

SPECIAL FEATURE on MARIA DE MACEDO

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Birth: 25th October 1931 - Porto, Portugal

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María de Macedo began her cello studies in Oporto (Portugal), obtaining a higher degree with the Professor Madalena Costa. She was awarded the “Suggia” award. She then continued her training in Paris and Geneva with Pierre Fournier and later on in the USA (Bloomington) with a Fullbright scholarship as a student and then no less than an assistant to Janos Starker!

In chamber music - and it must be mentioned that as a very intelligent musician the sense of chamber music playing has always been important to her - she had received classes from the maestros G. Sebok, B. Greenhouse and M. Pressler. She also investigated early music with Safford Cape in Belgium, and was able to put this into practice with being part of the Lisbon Ancient Music Group playing the viola da Gamba.

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She soon developed a solid performing career. She was a member of the Porto Symphony and Lisbon National Orchestras and a professor at the Superior National Conservatory of Lisbon. In fact, for twelve years she was co-principal cellist in the Gulbenkian Orchestra. In the 1950-60s she was very active as a soloist, giving recitals, playing cello concertos with orchestras and making recordings. She was presented at the Wigmore Hall in London playing with Sequeira Costa.

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Later in her career teaching became more and more important to her. In Portugal (to be precise, Porto) she created the “Fundação Franz Schubert” organizing Masterclasses with some prestigious cellists such as: L. Claret, M. Coppey, C. Bohorquez, T. Tsutsutmi and D. Grosгурin. In 2001 she created the prestigious Spanish Cello Forum, which continues to function and is a benchmark for cello students at Spanish conservatories. She has taught special cello courses in many parts of the Iberian peninsula, and also in other countries - especially mentioning Switzerland and Germany.

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As one of the very top and respected musicians in Portugal/Spain, here are two special questions for Maria!:

Q1: How do you see the world of cello in Spain today?

A: It is an immense joy to think about how the cello has progressed in Spain. It is a reality. I have been in Spain for more than thirty years and I remember what the cello was here when I arrived. Today there is a generation that is no more than forty years old that has completely changed the panorama of the cello in this country. Although I believe that this fact has been recognized first abroad than within Spain. It was abroad that I heard for the first time that the cello in Spain had changed! Today this is a reality and I feel a great joy to know that it is so.

Why has it changed? I think it has been a common effort, an effort to know how to go out, meet, listen and contact the best in our field. Learning is something we can do every day and the only condition is to know how to listen. From there I believe that all those who today are figures and who have the opportunity to transmit a lot to others will never stop learning for the rest of their lives. At least that is the concept that I have of learning, and I believe that this attitude of learning and therefore of opening thought and knowledge to the entire universe, to all cultures and those places where the culture of music is cultivated better. It is what has made Spain gain enormous progress in all fields of music in general.

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Q2: Could you tell us what you would recommend to a teacher who is starting to enter the world of (cello) teaching?

A: To all the teachers who are young and who are now beginning to find their jobs by means of teaching the cello (or any other instrument), both to children and adolescents, I would recommend attending master classes. This seems to me something indispensable. It is not necessary to go as an active student with a great teacher to learn from him, but listening to his/her classes, we learn not only what we need to transmit to our students, but actually how to teach it. So we are renewing ourselves every day. The advice that I give to any young teacher, who has so many years ahead of him to develop his work, is not to forget that we learn by listening to those who are better than you. The day you stop learning or become uninterested in doing it, you automatically get stuck in what you are doing.

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See her in action!

María de Macedo vista Ciudad Real

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9RMTvVRAF4>

Few people have done as much for the pedagogy of the cello in Spain as María de Macedo!

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‘documenting the cello’

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