

Electric violin set for world stage debut

THIRD-year USQ Bachelor of Visual Arts student David Guscott is on the verge of breaking in to the global market for electric string instruments following the production of a modern electric violin for his sculpture project in 2000.

After attracting wide interest in his electric violin prototype, David spent 2001 perfecting his stringed baby and setting up the business infrastructure to manufacture his range of "quiet" electric violins.

"I made the first violin for renowned gospel musician Peter Shurley who liked the instrument so much I decided that I would be mad not to go for it in terms of making instruments for a living," David said.

"Peter used to play a 230-year-old Hungarian violin but now almost exclusively plays the Guscott violin for his performances."

Violinist Marcus Holden, who runs the Australian Fiddlers' Festival and is a celebrated fiddler in his own right, is also enthusiastic about the "quiet" electric violin.

"It sounds fantastic," Holden says.

"I can tell you that it is such an improvement on every other electric violin I have played - there is just no comparison. Forget the Zeta (a US brand), forget the BTS systems (external pick-ups for acoustic violins), this Guscott violin is something else," he said.

"It is an easy instrument to get around and the pick-up system (the electronic pick-ups) allows you to play with much less effort."

This month the specialist international magazines "The Strad" and "The Double Bassist", which are produced in the UK with readership in more than 80 countries, will feature David Guscott's instruments in their new products pages as well as editorial about the revolutionary instruments.

"I am currently trying to set up an interview with international virtuoso violinist Nigel Kennedy to show him exactly how good the instrument is," David said.

"We have done extensive research into the bridge construction and with my colleague Greg Greber we have designed unique circuitry which gives the violin a wonderful acoustic sound. Most players cringe at the electric violin sound because of its harshness but with this design it sounds just like a classical violin.

"One of the advantages of this "quiet" violin is that because of the built-in pre-amp you can plug in a set of headphones and achieve a full and realistic sound in practice without disturbing your family or neighbours in the middle of the night. On the other hand if you plug it in to a decent amplifier you can compete with even the loudest rock or country band - and still sound like a genuine violin."

Guscott has now made 25 violins with his most recent sale to the St Andrew's Cathedral School in Sydney's CBD. His Elyssa-Mae Model in Deep Red or Pearl White retails at \$1190 while his Professional 4-String Model in a choice of colours, retails at \$2490 with the versatile 5-String



ELECTRIC ARTISTRY: Faculty of Education Music Lecturer Michelle Lovett tests one of David Guscott's "quiet" electric violins and is thrilled with the tone, pitch and action. Michelle, who is a multi-instrumentalist but essentially a violist says she can't wait for David to make an electric viola and has already placed an order for a 5-string model. "It is arguable that if Stradivari had access to the electronics and technology of the 21st Century that he would have made electric violins as well," David said.

Model at \$2990.

"We are hoping that the international magazine articles are going to stimulate some interest from Europe and the US where the market for this type of specialist instrument is infinitely bigger. But, on the other hand, if we get too much interest we are going to have to employ some craftspeople to keep up with the demand," David said.

For more information on David Guscott's electric string instruments check out the website: www.guscott.com.au or contact him direct by e-mail at dguscott@ozemail.com.au

