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REVIEW

2018 BAROQUE SUMMER SCHOOL ADA (OBOE)

The experience gained in the Cambridge Early Music Baroque Summer School 2018 is very rewarding and it is definitely a highlight of my summer this year. I am very honoured and grateful for the bursary offer, which allows me to attend and learn in the Summer School without any financial concerns.

It was my first time attending the Cambridge Early Music Summer School, which is a very famous course among the UK and has more than 20 years of history. With this long-standing establishment, the Summer School was very well organised and smooth. The schedule of each day was very contented, with 5-6 hours of rehearsals including sectional, ensemble and orchestral tutti. I would describe this intensive week as 'proactive', since all the participants largely indulged themselves in music, without passively merely sitting and listening. We played music all time and in all corners of the campus. Keep playing is the best way to learn music.

Being an ensemble-based course is the element that I like most about this Summer School. It is very different from learning in a masterclass for the sake of individual technical proficiency. While we learn in an ensemble/ orchestral setting, we not only focus on ourselves but also the other instruments. For instance, while we were playing the French orchestral repertoires, Chaconne in G major by Gottfried Finger and Suite from *The Beaux's Stratagem* by Peter Gillier, being the oboist, I had to double the descant with other upper winds instruments and violins. So, I learnt a lot while Judy Tarling coached the violins about bowing and phrasing which are also applicable on my playing and I had to think how to play in order to match and blend with string instruments. It is only learning through an orchestral context that will benefit in this case. Many occasions as such enrich my baroque oboe playing. Also, when we were working on choral and orchestral pieces, Philip Thorby's instructions to the choir on the texts also reminded me how to play my doubling melody line with the choir, eg breathe mark, stress, etc. The expertise and teaching of each tutors are highly appreciated.

Undoubtedly, I gained much baroque music knowledge and broader baroque repertoires after attending the Summer School. Titled "Echoes of Antiquity -

Purcell, Handel and the original Academy of Ancient Music” this year, it was a pleasure to read many of the classic masterworks, like Choruses from Handel *Israel in Egypt*. I am particularly amazed by reading Purcell’s and Handel’s versions of *O sing unto the Lord*. While studying Handel’s version, it was in a small ensemble group setting. I could easier understand the role of the oboe part and how it interacts with other instruments, importantly the violin parts and the soprano part. I enjoyed learning the very expose and lyrical oboe solos in the work in such an intimate and positive atmosphere. Moreover, we also studied many French baroque composers’ works, especially Peter Holman’s new found - Gottfried Finger. Without joining the Summer School, I would not have the chance to get in touch with these newly found music and less knew or performed baroque composers. Baroque music is always a huge treasure to explore further and more.

I am most thankful that I was able to debut my baroque oboe solo with a small period instrument ensemble. As a musician, this is definitely a milestone for my future career and development. The Sonata in B flat major by Gottfried Finger is such a beautiful piece with contrasting movements. With this experience and introduction to the composer and the piece, I hope I will have a chance to bring this piece to the Hong Kong audience in the near future.

Apart from the musical side, this Summer School in general gave me a very decent impression. I am very delighted to see all walks of lives from all parts of the globe coming together for their passion in baroque music. Even though many of them are amateur, they are gifted, spirited and respectful to music. All participants are highly engaged and collaborative, as we can see from the informal student concert. I learn from each participant as much as from professional musicians. At the same time, I made connection with fresh music professionals of my generation and we hope that we will have the chance to make music again after the Summer School. I believe the result of this Summer School on me will carry on much beyond that week in Cambridge Girton College.

Once again, I would like to thank the Cambridge Early Music for organizing such meaningful Summer School, the Bursaries Committee for granting me full bursary so that I can attend the Summer School worries-free, and all the tutor for their wholehearted teaching, especially my Woodwind tutor Gail Hennessy for recommending me to go on such a life changing journey. The CEM has my recommendation without hesitation!