

CITATION DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR GERARD SUTTON, VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ADMISSION OF RICHARD LEO TOGNETTI TO THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS HONORIS CAUSA ON 27 APRIL 1997.

Chancellor, I present Richard Leo Tognetti.

Richard Tognetti was born in Canberra in 1965 during a snowstorm which heralded perhaps the arrival of a precocious and very special talent. From that point Richard's has been a virtuoso performance in every way. He played the violin at the age of four, was admitted to tertiary studies at the Conservatorium at the age of fifteen and became leader of the Australian Chamber Orchestra at twenty-three. The University welcomes him today as the youngest recipient of an honorary doctorate.

Richard spent his early years in Wollongong where his talent was nurtured by his very supportive family and by two distinguished string teachers - Harold Brissenden and Hiroko Primrose. He was one of the first pupils of Wollongong Conservatorium before entering the Conservatorium High School in Sydney at the age of 11. Richard became leader and soloist of the young persons' chamber orchestra founded and conducted by the then Director of the Sydney Conservatorium, John Painter. This experience prepared him for one of his most significant early achievements as director, leader and soloist of the Huntington Chamber Orchestra which quickly became one of the finest chamber ensembles in Australia.

In 1987, Richard Tognetti left for Europe and studied in Bern where he performed as a member of and soloist with the prestigious Camerata Bern Chamber Orchestra. He gave other solo performances including several with the Bern Symphony Orchestra and was guest concertmaster of the Basel Sinfonietta. The culmination of his Swiss experience was the award of the coveted Tschumi prize for the best overall instrumentalist.

Richard Tognetti returned to Australia in 1989 to become Director and Concertmaster of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and, for nearly ten years, he has brought to that position a refined musical sensibility, impressive leadership skill and personal charisma. He has taken the Australian Chamber Orchestra to recognition on the world stage and, by the Orchestra's success, enhanced Australia's musical reputation. The Orchestra has been applauded for its "commitment and musical finesse" and Richard's

solo performances have brought praise for his "marvellous ability" and "eloquence". There is a recognition of his unique style and his evident delight in his music. His repertoire has ranged from performances with the Sydney Dance Company to the more sombre stages of opera.

Richard Tognetti was honoured as Young Australian of the year in 1989. His photographic portrait was chosen in 1995 for an exhibition in the National Gallery of "Creative Australians who have shaped Australia's cultural life." At the end of 1997 he was selected as one of the nation's 100 Living National Treasures.

Chancellor, as a musician and leader, Richard Tognetti has been an outstanding success. Under his direction, the Australian Chamber Orchestra's reputation for mastery of their art and subtlety in performance has flourished. His own profile has grown as one of the "stars" of the classical music world and his story has appeared in various magazines and on television. Despite such fame, Richard remains dedicated to his music and loyal to his roots. He gives his time to encouraging young musicians and retains links with our Faculty of Creative Arts and with this city.

An honorary doctorate is usually conferred on candidates at the end of a long career. Today we honour a gifted young man for his extraordinary achievement in a relatively short period. Above all, Chancellor, we recognise his promise. As one reviewer remarked, Richard Tognetti is "a star whose magnitude must inevitably increase." It is the role of a University to recognise and encourage potential; to nurture and reward excellence. In Richard Tognetti, we have found an ideal candidate and a model for others who, although they may not possess his special talent, can learn from his dedication and his willingness to move beyond the boundaries drawn by age, nationality and complacency.

Chancellor, it is a pleasure and a privilege to present Richard Leo Tognetti for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts, *honoris causa*.