

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Today, Quenton Blache is sitting third cello stand, inside chair.

QUENTON BLACHE *Cello*

As a classical musician, it's easy to be overly critical of oneself—to strive for perfection and focus on the technicalities during a performance, instead of finding the pleasure in sharing music with a community of people. For nineteen-year-old cellist Quenton Blache, he is determined to focus on the joy.

Blache recalls a statement made by one of the cellists of the North Carolina Symphony that was something along the lines of, “The joys of performing should make one smile, not worry.” These words have stuck with Blache and allowed him to loosen up a bit more when performing. “When I think about this advice, I react a lot less negatively to inaccuracies and treat them as a part of the performance and let my joy of sharing music take much higher ground. I believe these mental adjustments have led me to become a better performer.”

As a junior at the University of Southern California, Blache is double majoring in cello performance and composition with a minor in Chinese. This summer, Blache is studying with Desmond Hoebig and Richard Aaron and playing with the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

Music has always played a big role in Blache's life. “My mother is a casual pianist, and as a kid I would always listen to her play Prelude in C major from Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Over the course of a month or two, I was able to play the entire prelude by ear, but it wasn't until many years later that I looked at the music simply out of curiosity.” At age five, he started learning piano from his mother, followed by violin lessons at his elementary school a couple years later.

In the third grade, Blache noticed that there was only one cellist in his school orchestra. In middle school, he transitioned to cello, which soon became his primary instrument. As the years went by, he moved through the ranks as a cellist and embarked on a journey of youth orchestras and chamber ensembles to now studying cello in college.

On his instrument Blache says, “The cello is such an amazing instrument; I love it with all my heart. One of the coolest things in my eyes is how versatile it is. You can play beautifully rich low tones in addition to all the high tones of a violin. Some of my favorite ensemble configurations are the ones with just cellos. The 12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic come to mind, playing such a wide range of repertoire from the fun *Pink Panther* theme to the lush *La Vie en Rose*.”

In his first year studying at the Festival, Blache says, “Studying here was pretty much a no-brainer. Exceptional faculty, extremely high-level orchestras, and simply bonding with fellow musicians from around the world were all reasons I chose to come here. I was familiar with the Festival through friends who've studied here before, and I always remember hearing about this festival being among the top for classical musicians.”

In the future, Blache plans to attend USC's graduate program in screen scoring. “I have a keen interest in scoring for visual media,” Blache explains. “For cello, I could see myself playing in a chamber group that enjoys performing all kinds of music, in addition to recording for various films/tv shows/video games. Perhaps you'll find me as a member of an orchestra, or a soloist championing new music.”

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Blache is a recipient of the Vincent Wilkinson Foundation Scholarship