

Wallis Power – Italy, Summer 2016

It was with the generous help of the Christine Hansen music travel scholarship that I was able to spend a week of my summer vacation enjoying a truly inspirational cello course in Tereglio, Italy, a beautiful village set in the idyllic surroundings of the Tuscan hillside.

As a musician who wishes to take cello playing to a professional level, intense and high-standard summer courses such as there are essential for my artistic development, as they primarily provide the rare opportunity to work closely with internationally acclaimed musicians on a daily basis. The ‘Cello Classics’ Summer Course is run by Sebastian Comberti, who was joined this year by the esteemed cellists Roel Dieltiens and Raphael Wallfisch. The seventeen young student cellists lucky enough to enjoy a place on the course, including myself, were able to receive regular lessons throughout the week, in addition to taking part in and watching the daily masterclasses. I therefore learnt a great deal during the week; the substantial amount of individual teaching time gave me a lot to take forward into my development as a cellist, as we had the time to work on a wide range of repertoire.

In addition to the intensity of the course tuition itself, I also feel that the Cello Classics course in Tereglio was as much a cultural experience as it was a musical one. From experiencing the wonderful local Italian cuisine to exploring local areas of beauty, including a walk of a gorge, and a trip to Bagni di Lucca to watch the teachers give a concert, the week was thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding on a cultural level too. I also valued meeting students from around the globe; cellists from Melbourne, USA and Europe all gathered for the week and it was wonderful to get to know them and even develop my language skills a little further- an added bonus!

The course concluded with the final concert, set in the ornate church in Tereglio. I had the intimidating yet exciting task of opening the concert with my performance of the third movement of Rachmaninov’s Cello Sonata. An arrangement of Rossini’s William Tell Overture for 6 cello parts concluded the concert. I am extremely grateful to the Christine Hansen music travel award for enabling me to spend a musically enriching week in Tereglio, an experience that I will remember for a long time to come.