

# Richard Pollett

**Occupation:** Violinist  
**Born:** February 16, 1986, Adelaide  
**Died:** September 27, 2011, Brisbane

RICHARD Pollett was only just starting establish a stellar career as a violinist when he was killed in a cycling accident in Brisbane, where he was to have performed as soloist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra for the Australian premiere of the work *Selenite City, a concerto for piano and violin*.

Well known for his performances with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and other Australian orchestras, the Symphony Australia 2010 Young Performers Award winner was a musician of extraordinary depth.

Music ran in his blood. His mother Patricia is the director of performance studies at the University of Queensland School of Music and he grew up in a house filled with music.

From an early age he attended many concerts, especially those by the Perihelion ensemble, where he and his father Philip watched his mother play.

He started violin at the age

of five, studying with Diane Palmer, an ex-student of his mother, but by age eight asked to stop playing because he didn't want to practice.

His mother let him know that the pieces were perhaps not that exciting at his level but urged him to continue for one more year. If, after that time, he still didn't want to go on, he could stop. The family never heard another word about it.

However Mr Pollett was talented in many areas, including maths, and could easily have followed in the footsteps of his father Philip, a professor of mathematics at the University of Queensland.

Among his many interests were roasting, grinding and drawing the best shot of coffee possible, making sushi and creme brulee, the stock market, bridge (he was a member of the Queensland Youth Team at the Australian National Championships), foreign films, literature (he was part way through Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* at the time of his death) and developed a passion for cycling after moving to Melbourne, where he cycled every day from South Melbourne along the



**TALENTED:** Richard Pollett's love of music lives on through a memorial award for young violinists. Picture: Rob Heyman

scenic coastal path to St Kilda.

All these interests were undertaken with trademark thoroughness. One tale demonstrating this was his approach to busking.

Before having a go for the first time in the Queen St Mall, he carefully observed those

buskers who did well, noted sites which provided the best geographical advantage, the best time of day and which music elicited the best returns.

Then, backed by this research, he set up his stall and, needless to say, made more in an hour than most made in a

day. It helped that he could play a mean fiddle, of course.

Mr Pollett attended Brisbane Boys College, mainly because his parents thought the music teacher, Theo Kotzas, would look after him. He did that wonderfully.

While in high school he entered the National Youth even though he was not that advanced. It was the perfect challenge and changed his view of his future.

His formal violin studies began at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, where he qualified with first class honours and received the University Medal.

Awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award to do a master of philosophy degree at the University of Queensland.

He also won a scholarship to study at the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano, Switzerland, where he graduated with highest honours, returning to study at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne with Paul Wright.

Despite his age, Mr Pollett had a string of performance awards under his belt. He was a finalist in the ABC Symphony Australia Young Per-

former Awards in 2006 and 2007 and went on to win the Strings Final in 2010.

He was also a finalist in the National Youth Concerto competition in 2002, performing with the Queensland Youth Orchestra, and in the same year was a winner in The Queensland Orchestra Young Instrumentalist Competition.

As a soloist he appeared with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as well as the Orchestra of Lugano in Switzerland, and participated in several music festivals in Europe.

Earlier this year he studied in Israel at The Buchmann-Mehta School of Music and toured South America with its orchestra.

Mr Pollett is survived by his parents Patricia and Philip.

To keep his legacy alive, his family and friends joined the Australian Youth Orchestra to establish the Richard Pollett Memorial Award to encourage young musicians.

**For more information on the award, visit [ayo.com.au](http://ayo.com.au).**