

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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# JACQUELINE\_DU\_PRÉ

*By Catalina*

She was born in Oxford on January 26th, 1945 into a middle-class family in which music was important: her mother was a fine pianist and a gifted teacher. The French-sounding name came from her father's Channel Island ancestry. Just before her fifth birthday, when she was already showing musical promise, she heard the sound of a cello on the radio and the course of her life was set.

At ten years old Jacqueline du Pré studied under William Pleeth. She then studied with Casals, Tortelier and Rostropovich. In 1965 she recorded the Elgar Concerto with Sir John Barbirolli and the London Symphony Orchestra, a recording which established her stardom.

Her unselfishness made her a brilliant chamber music player, collaborating with many of today's greatest names in music. Her friendship with Daniel Barenboim, Itzhak Perlman, Zubin Mehta and Pinchas Zuckerman, led to the famous film by Christopher Nupen of their Schubert "Trout" Quintet. In 1967 she married pianist Daniel Barenboim. TIME magazine wrote:

*"Thus began one of the most remarkable relationships, personal as well as professional, that music has known since the days of Clara and Robert Schumann."*

Their marriage led to some fruitful collaboration, evidenced in many recordings with Barenboim as pianist or conductor. She could not pinpoint the time when she started losing feeling in her fingers, and her arms, as she said, felt like lead. By the fall of 1973 she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She continued to teach on occasion, but the deterioration of her health gained momentum and finally, on October 19th, 1987, she died at the age of forty-two.

Jacqueline du Pré left us a wonderful legacy of recordings, although certainly not nearly enough for any of us, her admirers. Too often the same recording seems to be recompiled into new collections (ie., there are at least 4 cd /sets which have the Dvorak and Elgar concertos), which only points out our yearning for more. Who wouldn't like to hear her play the Brahms Double Concerto, the Beethoven Triple, or the Tchaikowsky Rococo Variations? The list can go on and on, but I am grateful for what we do have. Perhaps someday other vaulted tapes will be transferred to CD, other films to DVD, to reveal a little more of this genius that was Jacqueline du Pré.





Please do see original works for many different instruments and groupings (virtually all of the orchestral instruments, plus keyboard, accordion, txistu etc.). There are countless transcriptions of all kinds for cellists, and for cello with other instruments on the [Johnstone-Music](#) web page. General music and cello-based articles and biographies abound, plus directories of famous historical cellists, and many other historical and present-day items of interest...

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