

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by - LEANNE SULLIVAN – 2002/2 Churchill Fellow

THE DAME ROMA MITCHELL CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP to undertake advanced study of the Baroque (valveless) trumpet with leading European exponents and to consult with a specialist baroque trumpet mouthpiece maker – U.K, Germany, Holland.

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Signed

Dated

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction and Acknowledgments	3
2. Executive summary	4
3. Programme	5
4. Main body	6
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	8

1. Introduction and Acknowledgments

The purpose of my Fellowship was to expand my knowledge base of the Baroque trumpet repertoire, to unravel the mysteries of clarino (upper register) trumpet technique and to pursue a customised baroque trumpet mouthpiece.

It is with much appreciation that I thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for this wonderful opportunity to study overseas and the munificence of the late Dame Roma Mitchell in her generous sponsorship of Fellowships for the pursuit of excellence in the performing arts.

Thanks to the friends and colleagues here in Australia who encouraged and helped me prepare my application especially Paul Dyer, Alison Johnston, Matthew Bruce, Kirsty McCahon, Ken Smith and Jacqueline Marcus.

2. Executive Summary

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 Principal Trumpet – Australian Chamber Orchestra

Project description:

To undertake advanced study of the Baroque (valveless) trumpet with leading European exponents and to consult with a specialist baroque trumpet mouthpiece maker.

Highlights and most useful people:

Susan Williams	Baroque trumpeter and professor, Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague
David Staff	Baroque trumpeter and professor at both the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London and the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester
Will Wroth	Performer and teacher of the baroque trumpet, Rotterdam
Daniel Kunst	Brass instrument and mouthpiece maker, Bremen

Major lessons learned:

Too numerous to mention, are the many insights that I experienced thanks to the great talent of my teachers that allowed my own individual playing to blossom. My learning curve during this trip was very steep indeed.

Finding a baroque mouthpiece that works for any given trumpeter is a very individual pursuit. I found that there was no standard maker that supplied the majority of professional players with a range of production line mouthpieces. Most players work in collaboration with a maker to find their own customised model. Trial and error plays a major part in the success of any given mouthpiece.

It is important to pursue as many avenues as possible regarding baroque music performance and to play as often as possible with other early music performers of period instruments. Much can be learnt from all instrumentalists.

Dissemination and implementation:

I will write an article about my experiences for publication in the Australian Trumpet Guild magazine. Information will also be shared through my teaching and amongst my colleagues. Master classes have already been given since my return and more are planned for the future.

3. Programme

- December 9-12** Bremen - Lessons with Susan Williams
- December 13-14** Rotterdam – Lesson with Will Wroth
- December 15** Oldenburg – Christmas Oratorio performance
- December 16-20** Bremen - Lessons with Susan Williams
Meetings with Daniel Kunst – Custom mouthpiece maker
- January 1-15** London – Lessons with David Staff
Visit to Museum of London
Attended a performance of the complete Bach Brandenburg Concerti at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London
- January 15-24** Bremen – Lessons with Susan Williams
Follow up meeting with Daniel Kunst
- January 24-25** Den Haag - Attended classes and observed baroque trumpet lessons at the Koninklijk Conservatorium
- January 26-27** Rotterdam - Lessons with Will Wroth
- January 28-29** Utrecht – Attended a performance of Purcell’s Fairy Queen

4. Main Body

Purpose

My need to seek help from overseas in the form of lessons so as to expand my knowledge base, understanding and proficiency in the performance of the baroque trumpet was the motivating factor in applying for this Churchill Fellowship. I had reached a point where I could go no further and there are no opportunities to study in Australia. As the specialist baroque trumpeters are mostly in Europe, which is the heart of the early music scene, this was the obvious place to study.

One of the unexpected benefits of my Fellowship that I had not anticipated before leaving Australian shores was being able to go away for 8 weeks of study on the baroque trumpet and leave my modern trumpet behind. The baroque trumpet is twice the length of the modern trumpet and consequently the response is quite different. Professionally I play both baroque and modern trumpet and the necessity of having to fulfil my professional commitments in Australia, means that I have never had the luxury of being able to focus purely on the baroque trumpet without having to constantly swap between the two. The Churchill enabled me to do this and it was of enormous benefit to have time away from my professional constraints and to practise and play the baroque trumpet for such an extended period. Being able to concentrate my efforts on the one instrument intensified my progress on the baroque trumpet.

The people I went to see

I chose to study with musicians who were known to me from previous contact here in Australia where I was lucky to have played professionally with these visiting artists. This meant I was familiar with their playing and teaching styles and had already developed a rapport with them. As a musician about to undertake intensive studies on a one to one basis with a limited period of time, this was of an enormous advantage. It eliminated the element of surprise at the commencement of studies and enabled me to make the best use of my Fellowship.

The inspiration of three very gifted performers on the baroque trumpet in Europe and London was what made my project so wonderful. I was very fortunate to study with Susan Williams, David Staff and Will Wroth who are not only great players but also wonderful communicators and teachers. Their knowledge of the baroque trumpet and its repertoire is immense. They were all incredibly generous with their time and I cannot express my gratitude enough.

My quest for the perfect baroque mouthpiece for playing in the extreme high register (clarino register) of the baroque trumpet was finally successful thanks to this Fellowship. Over the years I have had many mouthpieces sent from overseas at considerable expense but none were suitable. This trip allowed me to talk to other professional baroque trumpeters about what worked for them and then consult with mouthpiece maker Daniel Kunst, which resulted in

the production of a mouthpiece that worked for me. This outcome alone would have made my Churchill a success without the added benefit of all the wonderful insights I experienced during my lessons in Europe.

Benefit to the Australian Community

A consequence of my new mouthpiece is the possibility of now being able to perform certain repertoire that was previously inaccessible, due to the restraints of my existing mouthpiece in regard to the clarino register. Sydney audiences will benefit by being able to hear performances of works that were not often, if at all, heard in Sydney on period instruments. These works could not be programmed without bringing someone out from Europe, as there was no one here who was able to play the demanding first trumpet parts.

A good example of the impact that my Fellowship has already had since my return is the scheduled performance in October of two Bach Cantatas with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, with whom I play Principal Trumpet. This will be the first time the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra has played any Bach Cantatas that involve trumpets due to the extreme demands of these pieces in the upper register of which, Bach is famous for. The programming of these pieces by this group is a perfect example of the windows of opportunity that are now possible since my trip away thanks to the Churchill Trust.

Highlights

There were many highlights during this Fellowship.

Although January is traditionally a quiet time in Europe for classical concerts, I was still able to attend a few great performances. I was very fortunate to be able to hear David Staff perform Bach's 2nd Brandenburg Concerto at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, with the Feinstein Ensemble, along with the other Brandenburg Concerti on period instruments.

Equally inspiring was hearing Susan Williams perform Purcell's Fairy Queen with Combattimento Consort Amsterdam in Utrecht, which was particularly relevant, as I will be performing this same work in Sydney later this year on the baroque trumpet with Pinchgut Opera. To study these scores with these players leading up to these performances was an invaluable experience.

I was also fortunate to participate in a performance of Bach's Christmas Oratorio in Oldenburg, Germany with Will Wroth playing Principal trumpet. Although the choir was amateur it was inspirational to hear the superb playing in the clarino register by Will.

Whilst in London I took the opportunity to visit the Museum of London. I had been told that the museum had a collection of early trumpets that was worth taking a look at and I was not disappointed by what I saw there. They had a trumpet from a shipwreck from the 14th century, the earliest I have ever seen as well as a 17th century trumpet. Of particular note was a trumpet from Her Majesty the Queen's private collection of instruments dating from 1787. The

trumpet was a silver trumpet in Eb, William Shaw, bearing the Royal Arms of George III. This instrument was in immaculate condition and had a vent hole similar to the thumbhole commonly used on today's reproductions.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

We lose many of our most talented early music instrumentalists and vocalists to the attraction of the many employment opportunities that exist in Europe. This is equally true of baroque trumpeters. One of the problems is that young players need to go overseas to study, as there is no course in an Australian institution where you can major on the baroque trumpet. The employment opportunities in Australia are limited and so it is hard to attract these players back home again once their studies are completed.

It is my hope that I will be able to help change this situation through my teaching and performing. Since my return I have already given a lecture demonstration on the baroque trumpet at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music and have taken a baroque trumpet class there. Further classes will be given later in the Semester. This year I am also teaching an Honours student from the Newcastle Conservatorium the baroque trumpet.

I have had expressions of interest from students from Melbourne and Sydney who are keen to pursue Baroque trumpet study. There is also a class planned at the Sydney Conservatorium where I am a staff member. As well as my contact with students, professional trumpeters who are interested in hearing about my experiences have also approached me and some professional sessions have been planned.

I will also share my experiences by writing an article for the Australian Trumpet Guild Magazine in their next quarter.

As individuals, we can contribute to raising the profile of early music performance in Australia by performing at the highest possible standard. The granting of Churchill Fellowships to such musicians gives them the opportunity to do just that. By doing so we will be able to attract bigger audiences and take a step in the right direction towards addressing some of the issues mentioned above and expanding the early music scene here in Australia.