



## Choosing Boccherini

In the 18th century, the golden age of baroque music, a French composer observed that if God wished to listen to music he would choose Boccherini. It's a quote that international cellist Catherine Jones includes in notes for her Sony recording: *Boccherini and Cirri: Cello Sonatas* that is another career landmark for the graduate.



Catherine Jones seen here with virtuoso musician and conductor Frans Bruggen after a performance with the Orchestra of the 18th century. Bruggen, who died last year, pioneered the Early Music revival. (Photo: Marco Borgreve)



School of Music graduate Catherine Jones lives in a village on Italy's peerless Lake Como and has performed as principal cellist with leading baroque orchestras around the world.

Earlier this year, she spoke to *Uniview* while touring Australia, recalling that her career was launched with UWA studies and a postgraduate scholarship that enabled her to study further in The Hague, home of some of the world's best baroque orchestras.

The scholarship came after graduating with First Class Honours having studied with the School of Music's Paul Wright and Early Music specialist Suzanne Wijsman, and winning a string of prestigious prizes.

For Catherine, it is the rich palette of Boccherini's music "where depth of expression and lightness of spirit unite" that appeals, along with the challenges of making music that pushes her instrument to its technical limits.

"Boccherini's style, coupled with the virtuoso nature of the writing, creates an attractive juxtaposition for me," says Catherine. She believes her choice of composers for the Sony CD ("two Italian cellist composers, far from home, sending a breath of Italy's light, poetry and optimism to 18th century London") contributed to the recording's enthusiastic reception.

Catherine's UWA scholarship plus an Australia Council grant allowed her to complete a Master of Music at The Conservatorium in The Hague and – like Boccherini and Cirri – she was destined to spend most of her professional life far from home.

"It is hard initially, but there were so many foreign students at The Conservatorium and such a social atmosphere that I immediately loved it – and knew that, at the end, I'd stay on in The Hague," she recalls. "After graduating, I auditioned for Amsterdam Baroque as one of only two cellists, so getting a job with one of the most famous baroque orchestras in Europe was a big break." She performed with the orchestra for a decade, touring

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the US, China, Japan and Europe and recording more than 20 CDs.

In 2008 Catherine was invited to audition for the Dutch instrument foundation Jumpstart Jr. at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and was consequently awarded the use of a valuable 18th century Gagliano cello. Securing such an instrument was her second big break and a reflection of the high regard in which she is held. During this period she also recorded her first solo cello concerto for the respected Deutsche Harmonia Mundi label with the Italian Orchestra Il Complesso Barocco.

After four years, the instrument was returned to the foundation to advance the career of another young musician, as is their policy. "I think it's great that such instruments don't ever belong to a single person. It's yours to use and, in time, it will go to another worthy cellist," she says.

"Really fine Baroque instruments generally come from 18th century Italy, the country that gave birth to the cello we know today," she explains. "Famous artisans like Stradivarius and Gagliano made such good cellos that they really helped the instrument emerge from bass line to solo instrument.

"Famous instruments like the Gagliano are generally owned by banks or foundations. Foundation people want to invest in talent, and the instrument itself is an excellent investment. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma's instrument, the Duport Stradivarius, has an amazing history. We know practically every musician who has performed on it, so when it was briefly lost – he left it in a New York cab – it made headlines around the world!"

Today Catherine, who lives with her partner and son Luca (4) in Italy, says that having performed with The Academy of Ancient Music, The English Concert, Concerto Copenhagen, and the European Brandenburg Ensemble, she is now focusing on solo performances and recording.

In 2015 she will give a recital in the prestigious Quirinale concert series in Rome which is broadcast live nationwide. She has recently been featured on Italy's Radio 3 and her recital performances this year include the Concerti delle Camelie series, and Long Lake Festival in Switzerland. She will also give master classes at the Conservatorium in Verona.

Having performed in UWA's Baroque concert series and ABC Classics, Catherine also looks forward to visiting Australia annually – and maintaining her links with UWA. Earlier this year, she gave four recitals in Australia, including one recorded live for the ABC at the Melbourne Peninsula Festival. ■

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