

15

EMBARGO: 6.00PM WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 1973



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 142

24 October 1973

BEGINNING OF NATIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTION

The Prime Minister announced today that he had approved the purchase of two 18th-century cellos made by the Italian master, Giuseppe Guarneri, in 1710 and 1721.

The cellos and bows have been purchased in New York for a total price of \$54,950. They will be the foundation of a national collection of great instruments. Their purchase was recommended by the Music Board of the Australian Council for the Arts.

The Chairman of the Music Board, Australian composer, Don Banks, in recommending the purchase, said that the cellos were two of the world's finest instruments, and would be a tremendous asset to the musical life of Australia.

They would be available to Australia's leading cellists and to visiting performers giving concerts in Australia. He said there were cases overseas where instruments of similar quality were used as inducements to attract fine performers to work in certain cities or to be retained in leading positions in orchestras and chamber music groups.

He said that such instruments were becoming increasingly rare and the price paid was a very fair one. In a few years it would inevitably have gone up considerably as competition for these instruments is constantly increasing.

Giuseppe Guarneri, one of a famous family of instrument makers, was the father of the celebrated Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesu, who made many famous violins, but no cellos.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.