert – a box office person at the Wigmore Hall in London. When a concert-goer phoned to seek two tickets for a concert a week ahead, the box office said 'Oh, those tickets went a long time ago. No surprise, really – it is the Australian Chamber Orchestra'.

While that reputation reflects the skills and commitment of the entire band, today we can honour only the one person. As leader, Richard Tognetti has helped to establish an extraordinarily high technical standard. But that alone does not yield such world renown. Rather, the Orchestra's reputation rests largely on its robust and lively interpretations, often embodying a striking creative originality.

Still further creative input has come from Richard's own transcriptions for string orchestra of works written for another form, usually the string quartet. In recent years he and the ACO have also engaged in cross-over and other unusual collaborations. (However, for that initiative, most of his fans readily forgive him.) Just last week, Richard and the ACO began a new education programme, with a visit to Cabramatta High School. Finally, we note he has performed as soloist in many violin concertos, played with the ACO and other orchestras.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa), an outstanding leader and an extraordinary musician, Richard Leo Tognetti, and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.