

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Emma Sullivan, 2012 Churchill Fellow

The Peter Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to undertake private tuition and mentoring from renowned French double bass pedagogue and performer Thierry Barbé (Paris, France)



Thierry Barbé and Emma Sullivan in the orchestra pit of Palais Garnier, Paris, France

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Signed: Emma Sullivan

Dated: March 27, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, I was greatly honoured to receive The Peter Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to undertake private tuition and mentoring from renowned French double bass pedagogue and performer Thierry Barbé in Paris, France. My fellowship, which I undertook from November 29 to January 19, was an even more enriching and inspiring experience than I could ever have anticipated.

In my private lessons with Thierry Barbé we analysed the intricacies of the French bow hold, discussed double bass bow and left hand technique, and made a comprehensive study of modern French double bass repertoire. Through discussion and observing Mr. Barbé teach at the *National Superior Conservatory of Music of Paris* (Paris Conservatoire) and the *National Regional Conservatory* in Saint Maur, I also learnt much about double bass pedagogy. Another inspiring element of my Fellowship was being able to experience the vibrant and diverse classical music scene present in Paris. I was fortunate to attend many brilliant performances. At the conclusion of my fellowship experience, I felt I had learnt much about perfecting the art of French double bass playing.

I would like to acknowledge the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for allowing me this opportunity. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank Peter Mitchell for his desire to create opportunities for young Australians and for his family, who chose to honour his memory in such a far-reaching and generous manner. Finally, I would like to thank Thierry Barbé for his incredible generosity and his unrivalled passion for performing and teaching the doublebass.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project Description:

To undertake private tuition and mentoring from renowned French double bass pedagogue and performer, Thierry Barbé.

Project Summary:

I was based in Paris for the duration of my Churchill Fellowship and received regular private tuition and mentoring from Thierry Barbé. We discussed double bass pedagogy in detail and this was consolidated when I observed him teach at Paris Conservatoire and the National Regional Conservatory in Saint Maur. I also had the privilege of observing him rehearse and perform with the Opéra National de Paris, of which he is First Solo Double Bassist. A particular highlight was attending the dress rehearsal of the stunning and rarely performed children's opera *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Maurice Ravel.

I learnt much from my fellowship experience that I intend to apply to my performing and teaching. The most influential changes I made to my playing technique was in my use of the bow and my understanding of French bow technique. I also developed my left hand technique to be more accurate and consistent. In our study of modern French double bass repertoire, Mr. Barbé introduced me to new repertoire that I plan to introduce to double bassists in Australia. I will primarily disseminate the knowledge I have gained through my private teaching and my tutoring work with such organisations as Melbourne Youth Music and Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. I will also share the information I have gained with my colleagues in the many ensembles in which I play, including Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria. On March 12th, I performed a recital of French double bass repertoire at the Australian National Academy of Music. This gave me an opportunity to share the knowledge I gained from my fellowship studies with many Melbourne-based double bass students and professionals.

PROGRAMME

Arrived in Paris, France	November 30, 2012
Lessons with Mr. Barbé	December 6, 2012 December 10, 2012 December 14, 2012 December 18, 2012 December 21, 2012 December 28, 2012 January 4, 2013 January 9, 2013 January 17, 2013 January 18, 2013
Lesson observation <i>Regional Conservatory, St Maur</i>	December 18, 2012
Lesson observation <i>Paris Conservatoire</i>	January 9, 2013
Arrived in Melbourne, Australia	January 20, 2013

THE ART OF FRENCH DOUBLE BASS PLAYING

French bow hold and bow technique

The most significant area of my playing developed throughout my fellowship studies with Thierry Barbé was the way in which I hold and use the bow. For some time preceding my study in France, I had not felt at ease with my bow hold and did not feel I was consistently drawing a good, strong sound. I was also concerned that I was not equipped with the necessary information to provide my students with the best possible foundation for their work as French bow players. I was drawn to the ease with which Mr. Barbé held and drew the bow, the diverse range of colour he was able to create and the consistency in his quality of sound. Through private tuition, lesson observation, discussion and watching Thierry Barbé rehearse and perform, I was able to gain a thorough understanding of his take on French bow technique. I was particularly inspired by the clarity with which he was able to teach and explain his approach to the French bow. Unlike some teachers, who have come to their current playing style very naturally and are not able to articulate the intricacies of what they are doing, Mr. Barbé has made a study of how he creates sound and how to best share that with his students.

From my first lesson, Thierry Barbé observed that my bow hold was not providing me with enough strength or flexibility to fully express my musical intentions. Throughout my period of study with him, he showed me the four main ways in which he holds the bow and explained the situations in which each is appropriate. These bow holds are *Standard French*, *Italian*, *Inner* and *Adapted French*. For photos of each of these four bow holds, please see Appendix 1 (page 19). This concept of having different ways of holding the bow for different musical situations was new for me. I had been trying to perfect one bow hold and, in doing this, my bow arm had become tense and inflexible. Mr. Barbé's approach encourages more fluent and flexible bow use. Mr. Barbé placed rubber tubing on the stick of my bow, near the frog. This allows more security when holding the bow and prevents the fingers slipping up and down the stick.

The first bow hold I learnt was the *Italian* bow hold. Here, the thumb is curved and placed in the corner of the frog, with the fingers flat over the frog. The joint between the ends of the fingers and the start of the palm should be against the stick. The tips of the second and third fingers are placed under the frog and they, with the thumb, provide strength. The two middle fingers stay in place and work as a 'lever' with the forearm, while the index and pinky fingers create flexibility. This

flexibility takes time to develop and this manner of holding the bow can initially feel quite locked. This bow hold is the best version of the French bow hold to teach beginning students, as it feels secure and provides strength without tension. However, as bow technique is developed, it can be a little limiting, as it does not allow much flexibility. Mr. Barbé noted that the *Italian* bow hold is also a good solution when rubber tubing is not available for the stick of your bow.

The *Standard French* bow hold is the most commonly used of the four methods of holding the bow I studied during my time in France. In this bow hold, the thumb is placed further to the left. This moves all the fingers along so that the second finger is on the corner of the frog and the hair. The second and third fingers function in the same way under the frog but the slightly different position allows more flexibility in the wrist. The angle of the second and third fingers is slightly turned and they, with the thumb, are strongly gripped. To describe the angle of the second and third fingers, Thierry Barbé used the analogy of pulling a cork out of a champagne bottle. The angle of your fingers when doing this motion is similar to what is needed when playing with the *Standard French* bow hold. This bow hold is appropriate for all general playing and for when playing with spiccato.

The key to mastering the *Standard French* bow hold is developing flexibility in the fingers and wrist. This flexibility can be developed away from the double bass, just working on the bow. Initially, you work on the motion while holding the bow with the left hand but, ultimately, you want to be able to do the motion completely independently, without holding or support from the left hand. When this motion is transferred onto the double bass, it should allow the bow to engage with the string consistently regardless of which part of the bow you are in. As the down bow is drawn, the third finger is the most engaged and in control and as the up bow is drawn, it is the second finger that dominates the motion. To create smooth bow changes, the bow change needs to remain in the same tempo as the rest of the stroke and not be rushed. One issue I struggled with while trying to perfect the *Standard French* bow hold was that my index finger would become overly engaged and subsequently lock up the rest of the hand. A good way of counteracting this common problem is to practice without the index finger on the bow and then gradually add it back on.

Flexibility of the bow wrist and fingers can be worked on through a number of exercises. Two of the exercises introduced to me by Mr. Barbé were “The Cowboy” and an exercise to be done on open strings.

"The Cowboy"

Place the first finger on the other side of the bow so the first and second fingers are like the legs of a cowboy riding a horse. Moving these 'legs' forward and backward is the exact motion that should be occurring with the wrist and the second and third fingers. The "cowboy" position automatically places the second and third fingers at the correct angle.

Open String Exercise (Rhythm: Minim, 2 crotchets)

Allow the wrist to move forward with the up bow and down with the down bow. The second and third fingers should keep a strong grip with thumb, the pinky should stay curved and the first finger moves with the wrist. The bow must stay straight.

This flexibility of the wrist and fingers while playing with the *Standard French* bow hold can also be applied to playing *spiccato*. All elements should remain the same and the flexibility should prevent the shoulder from over-working. When first working on flexibility within the *spiccato* stroke, the motions should be very slow and exaggerated. When it is gradually brought to a faster speed, it should become a completely natural motion.

With the *Inner* bow hold, the fingers are directly under the stick, with the pinky finger in the corner. This hold has a number of appropriate uses. Firstly, it provides greater security, as your right hand is more closed. The left hand then mirrors this and feels more secure with intonation, in particular. For this reason it is good for solo Bach, orchestral bass solos and the like. The *Inner* bow hold is also very useful if you are trying to avoid making a harsh or aggressive tone, as it creates a warmer sound with less edge. This bow hold offers a physical way to immediately change colour or dynamic. For example, you could use the *Inner* bow hold when faced with a sudden change to a soft dynamic. As it creates a darker and less resonant tone, the *Inner* bow hold is not a good option for general orchestral playing or when there is a need to project. With this bow hold, the first finger and pinky work as opposites to create flexibility. In comparing this bow hold to the *Standard French* bow hold, Mr. Barbé used the analogy that the inner position is "economy class" and the outer position is "first class"! This is because your right hand feels freer to move and be flexible in the outer position.

In the *Adapted French* bow hold, the second and third fingers are on the hair, placing them in front of the frog. This creates more power and makes the impact of the bow on the string very direct. This bow hold is much stronger than the other three and can be used when you are searching for a

more powerful or intense sound. When using this bow hold, flexibility works in the same way as it does with the *Standard French* bow hold.

In my discussion of bow technique with Mr. Barbé, he would often explain how concepts worked in relation to the German bow. A major difference between the two types of double bass bow is that the German bow hold automatically creates weight and pronation, but this does not come naturally with the French bow hold and has to be developed. A good exercise to work on emulating this natural weight is holding the tip of the bow with your left hand and then letting go - if your bow hold is powerful enough it should hit your leg with force. It was very interesting to more thoroughly understand how German bow works and to discuss the differences and similarities between French and German bow.

Studying these four different ways of holding the bow was an incredibly enlightening experience for me. It gave me a deeper understanding of how to use my bow arm and made me more aware of how intricate movements can affect tone and colour. In mastering the four different ways to hold the bow so they are flexible and interchangeable, you allow yourself many options to vary colour, tone and attack. You can then create even more variations. For example, for very soft playing, you can use the *Standard French* bow hold but lean the hand to the right so the right edge of your hand is against the stick. This position is not as flexible but provides great security for very soft playing and prevents bow shakes.

Left Hand Technique

My left hand was another area of focus during my Churchill Fellowship studies. Under Thierry Barbé's guidance, I adjusted my hand position to make it more secure and strong. I also worked on further developing my vibrato and thumb position. This work equipped me with a more accurate and consistent left hand technique and provided me with greater musical scope. It also helped me to develop a more thorough and effective approach to teaching the foundations of left hand technique to double bass students.

Early in my first private lesson with Thierry Barbé, he observed that my left hand needed to be more solid and reliable and that my hand position should be set up to allow this. He noted that improving my left hand set-up would help me to improve sound production, intonation and vibrato. Mr. Barbé observed that my first finger was slightly inclined back, which served the first finger to the detriment of all the other fingers. This hand position meant that I always had to

slightly stretch to play with good intonation on my fourth finger. He pointed out that if I played on my first finger with the fourth finger already in place, the first finger would be forced to be in the correct position. When moving in an ascending motion, it is quite natural for the first finger to keep a good position but during descending motion it has to be very consciously done. Mr. Barbé noted that some players, with large hands, are able to play effectively with a more tilted first finger but that my hand is not big enough. This led to a very interesting discussion about the difference between the male and female hand. He noted that, when teaching students, you have to be aware of these differences and that sometimes male and female left hand positions need to be different. This approach is refreshing, as many double bass teachers try to impose the same technical approach onto every student.

Mr. Barbé suggested I place my first finger completely perpendicular to the string and at a good distance from the other fingers. The second, third and fourth fingers are a group, staying close to each other and working together. The relationship between the first finger and the other fingers should not change when the hand shifts or changes position. When working with young students, you can use the analogy of the first finger being Donald and the other three fingers being Huey, Dewy and Louie. The thumb should be placed directly behind the second finger so it is centred and not just serving the first finger. An analogy given to describe the appropriate hand position was that the hand should be shaped like you are holding a cup of coffee between your second finger and thumb and you don't want to burn your first finger. To achieve the correct hand position, the elbow must be low, not elevated.

Another left hand concept that Thierry Barbé stressed was that the fingers should move in a very smooth and economical manner. He described the desired movement of the fingers as "gliding like a snake," staying on the string or as close to the string as possible at all times. Whether ascending or descending, the hand should maintain its position so you are not just shifting to one note but to a whole position. One must be particularly vigilant of this when the hand is moving in a descending motion, as this is where the hand is most likely to lose its position. This is often because the hand is moving back at an angle, instead of being perpendicular to string. A good exercise to reinforce the correct hand position is simply sliding between 4 on "e" on the "a" string and 1 on "e" on the "d" string, being careful of hand position and intonation. String crossings should always be prepared with the left hand, moving the first or fourth finger to the new string before playing the note. This allows for smoother changes.

I also worked on developing greater left hand strength. The left and right hands can not help but match input so the left hand fingers need to develop greater strength to help the bow arm play with

more strength. Another of Mr. Barbé's analogies was that one needs to be able to "smile" when they play. This can only happen when technique is developed to a level where you play with ease.

In my study of the left hand, I was encouraged to more closely examine my fingering choices. Thierry Barbé encouraged me to take a number of factors into consideration when choosing a fingering. These included the origins of the piece, the speed of the passage and how to best achieve good intonation. If a work was originally written for a different instrument, such as cello or violone, or for double bass in a different tuning, such as Viennese, it is best to emulate the fingerings that would have been used in that context. This is particularly important in broken chord passages – you should choose fingerings that, if possible, hold the chord and allow it to resonate. In very rapid passages, it is often appropriate to go across the strings in a higher position than play up the "G" string. Mr. Barbé warned me to avoid finger substitution, as the best way to keep fingerings smooth and in tune is to keep them simple. I was also told to choose fingerings that prepare strings crossings and shifts to the best advantage.

When playing in the higher register of the double bass, the fingering concept changes. The thumb comes around from the back of the fingerboard and is used to press down the string and the fourth finger is no longer utilised. This fingering concept is called *thumb position*. Thumb position is an important element of all solo double bass repertoire and much orchestral and chamber work. I found Thierry Barbé's approach to teaching thumb position quite different to my past study and he offered me new ways to play with strength and musicality in the higher register of the double bass.

In Mr. Barbé's approach to thumb position, the fingers work very independently – you lift each finger when the other is playing and keep them high off the string but curved. This allows clarity and greater flexibility in vibrato. He stressed that the fingers need to be very strong and used the analogy that they work like little hammers. This approach to thumb position is more similar to that of cellists. When playing in thumb position, you need to be careful of which part of the finger you use. I, initially, was tending to be in the centre or on the right of the nail, which causes the pitch to be flat. It is stronger and more expressive to be on the left side of the nail and on the brighter side of the pitch.

Vibrato is another important element of left hand technique and is essential for playing with expression and character. During my time in Paris, I worked on creating a more open, wide, rich and expressive vibrato that would better serve my musical intentions. Mr. Barbé explained how vibrato should never go below the pitch – it should go from the pitch and then higher. This means that vibrato is a forward motion. When playing with vibrato, the hand position must keep its

essential shape and the fingers should remain curved. The first and second fingers both vibrate independently whereas the third and fourth vibrate together, to provide strength. As you are vibrating, the fingers not being used should be lifted very slightly above the string, but not high in the air as I was originally doing. In thumb position, the thumb can be placed on the side of the fingerboard or on another string, rather than pushing down the same string. This action allows the vibrato to be a more free motion. Mr. Barbé highlighted the need for vibrato to always be a conscious choice - sometimes you may choose to only vibrate on select notes to create interest and diversity and in other contexts a continuous vibrato is appropriate. He encouraged me to continue working toward developing a wider, more flexible and more supple vibrato that is easily interchanged between the fingers. This can be developed using the below exercises.

Exercises to develop consistent, expressive vibrato on each finger:

“James Bond” exercise in lower positions:

1-2-4-2 fingering, starting on any note

Keep the vibrato constant and wide throughout.

In upper positions, the exercise is the same but there is an extra note:

+1-2-3-2-1, starting on any note

In thumb position there are more variations, as the fingers can be apart a semitone or a tone. When apart a tone, it is particularly important to lift the fingers that aren't playing.

To reinforce the work I was doing to improve my left hand technique, Thierry Barbé introduced me to a scale exercise by Jean-Marc Rollez (see example in F Major on next page). This exercise can be done on any major or minor scale and can be used to work on many different elements of left hand technique.

Rollez, Jean-Marc. *La Contrebasse – Méthode de Contrebasse*. Ed. Gérard Billaudot. Paris, France, 1980, page 8.

The study of left hand technique I made under the guidance of my mentor, Thierry Barbé, was comprehensive. I developed a greater understanding of hand position, fingering choices, thumb position and vibrato. Working to independently improve each of these elements of my playing not only improved my own playing capability but also greatly influenced my pedagogical approach, particularly with beginning students.

French Double Bass Repertoire

During my studies with Thierry Barbé, he shared with me his love of modern French double bass repertoire. In each lesson, we covered a new work and, through this process, I developed a passion for French double bass music and a much wider understanding of the genre. I believe that many of the works I learnt, when introduced, will become greatly popular amongst double bass students and professionals in Melbourne and, hopefully, more widely across Australia. I featured some of these new French works in a recital on March 12th at the Australian National Academy of Music. Please see Appendix 3 for a program of this recital (page 23). In the recital, I shared some of the knowledge I gained during my Churchill Fellowship with double bass students of all ages and standards and a number of double bass performers and educators. There were many positive comments regarding the repertoire and I believe a number of the double bassists present will consider including more French repertoire in their teaching and performing.

Two of the French composers introduced to me during my fellowship studies were Serge Lancen and Alfred Desenclos. Lancen has written a number of excellent works for double bass. I studied the first movement of his *Concerto for Double Bass and Strings* (1962) and a charming six-movement work from 1978 called *Croquis*, which translates to mean “sketches”. *Croquis* is a particularly good work for teaching, as each movement is very different in style and works on different aspects of technique. It is a work that develops advanced technique, while still being an interesting work for performance and very musically satisfying. Lancen’s concerto is similar in style to the work of Shostakovich and is an exciting and virtuosic work for double bass, with extensive cadenzas. Before my lessons with Thierry Barbé, I had never heard of Alfred Desenclos’s *Aria et Rondo*, another fantastic work for double bass and piano. The *Aria* movement is expressive and emotive and the *Rondo* movement has a wide appeal, being influenced by the swing jazz genre.

Transcriptions are very common in double bass repertoire and Thierry Barbé introduced me to a number of prominent French works that have been transcribed for double bass with great success. Amongst these are two works by Claude Debussy – his Cello Sonata and *La Plus Que Lente*, which was originally written for solo piano. Both of these works are well suited to the double bass and are excellent additions to our solo repertoire.

Double Bass Pedagogy

Aristotle wrote, “Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach.” Thierry Barbé’s deep understanding of the double bass and how to teach it greatly inspired me and has heavily influenced how I now approach double bass pedagogy. Through my own private tuition and also in observing him teach, I gained an understanding of his pedagogical approach and how to apply it to my own teaching and tutoring work in Australia.

Thierry Barbé’s pedagogical approach is direct but also very supportive. He identifies and explains how to correct issues very quickly and is very explicit when describing technique. He uses a lot of analogies and commented how important he believes they are when working on technique, particularly for younger students. One aspect of Mr. Barbé’s pedagogical approach that appealed to me was how he works on technique and repertoire completely separately. In this way, if you are working on making a major change in a student’s technique, you can work on it in technical exercises but are not constantly worrying about it while working on their repertoire. This way you are working on improving technique but you are still moving forward in learning music. Then,

when the student has mastered the new technique in the context of an exercise, they can then apply it to their repertoire. This is a very good way of helping a student make major changes while still allowing them to feel they are making progress. We also discussed how you should make a “conclusion” at the end of each lesson. This allows you to review what you have worked on and discuss what needs to be done in the week ahead.

As an instrumental teacher, you have to be very conscious of issues relating to tension and injury. This was a topic I discussed in depth with Thierry Barbé. He stressed the importance of encouraging students to counteract the stress placed on their bodies by playing. For example, he suggested using massage and stretches to keep the muscles in the neck and upper back loose and relaxed, as they affect all the other muscles bassists use. I found it particularly interesting when Mr. Barbé commented that he does not agree with telling students to avoid all painful motions. He believes that to reach a high level of technique you must push yourself to the limits and sometimes this is not comfortable. For example, I found when changing my bow hold and making the muscles more strong and independent, I certainly could feel some discomfort in my hand. Mr. Barbé noted that rather than avoiding any discomfort at all, you should make students cautious of doing things for prolonged periods of time. He recommended working on technical changes for no more than fifteen minutes in one sitting, but many times throughout the day or week. It was also noted that, with each student, you need an individual approach to making technical changes, as everyone's body is different. This means that sometimes you need to be very patient, as students can only make changes at the rate their body is willing to accept such change.

Experiencing the Classical Music Scene in Paris

One of the greatest privileges of my Churchill Fellowship was the opportunity to experience the vibrant and diverse classical music scene in Paris. I attended chamber music, orchestral, ballet and opera performances and was impressed by the incredibly high standard present across all of the professional ensembles. For a full list of concerts attended, please see Appendix Two (page 21).

As Thierry Barbé is first solo double bassist with the Opéra National de Paris, I observed many rehearsals and performances of this ensemble. Included amongst these were the ballets *Don Quichotte* and *William Forsythe/Trisha Brown*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Maurice Ravel's children's opera *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. With the spectacle of the dazzling soloists and extravagant sets and costumes in these performances, it would be easy for the orchestra to become of secondary interest. However, the virtuosity and musicality of the ensemble made it one of the highlights of

each performance I attended. This was obvious whether a solo instrument or the whole orchestra was playing. Through attending multiple performances of the same work, I was able to appreciate the flexibility of the orchestra in allowing for the differing needs of each soloist. The Opéra National de Paris played in a truly French style, with much colour, expression and flair.

The Opéra National de Paris has a weekly lunchtime concert series titled *Jeudies @ Bastille*, which features members of the orchestra and opera chorus in a chamber music setting. It is a unique opportunity to see some of the top orchestral musicians and opera singers in the world performing in a more isolated setting. Amongst the *Jeudies @ Bastille* performances I attended were two very different renditions of Debussy's much-loved String Quartet. It was fascinating to see two performances of this quintessential French work both performed at an extremely high standard but with markedly different interpretations. It opened my eyes to the scope of talent within a high-level orchestra, such as the Opéra National de Paris. The concept of a professional orchestra having a weekly chamber music series, in addition to its standard programming, is a very interesting one. It creates extra revenue for the orchestra, allows the audience to feel more connected to the orchestral players by seeing them in a more intimate setting and provides the musicians with an outlet through which to work on their skills and express themselves more individually. Some of the Australian orchestras have chamber music series within their programming but definitely not at this scale. I certainly think it is an addition worth considering.

There is an abundance of professional orchestras working in Paris and I was fortunate to see concerts by Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. These concerts featured incredible soloists, including Javier Perianes, Lars Vogt and Jean-Yves Thibaudet on piano, Gil Shaham on violin and Gautier Capuçon on cello. In all of the symphonic concerts I attended, I was struck by the commitment of every performer on stage. This undoubtedly contributed to the incredible sound each ensemble was able to attain. As a double bassist, I was drawn particularly to the string sound each of these orchestras created, whether a chamber orchestra or a full symphony orchestra. The richness of sound and clarity of ensemble was breathtaking. Particular highlights included Javier Perianes' understated performance of Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, Gil Shaham's exciting performance of Stravinsky's Violin Concerto (and the three encores that followed!), Gautier Capuçon's Saint-Saens Cello Concerto and encore of *Le Cygne* and the performance of Beethoven's third symphony, *Eroica*, by Orchestra de Paris.

I was pleasantly surprised to note how nationalistic French orchestras are in their programming, with most concerts featuring at least one French composer. This allowed me to see many great

French works performed. I was particularly excited to see one of my favourite French orchestral works, Ravel's *La Valse*, in concert at the Salle Pleyel. This work is always a crowd favourite but the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France's vibrant and imaginative interpretation led to a rousing standing ovation. I also had the opportunity to attend performances of more rarely-performed French works and new works by modern French composers. The stand-out amongst these was Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphonie*, performed by the Bavarian Radio Orchestra with soloists Jean-Yves Thibaudet (piano) and Cynthia Millar (ondes Martenot). This work is over eighty minutes in length and is impressive in scale. It includes a number of full orchestral chords that bloom to an extremely loud dynamic. In these moments, the sound created by the Bavarian Radio Orchestra was awe-inspiring. Jean-Yves Thibaudet's solos were also of particular note.

Classical music and culture more generally is an integral element of life in Paris. Almost all of the concerts I attended were sold out and often people would try to buy your ticket from you as you entered the hall! Opera performances were extremely popular and people would line up for hours before each performance to buy last minute tickets. This was incredibly heart-warming for me, as often classical music is described as a dying art. It is not just classical music that is thriving in Paris. During my two months exploring the city, I was able to visit an incredibly diverse array of museums and art galleries and was inspired by the history and culture emanating from every street of the city. In my opinion, there are two main reasons for the disparity in attitude toward classical music between France and Australia. The first is that ticket prices are much more affordable. There are still top of the line tickets sold at astronomical prices but there are tickets to the same concerts for five and ten euros, making classical music truly affordable for all. The other contributing factor is the importance placed on all aspects of culture and performing arts in the French education system. A passion for culture and an understanding of the arts needs to be nurtured and, if this is made a priority in the Australian education system, we will foster more creative, intelligent, self-aware and confident citizens.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

My Churchill Fellowship experience allowed me to grow as a musician, teacher and person. I return from my time in Paris with a greater command of double bass technique and, particularly, a deeper understanding of the workings of French bow. Through my study of French double bass repertoire and also through attending countless excellent performances by French ensembles, I have gained a more thorough comprehension and appreciation of French style. The unique experience of shadowing Thierry Barbé in all aspects of his double bass career has provided me with much insight into what makes a great double bass performer and pedagogue.

I have already applied much of what I learnt during my fellowship to my playing and teaching. In my private teaching, I have observed that I feel more confident helping my students overcome technical issues, both with their bow arm and with their left hand technique. I am also able to apply many of the teaching concepts Thierry Barbé shared with me in my tutoring work with the Melbourne Youth Music ensembles, Monash University Orchestra and in the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra Education Outreach Program.

On March 12th, I performed a recital at the Australian National Academy of Music, which served as a culmination and celebration of my Churchill Fellowship. Please see Appendix 3 for a program of this recital (page 23). I featured French repertoire that I had studied in Paris and shared some of my experiences and the knowledge I gained with an audience of double bass students and professionals. I received many positive comments and much interest in the French repertoire I performed, which was new for many of the double bassists present. My goal is to continue to be an ambassador for French double bass repertoire, French style and French bow technique.

I made many observations about the manner orchestras and musical organisations operate through my Paris experience. I intend to share these observations with the many ensembles in which I am involved, particularly Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, where I hold a core member position.

APPENDIX 1

Different French bow holds

Standard French bow hold



Italian bow hold



Inner bow hold



Adapted French bow hold – Fingers are further in front of the frog, giving the sound more intensity and strength.



APPENDIX 2

Concerts Attended

Wednesday, December 5th @ Eglise Saint-Sulpice
 Academy of Ancient Music with Richard Egarr (director & harpsichord)
 Vivaldi Concerto in E major RV270 'Il riposo per il Santissimo Natale'
 Vivaldi Dixit Dominus RV594
 Vivaldi Gloria RV589

Thursday, December 6th @ Opera Bastille Studio
 Jeudies @ Bastille
 Members of Paris Opera
 Debussy String Quartet
 Prokofiev String Quartet No. 1

Sunday, December 9th @ Opera Bastille
 Don Quichotte (Music by Ludwig Minkus, Choreography by Rudolf Noureev)

Thursday, December 13th @ Opera Bastille Studio
 Jeudies @ Bastille
 Members of Paris Opera
 Debussy String Quartet
 Shostakovich String Quartet No. 7, Opus 108
 Franz Schubert Quartettsatz

Friday, December 14th @ Notre Dame Cathedral
 Mater Salvatoris: Gregorian Chant and Medieval Music
 Ensemble vocal de Notre-Dame de Paris – Direction Sylvain Dieudonné

Saturday, December 15th @ Palais Garnier
 William Forsythe/Trisha Brown (Music by Thom Willems and Laurie Anderson, Choreography by William Forsythe and Trisha Brown)

Tuesday, December 18th @ Theatre des Champs-Elysees
 Orchestre de Chambre de Paris
 Joseph Swensen Direction and Violin
 Javier Perianes Piano
 Mozart □ Sérénade No. 6 in D Major
 De Falla □ Nuits dans les jardins d'Espagne, impressions symphoniques pour piano et orchestra
 De Falla □ Nocturne for piano solo
 Debussy □ Clair de Lune
 Chopin □ Nocturne No. 20
 Schoenberg □ Verklärte Nacht (1943 version)

Wednesday, December 19th @ Versailles Opera Royale
 Ballet Victor Ullate Comunidad de madrid
 Coppelia (Music by Leo Delibes, Choreography by Eduardo Lao)

Thursday, December 20th @ Opera Bastille Studio
 Jeudis @ Bastille
 Members of Paris Opera Chorus
 Benjamin Britten Five Flower Songs, Opus 47, Purcell Realisations and A Ceremony of Carols, Opus 28

Friday, December 21th @ Opera Bastille
Don Quichotte (Music by Ludwig Minkus, Choreography by Rudolf Noureev)

Monday, December 24th @ Opera Bastille
Don Quichotte (Music by Ludwig Minkus, Choreography by Rudolf Noureev)

Thursday, December 27th @ Opera Bastille
Carmen by Georges Bizet

Thursday, January 10th @ Salle Pleyel
Orchestre de Paris
Nicola Luisotti – conductor
Gil Shaham – violin
Giuseppe Verdi “La Force du Destin” Overture
Igor Stravinski Concerto for Violin
(Encores of 2 different Bach movements and a modern show piece)
Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky “Capriccio Italiano,” Opus 45
Serge Prokofiev Symphony No. 3, Opus 44

Friday, January 11th @ Salle Pleyel
Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France
Lionel Bringuier – conductor
Gautier Capucon – cello
Eric Tanguy “Eclipse pour orchestra”
Camille Saint-Saens Concerto for Cello and Orchestra Opus 33
Roussel Symphony 3 Opus 42
Maurice Ravel “La Valse”

Saturday, January 12th @ Theatre des Champs Elysees
Bavarian Radio Orchestra
Mariss Jansons – conductor
Jean-Yves Thibaudet – piano
Cynthia Millar – ondes Martenot
Messiaen Turangalila Symphonie

Monday, January 14th @ Amphitheatre Bastille
Janina Baechle – Mezzo Soprano
Elisabeth Leonskaja – piano
Franz Schubert “Winterreise” Opus 89, D. 911

Tuesday, January 15th @ Theatre des Champs Elysees
Orchestre de Chambre de Paris
Thomas Dausgaard – conductor
François Leleux – oboe
Brahms Liebeslieder Walzer or orchestra
Mozart Concerto for Oboe K. 314
MacMillan Concerto for Oboe
Schubert Symphony No. 6

Wednesday, January 16th @ Salle Pleyel
Orchestre de Paris
Herbert Blomstedt – conductor
Lars Vogt – piano
Beethoven Leonore II, Opus 72
Beethoven Concerto for Piano No. 1, Opus 15
(Brahms & Chopin encores)
Beethoven Symphony 3 “Eroica”

APPENDIX 3

Program from Churchill Fellowship Recital



Alumnus Recital
Emma Sullivan, double bass
Caroline Almonte (guest), piano
Michael Dahlenburg (alumnus), cello
 7pm Tuesday 12 March 2013

Serge Lancen(1922-2005) From Concerto for double bass & strings (1962):

1st movt., *Allegro*

Serge Lancen*Croquis*(1978)

Habanera
Mais que se passe-t-il donc?
Tilbury
Tendresse
Reminiscence
Espagnolade

Claude Debussy(1862-1918) *La plus que lente*(1910)

Alfred Desenclos (1912-71) *Aria et Rondo* (1952)

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) *Duetto* in D major for double bass & cello (1824)

Allegro
Andante molto
Allegro

Durations: 7' – 15' – 5' – 13' – 15'



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Emma Sullivan attended the Australian National Academy of Music in 2009, studying with Steve Reeves. Highlights of her year at the Academy include performing with renowned cabaret singer Meow Meow at the Perth Festival and being a joint winner of the ANAM Concerto Competition. Since her year at ANAM, Emma has become a core player with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and also performs regularly with Orchestra Victoria, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her performing commitments, Emma enjoys sharing her love of the double bass with her students.

In 2012, Emma was awarded the Peter Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to undertake a two-month period of intensive study and mentoring under renowned French double bass performer and pedagogue Thierry Barbé in Paris. This recital is a culmination of her fellowship experience. In her private lessons with Thierry Barbé, they analysed the intricacies of many aspects of double bass technique and undertook a comprehensive study of French double bass repertoire. Attending performances by the many brilliant orchestras in Paris was another privilege of Emma's fellowship experience. Highlights included a performance of Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphonie*, with soloist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France's superb rendition of Ravel's *La Valse* and Paris Opéra's production of Bizet's *Carmen*.

Emma is most grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for allowing her such an enriching opportunity. She would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Mitchell family and express her gratitude to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for the invaluable contribution it makes to all facets of Australian society.