

Screen Australia and the Australian Chamber Orchestra

present

a Stranger Than Fiction Production

in association with

Camp4 Collective and Sherpas Cinema

MOUNTAIN

A STORY OF EPIC DIMENSIONS

A MASTER CLASS IN COLLABORATION

Directed by **Jennifer Peedom**. Story by **Jennifer Peedom**.
Music by **Richard Tognetti** and the **Australian Chamber Orchestra**
Words by **Robert Macfarlane**. Narration by **Willem Dafoe**
Principal cinematography by **Renan Ozturk**
Sound design by **David White**
Edited by **Christian Gazal** and **Scott Gray**
Produced by **Jennifer Peedom** and **Jo-anne McGowan**



VANAF 22 MAART IN DE FILMTHEATERS

‘WHAT IS THIS STRANGE FORCE THAT DRAWS US UPWARDS – THIS SIREN SONG OF THE SUMMIT?’ ROBERT MACFARLANE

MOUNTAIN, gebaseerd op het boek van Macfarlane, is een ode aan de bergen. Oscar-winnaar Willem Dafoe vertelt op poëtische wijze over de bekoring van de bergen door de tijd heen. De betoverende muziek van The Australian Chamber Orchestra zorgt voor een prachtige omlijsting. De schoonheid van de bergen is al eeuwenlang een fascinatie voor de mens. Een bergtop bereiken, wordt gezien als een ontzagwekkende prestatie. In vroegere tijden werden bergen vooral als onheilspellend en onherbergzaam ervaren. Vandaag de dag worden ze niet alleen als wonderen der natuur maar ook als toeristische attracties gezien. Alpinisme wordt door steeds meer mensen beoefend, de risico's en de intensiteit van het berglandschap worden indrukwekkend in beeld gebracht. Ontsnap aan de dagelijkse veiligheid, beleef het gevaar en laat je betoveren door de lokroep van de bergen.

Distributie Benelux Cinemien

‘Chateau’
Gedempt Hamerkanaal 139
1021 KP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
+31 (0) 20 5776010
www.cinemien.nl

Publiciteit

Manon de Weerd
manon@cinemien.nl
06 817 90 714

Marketing

Tessa Jansen
tessa@cinemien.nl
06 835 65 143

A STATEMENT FROM JEN PEEDOM

1 June 2017

"When Richard Tognetti of the Australian Chamber Orchestra approached me to collaborate on this project, I said 'yes' straightaway for three reasons.

Firstly I knew the Australia Chamber Orchestra was an absolutely world class orchestra because I'd been to many of their concerts. I played violin until the end of high school, so I have some classical music training and a love of classical music. So the opportunity to work with the ACO, was an opportunity I wasn't going to pass up.

Secondly it felt like a unique creative opportunity. Collaborating with an orchestra was always going to produce a very different kind of film, and I was interested in that as a creative challenge. Filmmaking is always about collaboration but I knew in this case, the collaboration was the most important aspect of the project. That idea was exciting.

I certainly had to flex my creative muscles in a very different way. Working with classical music, presented a whole new set of creative constraints that we had to work through. But we approached these constraints as a jigsaw puzzle. It wasn't always easy, but the result truly speaks to the trust and mutual respect of that collaboration.

The third reason I got involved was because, despite all of the films that I'd made on Mountains and about adventurers, I still felt that I had something to say – there were ideas that I still wanted to express. There's a line in the film: "To those who are enthralled by mountains, their wonder is beyond all dispute. To those who are not, their allure is a kind of madness." I was really interested in exploring the space between those two points of view and

how significantly our feelings towards mountains have changed in such a relatively short period of time.

Bringing Robert Macfarlane into the mix was an essential part of that collaboration. His book 'Mountains of the Mind' explored many of the ideas I wanted to express, so I approached him to write a very sparse, poetic narration script. Without Robert's beautiful words I wouldn't have been able to say what I wanted to say in this film. His script is breathtaking.

This project would not have happened without our principal cinematographer Renan Ozturk from Camp4 Collective, who I had worked with on my 2015 film *Sherpa*. A true mountaineer, whose images are utterly poetic. He was the third collaborator in this marriage of music, words and picture. He introduced me to a number of other cinematographers, whose images helped give us the vast international scope of this film.

Many of the images have been captured under the most extreme circumstances on the highest and most unforgiving mountains in the world using all sorts of new technology, including drones. So a big shout out to our Renan and also to the team at Sherpas Cinema and all the cinematographers who worked so hard to capture these extraordinary images.

Each of us brought our own ideas to MOUNTAIN and it really was like a master class in collaboration. Each of us raised the bar, inspiring the others to do the same. The result is a testament to that alchemy. It has been one of the most challenging, but enriching projects of my career.

I hope that the experience of seeing, and hearing, MOUNTAIN will be a very moving, dare I say, transcendental experience!





SYNOPSIS FOR MOUNTAIN

A sentence:

MOUNTAIN is a unique cinematic and musical collaboration: an epic odyssey through the Earth's most awesome landscapes, showing the spellbinding force of high places – and their ongoing power to shape our lives and our dreams.

A paragraph:

A unique cinematic and musical collaboration between the Australian Chamber Orchestra and BAFTA-nominated director Jennifer Peedom, MOUNTAIN is a dazzling exploration of our obsession with mountains. Only three centuries ago, climbing a mountain would have been considered close to lunacy. The idea scarcely existed that wild landscapes might hold any sort of attraction. Peaks were places of peril, not beauty. Why, then, are we now drawn to mountains in our millions? MOUNTAIN shows us the spellbinding force of high places – and their ongoing power to shape our lives and our dreams.



A half-page:

Only three centuries ago, setting out to climb a mountain would have been considered close to lunacy. The idea scarcely existed that wild landscapes might hold any sort of attraction. Mountains were places of peril, not beauty. How then have mountains come to hold us spellbound, drawing us into their dominion, often at the cost of our lives?

By the time Mount Everest was vanquished in the mid-twentieth century, mountaineering had become a quest for mastery rather than a search for mystery. Mountains were seen as adversaries to be overcome; places where fear could be taken to the edge – or beyond.

Millions are now enchanted by the magic of mountains. And where once their remoteness protected their purity, mountains have today become theatres for recreation: managed and commodified as parks and playgrounds.

But mountains are so much more than an escape, or an enemy to be overcome. Their greatest value lies in their power to inspire wonder and awe: to remind us of the limits of our schemes and ambition.

The Australians Jen Peedom, director of *Sherpa*, and Richard Tognetti, artistic director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, drove this very international collaboration that also involved US-based cinematographer Renan Ozturk, British writer Robert Macfarlane and American actor Willem Dafoe. There is extraordinary artistry in the finished work, filmed by the world's leading high altitude cinematographers, with works by Chopin, Grieg, Vivaldi, Beethoven and new works by Richard Tognetti.



KEY POINTS ABOUT MOUNTAIN

New rules of filmmaking were applied to MOUNTAIN. The film has an intensity of feeling rarely found in cinema because the images, music and poetry are given equal weight and because of the very precise way they weave in and out of each other.

MOUNTAIN is full of big ideas about deep time, nature and how the allure of mountains is a kind of madness.

These ideas are expressed with poetic brilliance by British writer, academic and conservationist Robert Macfarlane and expressed by Oscar-nominated actor Willem Dafoe. (See page 10 for comment from Robert Macfarlane.)

MOUNTAIN is director Jennifer Peedom's follow-up film to *Sherpa*. *Sherpa* screened at international film festivals in Telluride, Toronto, London, Sydney and Melbourne. The moving story about the deaths of 16 Sherpas on Everest was nominated for a BAFTA and won a slew of awards, including the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Feature.

The music in MOUNTAIN is extraordinary. The exalted music of Beethoven, Vivaldi, et al was treated with utmost respect and every note recorded especially for the soundtrack by the world-renowned Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO), lead by Richard Tognetti. There is a cinematic version of the film with the music embedded and a version designed for live accompaniment by the ACO. (See page 8 for more about the music.)

MOUNTAIN is hard-to-define. It is a wild ride during the death-defying depictions of extreme sports. It is a piece of art when the images, music and poetry sing at their loudest. It is a philosophy class on the human condition when the narrative reveals its surprises. It is a meditation track when it makes the spirit soar.

HOW MOUNTAIN WAS MADE

Richard Tognetti's passion for skiing was an inspiration

Richard Tognetti AO is the artistic director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO), a violinist and composer, a master collaborator and a big believer in synesthesia, the phenomenon in which the stimulation of one sense leads to another becoming more acutely attuned.

"Putting visuals with music can elevate music," he says. "It's what happens at the opera. You end up listening more with your eyes and seeing more with your ears."

For some years Richard has been experimenting with the alchemy between music and imagery. One such project was *The Reef*, which the ACO toured around Australia and offshore. The spectacular slice of film that was part of the tour and helped celebrate big wave surfing and the ocean, was filmed in Ningaloo Reef in northwest Western Australia.

"TO THOSE WHO ARE ENTHRALLED BY MOUNTAINS, THEIR WONDER IS BEYOND ALL DISPUTE. TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT, THEIR ALLURE IS A KIND OF MADNESS."

– Robert Macfarlane, *MOUNTAIN*

It was only natural that Richard would think about another iteration featuring mountains: he has loved skiing since his father introduced him to the pastime and is in the habit of watching the weather patterns over Japan in the final months of each year to prepare himself for his annual pilgrimage to that country's snowfields. He and colleagues went to work, albeit in a piecemeal way.

Richard sought out Jen Peedom because of *Solo*

Via a mutual friend Richard knew Jen Peedom had frequently worked in the Himalayas as a camera operator and filmmaker. But what prompted him to commission her to make *MOUNTAIN* was the appeal of her film *Solo*, which she co-directed with David Michôd, who went on to make *Animal Kingdom*. Andrew McAuley's 2007 attempt to be the first to kayak solo from Australia to New Zealand was a journey that ended in tragedy. (At that point, Jen's most successful film to date, *Sherpa*, had not been made.)

Richard and Jen met in September 2013. Because Jen hugely admired the ACO, relished the thought of the creative challenge, and still had things she wanted to say about mountains, she agreed to be involved immediately. The collaboration became something much more than a commission but that's when it was born.

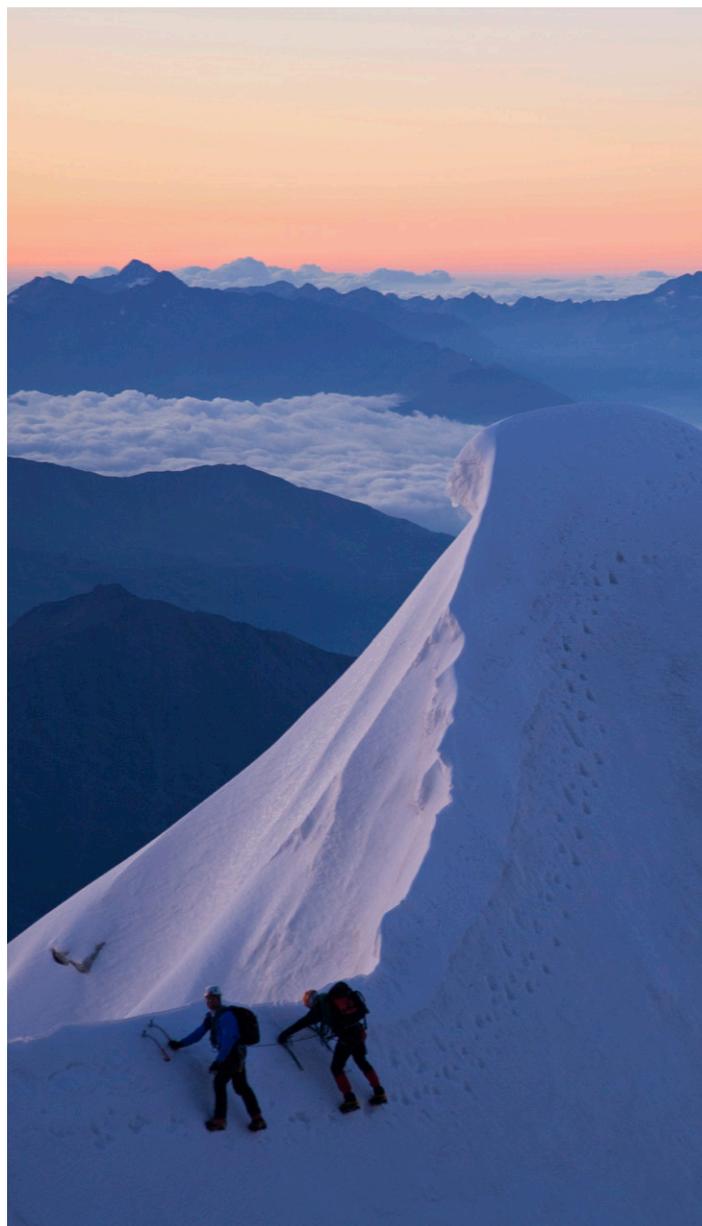
Within a year or so it was decided to make an additional standalone version for the big screen – it's called *MOUNTAIN* and the touring version is titled *MOUNTAIN LIVE*. Much later it was decided to also produce an IMAX version.

From the outset Jen knew that the project was about giving the music as much weight as the images, the composer as much say in all matters musical as the usually all-powerful director.

Filmmaking conventions had to be thrown out, compromises made and new languages learned. Uppermost in Richard's mind was the need to produce a film that would elevate the ACO's music and be part of a tour. The stagecraft necessary for a live concert is very different to the disciplines of making a theatrical feature-length documentary, which is what Jen was most focused on. Of course this created tension at times.

"The collaboration was the most important thing to honour. We had to have an equal creative role because we wouldn't achieve what we both wanted to without it," says Jen.

Honour it they did and the reward is a film of extraordinary artistry with an intensity of feeling rarely found in cinema.





“No Beethoven concertos were murdered in the making of this film”

Music has the capacity to utterly transform how an audience experiences imagery. Filmmakers have taken advantage of this for about a century. The experience is not always satisfying for the musicians involved.

Richard has been the composer on a number of films. He says this: “A director in a ‘normal’ film can turn the volume down or put narration over a piece of music or chuck the music out. The composer is subservient to the demands of the film and has no say whatsoever.”

MOUNTAIN turned usual practice on its head.

“With this project, Jen and I decided on certain pieces, including the second movement of Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto (Piano Concerto No. 5). It’s one of the high peaks (of music) and needs to be respected like you’d respect a Rembrandt or a national park. She understood they were sanctioned masterpieces.”

Richard has an encyclopedia of classical music in his head. For Jen the starting point for the music was listening to hours and hours of classical music recordings by the ACO. The selections had to fit the dramatic beats and the overall dramatic arc – or the pictures and the story had to accommodate the selections.

“Sometimes it was agonizing trying to make a long piece of classical music fit a scene that had out weighed its welcome,” Jen says. “Classical music can be very hard to work with. But I can honestly say that no Beethoven concertos were murdered in the making of this film!”

Richard interjects, laughing: “I was living in fear that my (ACO) subscribers would try to kill me if we had narration over the Emperor Concerto of Beethoven or cut a movement in half during our concert tour!”



Renan Ozturk unearthed visual riches

Richard was stirred by the possibilities of Mountain and imagined finding and composing music to all kinds of material: scenery unforgivably harsh and incredibly beautiful; breath-taking depictions of daredevil acts by rock climbers, snowboarders, skiers, and those who throw themselves off mountains in wing suits.

The film has it all but from early on Richard knew that capturing such footage would require time, risk, negotiation, sophisticated equipment such as helicopters, and a consequent level of expense that would severely limit the scope of the film.

“THOSE WHO TRAVEL TO MOUNTAIN TOPS ARE HALF IN LOVE WITH THEMSELVES AND HALF IN LOVE WITH OBLIVION.”

He and colleagues talked about accessing others’ archives but it was Jen and particularly US-based filmmaker Renan Ozturk, whom she brought on as cinematographer, who could and did throw the net wide.

Renan knew many people highly skilled at wielding a camera at high altitude and with big libraries of footage. He could also access a significant amount of material through Utah-based Camp 4 Collective, the production company he co-founded with the express purpose of shooting the best action and adventure athletes in the wildest places on earth.

Awesome visuals were sourced from far and wide, much of it never seen before. Renan’s colleagues over at the Canadian company Sherpas Cinema also supplied a lot of brilliant footage. One of that company’s aims – to “amplify the voice of nature” – fits nicely into the Mountain philosophy.

“Rather than us shooting the movie from go to whoa ourselves, which would have taken probably five to 10 years and cost millions, we had access to the best mountain cinematography in the world,” says Jen.

“We were specifically looking for material, firstly, that was absolutely extraordinary and, secondly, that was imbued with the magic, the spiritualism and the majesty of mountains. My role was that of curator as well as director.”



Music editor and sound track producer on Mountain, Joseph Nizeti, oversaw the music and the emotional chemistry achieved by its pairing with imagery. He's Richard's right-hand person on special projects at the ACO.

It was footage of people flying in wing suits that lead to Richard using five movements of Vivaldi out of order, he says.

"It gave the footage light and life and motion and rhythm that made sense of that diving-off-a-mountain madness ... (there's) risk and danger but also thrilling poise and precision and perfection," says Joseph. "Vivaldi's music also goes to aggressive, sharper, intense places and it became a sounding board for so many of the visual sequences that Jen was constructing with the editors."

"AT HEIGHT, YOU CAN BE TAKEN RIGHT TO THE BRINK, FOR YOU NEVER FEEL SO ALIVE, KNOWING THAT AT ANY MINUTE YOU COULD DIE."

"Richard was also extremely drawn to the music of Beethoven, which embodies eternal time and elegance and perfection. He used the middle movement of the Violin Concerto in D major and the middle movement of the fifth piano concerto, which is played for the film by the extraordinary Sydney pianist Tamara-Anna Cislowska. She will also be with the ACO on the Mountain tour in August (2017). Both movements gave parts of the film a (slower) rhythm that lets the audience really indulge in the imagery, and experience the beauty and vastness of nature.

"We also used the work of the twentieth century Norwegian composer Grieg. His works are focused, spiritual, concentrated. They give a sense of openness and grandeur and space and air."

Work by Chopin, Arvo Pärt and Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe is also in Mountain.

When the tone of the film turned anxious Richard wrote the music

While Richard was hardline about the filmmaking constraints around the existing classical music, he regarded his own as malleable and adaptable. The more flexible rules of engagement around compositions, which include some electronica and modern contemporary song writing, were enormously helpful.

"My own compositions are constructed more as film music, acting as a bridge between two works or formulated and inspired by certain concepts that couldn't be found in the canon (of existing music)," says Richard, who believes most film music has become "anodyne, vanilla, generic".

Mountain doesn't have music for only about nine minutes. About half of the music is classical and Richard composed the remainder. His original score, says Joseph, tended to be for those times when the film adopted a dangerous or anxious tone.

"I wanted the sense of vertigo that you get, the sense of awe, the sense of wonder, but most of all I wanted to capture the sense of horror you can get imagining you are Alex Honnold, who climbs vertical rock faces with no ropes," says Richard. (The film includes gravity-defying scenes of the celebrated Alex.)

"And then there's the ineffable, immutable sense of majesty and awe that we all feel when we look from the comfort of an airplane at mountains such as Denali (the highest mountain peak in North America) or the Himalayas."

"WE WENT IN SEARCH OF PLACES THAT WERE INTIMIDATING AND UNCONTROLLABLE – THAT INSPIRED IN US THE HEADY BLEND OF PLEASURE AND TERROR, WHICH WE CAME TO CALL THE SUBLIME."

The film's most dizzying scenes affected Jen in a different way: "I have a different relationship to mountains than Richard. Where he would respond to certain scenes with words like "horror", I'd respond with words like "epic beauty" or "majesty". So it took us a while to figure out a language. But ultimately, we found a way of expressing both those reactions with the music."

The poetic thread has its roots in Mountains of the Mind

During the usual batting around of ideas that happens during film development, Richard was curious to explore the concept of the sublime. In the branch of philosophy known as aesthetics, the sublime is a quality of almost overwhelming greatness and magnitude.

"It triggered a memory of a book – Mountains of the Mind by Robert Macfarlane – that had also discussed the sublime," says Jen. "I'd read it years earlier to better understand my interest in mountaineering and it had really resonated.

"I re-read the section about how people's perceptions of mountains has changed in a relatively short time and it immediately struck me as a useful structure for our story. For me, finding the structure of a film unlocks emotion and ideas. And in this case, it really enabled us to narrow down the thesis of the film."

MOUNTAIN is unusual in that it has no characters. When Jen began to consider the benefits of narration, a poetic thread to bind some of the more disparate ideas into a single narrative, of course she sought out the book's author Robert Macfarlane.





He was reluctant: "I'd promised myself not to take on any new projects at the time, as I pressed forwards with a seven-year-long new book – on underworlds. But then, in quick order: interest, fascination, obsession!"

Jen visited Robert in Cambridge in the UK in October 2015. Robert is a Reader in Literature and the Geohumanities in the Faculty of English at Cambridge University.

"The first thing he said to me when we met was 'there's someone we need to go and meet before we talk' and it was this tree, the most extraordinary tree I'd ever seen," says Jen. "That he did that said so much about this beautiful man. He really is an extraordinary human being; a mountaineer and adventurer himself, an extraordinary writer and a poet."

"THIS ISN'T CLIMBING ANYMORE – IT'S QUEUING. THIS ISN'T EXPLORATION, IT'S CROWD-CONTROL. THIS IS THE MODERN INDUSTRY OF ASCENT, IN WHICH THE RISKS ARE OFTEN TAKEN MOST BY THOSE WHO HAVE LEAST."

Luckily for MOUNTAIN, the admiration was mutual. Says Robert: "After meeting Jen and watching *Sherpa*, I knew this was an extraordinary opportunity to collaborate with people who were utterly brilliant in their own fields of music and image. So it has proved."

Robert thought of the words he wrote for MOUNTAIN as the weather: moving through and over the film swiftly,

bringing changes of mood and light, he says. Sometimes footage sparked something in him; sometimes Jen would be very specific about what she wanted.

"The whole had to convey the epic nature of the film's journey. That was the challenge and I relished trying to meet it. Jen was a brilliant editor, really a co-writer. We obsessed for over a year about individual words, single commas, speech rhythms, pauses ... MOUNTAIN is the most exciting film I've helped to make. I'll always feel proud and lucky to have been involved."

Richard took some convincing about including narration in MOUNTAIN LIVE in particular: "It depended on the musicality of the voice chosen. Collaboration is about trust and right up to that last bell Jen was roaming the Earth looking for a particular voice and she found it! ... It ended up being Willem Dafoe and as soon as I heard the first few words uttered it felt like a cello being played. It was an exciting moment."

Jen had travelled to Rome to meet with Willem for the three-hour voice recording session. The result was transcendental. The narration is sparse but it was an exacting job to position it within the film while still allowing space for the film to breathe. The narration couldn't be allowed to damage the integrity of the music; the ACO couldn't be allowed to overpower Robert's words. MOUNTAIN LIVE has about 70 per cent of MOUNTAIN's narration.

Says Robert: "The first sentence I heard him (Willem) speak set my skull tingling. I knew within 10 words that there could be no better narrator. That weathered voice of his, its calm patience and grace ... to hear Willem Dafoe read my script, well, it's one of the high points of my writing life."

A creative retreat happened in Japan early in post

A creative retreat, held in Niseko in Japan in January 2016, was yet another aspect of the production of MOUNTAIN that set it apart. About a dozen people were involved.

“It was great to be in a big house all together in Japan gestating and dreaming, collaborating and experimenting, as the snow was falling outside,” says Richard. “We’d set up an audio studio upstairs and a lot of ideas came out of being in close proximity to the editing suit. It was a really wonderful and productive opportunity for us.

“And I got to take Renan, who’s one hell of an adventurer, powder skiing in that glorious environment and that was pretty special,” he adds. In the same breath he says that the Finnish composer and violinist Sibelius once said that the scent of first snow is embedded in his Sixth Symphony. Richard injected his own ephemeral sensations into MOUNTAIN through the music.

It was here that both Renan and Richard saw a rough cut of MOUNTAIN for the first time. Jen and editor Christian Gazal were able to see their reactions first hand, respond to feedback immediately, then show them the results soon after. Renan shot new footage and helped source new material to flesh out sequences. New music was selected during this time, and Richard began responding to the images with original compositions.

It was the only chance to have all the collaborators in the same place at the same time (other than Robert Macfarlane, who wasn’t able to travel), and it really paid dividends in terms of establishing a great collaborative process.

Films are usually made in stages with different people joining the director at different times. It was highly unusual for editor Christian Gazal in particular to be with the broader creative team for what was eight days and he found it motivating and inspiring. At the time he was struggling with the shape of the film’s third act.

“One of the blessings of this project was the quality of the footage,” says Christian. “It came from such highly accomplished people ... (but because) it had been shot from a few different people for different purposes, one of the big challenges was to make it feel like it all belonged in the one movie. You had to pay particular attention to the continuity that ties it all together, whether that was through the music or the setting or something as simple as the movement within the shot.”

Scott Gray stepped in when Christian had to leave to work on *The True Adventures of Peter Rabbit*.

“I think there was about 2,000 hours of footage, almost too much to get our heads around,” says Jen. “It was one of the hardest things I’ve ever edited because the parameters were so wide.”





The music was recorded in April 2017

One of the challenges for the film team in working with a busy touring orchestra, was the schedule. The recording session for the score had to be booked more than two years in advance, which meant that the film had to be put into hiatus at various stages. The music for the film was played and recorded by all but two of the 18 string players that make up the Australian Chamber Orchestra – plus a few other musicians – over six days in April 2017.

Much of the music used in the film had been recorded by the ACO previously but the way Richard and the ensemble interpret the character and tempo of a piece of music develops over time. Also, the aim was to take full advantage of the fact that the film would be shown in some technologically advanced cinemas, so the score was recorded in 7.1 Surround Sound. It meant much experimentation and close collaboration between ACO sound recordist and mixer Bob Scott and the film's Academy Award winning sound designer David White.

The music that was recorded was then embedded in the cinema version; and this music will be played live in the 2017 national tour. International tours will also be staged at dates to be announced.

“MOUNTAIN is going to transform the way we see a lot of the footage,” says Renan, speaking with the mountain community in mind. “In my world these images are usually put to electronic or popular or indie music. It’s been great to re-experience a lot of the iconic shots that have been out there in my community in this way with an orchestra.”

Business partners

The Australian Chamber Orchestra, Screen Australia and post-production company Definition Films provided the backing that enabled MOUNTAIN to be produced. Camp4 Collective and Sherpas Cinema opened up their archives to director Jen Peedom, enabling a wealth of footage to be included in the film. The Australian distributor is Madman Entertainment and the sales agents are Submarine (North America) and Dogwoof (Rest of World). DCM Film Distribution bought German-speaking territories before production commenced.

ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN CAST AND CREW

JEN PEEDOM, DIRECTOR

Jen Peedom is a BAFTA nominated director, well known for her gripping, intimate portraits of people in extreme circumstances. Her credits include the internationally renowned documentaries *Sherpa*, *Miracle On Everest*, *Living The End* and *Solo*, which played in the Official Selection of major documentary festivals including IDFA and Sheffield and won numerous awards including an AFI for Best Documentary.

In the case of *Sherpa*, Jen went to Mt Everest during the 2014 climbing season to make a film from the point of view of the guides who help foreigners reach the summit. Tragedy struck while she was there when a huge block of ice crashed down and killed 16 Sherpas. *Sherpa* was the only documentary selected for Official Competition in the 2015 Sydney Film Festival before a successful run on the international festival circuit, including Telluride, Toronto and London. It was nominated for a BAFTA and won the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Feature at the BFI London Film Festival. It became the third highest grossing Australian documentary in history.

A one-time commodities trader, Jen's filmmaking career began when she was one of the competitors in the series *Race Around Oz*, broadcast on ABC-TV in 2000. She has been general manager of IF Magazine, a publication about film and television for practitioners, was New South Wales Young Business Woman of the Year in 2003 and was the inaugural recipient of the David & Joan Williams Documentary Fellowship in 2010, which recognises creative ambition, intellectual rigour and innovation in documentary cinema.

Jen is represented by Bec Smith at United Talent Agency.

RICHARD TOGNETTI, COMPOSER

Australian violinist, conductor and composer Richard Tognetti was born in Canberra and raised in Wollongong. He has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

He began his studies in his home town 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. He was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

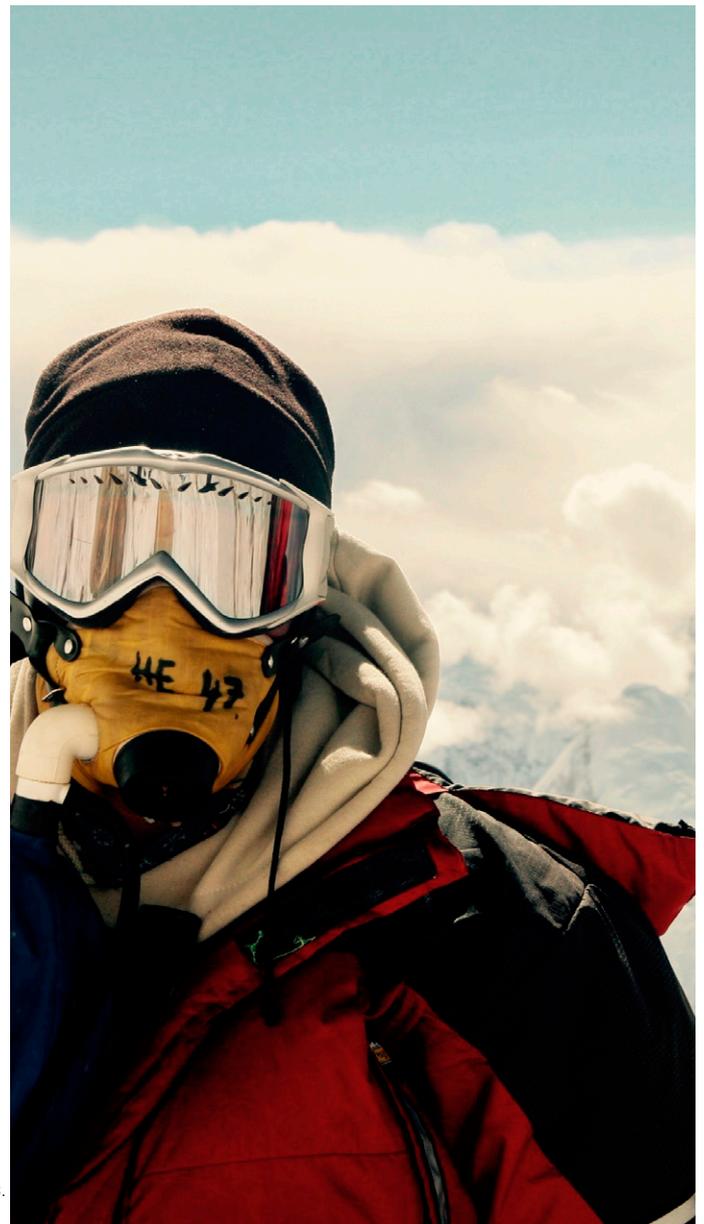
Richard performs on period, modern and electric instruments and his numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. As director or soloist, he has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment,

the Academy of Ancient Music, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Nordic Chamber Orchestra and all of the Australian symphony orchestras, most recently as soloist and director with the MSO and TSO. Richard also performed the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutosławski's Partita. In November last year, he was London's Barbican Centre's first Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall.

Richard was 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*.

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 a 1743 Guarneri del Gesu violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor.



ROBERT MACFARLANE, WRITER

Robert Macfarlane is the author of internationally prize-winning and bestselling books including *Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination* (2003), *The Wild Places* (2007), *The Old Ways* (2012), *Holloway* (2013, with Stanley Donwood and Dan Richards) and *Landmarks* (2015). He is particularly known for his writing about landscape, nature, wilderness and the environment. His work has been translated into a fourteen languages and is published in more than 20 countries, and his books have been widely adapted for television, film and radio. His books have won prizes around the world, including - most recently - the 2017 EM Forster Award for Literature, awarded by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His many essays and reviews have appeared in the Guardian, The New Yorker, Granta and the New York Times. He is presently completing *Underland*, a book about underworlds real and imagined. Macfarlane is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

RENAN OZTURK, CINEMATOGRAPHER

Renan Ozturk is recognized as one of the world's best professional climbers and as a cinematographer who gets extraordinary results when he pushes the art of filmmaking in extreme locations, including at high altitudes. He was the cinematographer on the BAFTA-nominated documentary *Sherpa*, which documented events before and after the most devastating tragedy on Mt Everest – it happened during the 2014 climbing season and left 16 Sherpas dead. Renan is fluent in Nepali. He was one of the cinematographers on and starred in *Meru*, which won the US Documentary Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2015. Renan was also heavily involved in the ski movie *Into The Mind*, which was released in 2012.

Renan is co-founder of the Camp4 Collective, a production company specifically launched to tell stories about adventure sports. His video “dispatches”, produced during expeditions, bring adventure to a world-wide online audience in near real-time. He has been recognized by North Face – as one of their professional athletes – and was named National Geographic “Adventurer of the Year” in 2012. He is also a landscape painter. Renan is married to Taylor Freesolo Rees and they often work together.

CHRISTIAN GAZAL, EDITOR

Christian Gazal is a freelance editor who worked on Jen Peedom's BAFTA-nominated *Sherpa*, a moving exploration of the biggest tragedy on Mt Everest. *Sherpa* earned the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Feature at the London Film Festival and an AACTA Award nomination in the category of best editing in a documentary for Christian's masterful work. He is now working on *The True Adventures of Peter Rabbit*, Beatrix Potter's classic tale of a rebellious rabbit trying to sneak into a veggie garden.

Christian had been assistant editor on a number of Australian films – including *Moulin Rouge!* which received an Academy Award nomination for editing – before he was invited to work on *Ned*, his first feature as editor. *Ned* was completed in 2003. The 2006 animation *Happy Feet* followed. The film was directed by George Miller of *Mad Max* fame and won a BAFTA and an Oscar for best animated film. Christian was brought back to work on *Happy Feet's* sequel and also edited *The Little Death*, which was released in 2014.

SCOTT GRAY, EDITOR

Scott Gray has been editing feature films, mini series, documentaries, television commercials and music videos for the past 25 years. He has just completed editing four episodes of the critically acclaimed and highly anticipated series two of *Top of the Lake*, directed by Ariel Kleiman and Jane Campion. This was the first TV series ever invited to screen at the Cannes Film Festival. He also edited the documentary *Solo*, which won the AFI Award for best documentary in 2009.

Scott won the AFI Award for *Somersault* in 2004 and the MTV Award for Alanis Morrissette's *Ironic* in 1996. In 2013 he was nominated for an Emmy Award, with his co-editor Alexandre de Franceschi, for *Top of the Lake*, directed by Garth Davis and Jane Campion. His other credits include: *Clubland*, directed by Cherie Nowlan; *The Silence*, directed by Cate Shortland; *Dead Europe*; *The Broken Shore*, again with Alexandre de Franceschi; and on the Scott Hicks features *The Boys Are Back*, *The Lucky One*, *Fallen* and *Highly Strung*.



DAVID WHITE, SOUND DESIGNER

David White was the first Australian to be nominated for and to win the Academy Award for best sound editing for *Mad Max: Fury Road* in 2016. This capped off his numerous achievements as a sound designer, sound mixer and sound editor in a career that has lasted more than 30 years.

His many credits include sound supervisor on the sci-fi series *Farscape* and sound designer on the moving dramatic feature *The Railway Man*, a co-production between the UK and Australia. In the last few years he has worked on several acclaimed documentaries in addition to *Sherpa*, including *Snow Monkey* and *Zach's Ceremony*. David studied sound at the Australian, Film, Television and Radio School but never graduated. Recently he was made an honorary graduate.

JO-ANNE MCGOWAN, PRODUCER

Most recently Jo-anne McGowan produced the feature documentary *David Stratton's A Cinematic Life*, about how the renowned critic came to understand himself and his adopted country via Australian cinema. It recently screened at Cannes Classics, a sidebar of the Cannes Film Festival dedicated to the art and history of cinema. A three-part television version was made simultaneously for ABC TV. Not long before, Jo-anne produced *Between a Frock and a Hard Place*, a documentary that looked well beyond the history of the beloved Australian film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of The Desert* to the society that spawned it.

Jo-anne has made a range of other documentaries on the creative industries and their connection to society and culture including: both series of *Art + Soul* (with Bridget Ikin), a compelling look at indigenous art; an animated interstitial documentary series on how family heirlooms encapsulate memory; and Barry Humphries' *Flashbacks*. She produced *Troubled Waters*, about Australia's role in East Timor, and *Kabbarli*, about Daisy Bates. Jo-anne has been a commissioner herself – at SBS – a development executive at ABC-TV and head of producing at the Australian Film Television and Radio School.

Jo-anne and Jen established Stranger Than Fiction Films in 2015. The company aims to make impeccably researched, well-told, insightful and moving cinematic stories for both Australian and international audiences.