

New York to home with strings

Canberran Rupert Boyd, now respected internationally, is coming home to perform, **Arne Sjostedt** writes

It is a timeless image, the travelling musician plying his trade. Moving between cities with a head full of music and, in this case, a guitar for company.

Canberra musician turned globetrotter Rupert Boyd has seen his fair share of the world. With his beautiful debut release *Valses Poéticos* attracting praise of his skills from publications like *Classical Guitar* and *Soundboard* magazines, Boyd is living in the United States and plying his craft where ever he can.

Following scholarships to Yale University and the Manhattan School of Music, it is a journey that has seen Boyd perform at the world's largest Gothic cathedral (Cathedral of St John the Divine), New York's Carnegie Hall and a recent BBQ for Australian Ambassador Kim Beazley. And that is just a portion of where his guitar has taken him.

He has even thrown the first pitch at a baseball game in Lincoln, Nebraska.

"I've been predominately living here in New York as a freelance musician, and everything that that entails," Boyd says. "Which over the years have been some fun exciting performances and getting to work with some really fantastic musicians."

This month he is returning home to play a number of Australian dates. Though used to flying solo, or as one part of The Australian Guitar Duo (with Jacob Cordover), this tour sees Boyd team up with flautist Jillian Norton for a show that sees him make a few calculated changes to his normal performance routine.

"I have huge fondness for Bach's music and the romantic Spanish music," Boyd says. "But at the moment I've been finding it



Classical guitarist Rupert Boyd has performed with orchestras across the world.

a really rewarding and enjoyable experience playing Australian music to an American audience." This includes works written in the past 20 years by the likes of Nigel Westlake, Phillip Houghton, Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards.

"It's music that audiences don't know in North America. Also, when I've played these works in France and Spain no one has heard them before," he says.

"People will single out the Australian works as their favourite in the shows that I've played."

In somewhat of a reversal of tradition, for his Australian shows Boyd says he intends to concentrate on American compositions.

"This first half is going to be solo classical guitar, and it is going to be predominately Spanish reper-

toire." For the second half Boyd will be joined by Norton. It will consist of works by three living New York composers, David Lesner from the Manhattan School of Music, Robert Beaser (head of composition at The Julliard School) and Benjamin Verdery, who taught Boyd while he studied at Yale University.

Though music is not the only thing the guitarist will be bringing back from the United States - he has a veritable bivouac of stories, from winning the Andrés Segovia award (from the Manhattan School of Music) to that pitch he threw when promoting a music festival in Nebraska. Boyd says he'd never thrown a baseball before, and had been told he'd be booed out of the stadium if it

bounced before it got to the catcher. Something backyard cricket can never properly prepare a man for. Fortunately it all went down well.

"There were about 1000 people in the audience and it suddenly became much more stressful than the concerts we were playing," Boyd says. "We then invited one of

the baseball players to come and play the first chord at one of our concerts, which they all politely declined."

■ Rupert Boyd & Jillian Norton play November 20 at the Wesley Music Centre, 20-22 National Circuit, Forest. Tickets: \$25, \$20 concession & \$10 students, available at the door.

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