

*Works for
Cello and Piano*



PORPORA
REGER
YUN
DOHNANYI



Leslie Parnas
CELLO
Wonmi Kim
PIANO

The cello has always been a bit of a bridesmaid among solo instruments and is often said to suffer from a very limited repertoire. In fact, just past the relatively small number of standards, there is a wealth of fascinating material to be explored and the four works on this album, written over a period of more than two centuries, are good cases in point.

The stylistic range of these works covers a huge span from late baroque/early classical to late romanticism to early and not-so-early modernism. In spite of these differences, all of these works share a kind of joy in the sound capabilities of the cello — not only its baritone lyricism but also its virtuosic agility, its chamber-music partnering with the piano as well as its ability to express musical and musico-dramatic thought on a large scale.

Nicola Antonio Porpora is a legendary name in the history of Italian vocal music but he is much less known as an instrumental composer. He was born in Naples in 1686 and died there in 1768 after a remarkable career as a famous singing teacher and as the composer of tragic, comic and sacred operas, oratorios, cantatas, serenades, masses and motets as well as various sonatas, concertos and sinfonias. He studied for ten years at the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Christo in his home town. Naples was the center of European opera at the time as well as a crossroads of European politics and Porpora benefited greatly from both of those facts, scoring major successes in Naples, Vienna, Rome and Northern Italy. He also spent three years in London in competition with Händel and later worked in Dresden and Vienna before returning to his native land. His pupils and protégés, some of the greatest names in eighteenth-century Italian opera, include the castrati Farinelli, Caffarelli and Senesino, the sopranos Cuzzoni and Regina Mingotti as well as the dilettantes of various aristocratic circles. He was also influential as a composer and his pupils included Johann Adolf Hasse (later to become his rival) and Joseph Haydn, who served for a while as his valet and keyboard accompanist for auditions, rehearsals and singing lessons. In his autobiographical sketch, Haydn wrote that he had had “the good fortune to learn the true foundations of composition from the celebrated Porpora who was in Vienna at that time.” This was in the mid-1750s.

Italian opera led the way in the transition from the ornate baroque to a newer and simple melodic style, the basis of what we call classical style. Porpora, who lived and composed dur-

ing an era of rapid change, went through this evolution in his own music and, although he was no revolutionary, helped to bring it about. His instrumental music, most of it inspired by his visits to London, Germany and Austria, appeared in the years between 1736 and 1763 and, not surprisingly, it resembles the music of the young Haydn, a composer who — partly under Porpora's influence — underwent a similar evolution from the late baroque to a classical style.

Porpora's **Sonata in F major** has the compact four-movement form of a sonata da camera or suite but it also has strong tendencies in the direction of a classical sonata. The opening *Largo* is a simple melodic phrase and counterphrase carried all the way through by the cello. An *Allegro* follows in a brisk four: this is a dance-like movement with a twelve-bar phrase ending in the dominant and sixteen-bar 'B' section that curves back to the tonic and a mini recapitulation; both halves are repeated. An *Adagio* in the relative minor leads without a break to a 3/8 finale in the style of a minuet. This movement, like the first *Allegro* (with which it shares some musical material), is in a dance double-bar form with a first section that cadences on the dominant and then repeats and a second part that moves back to the tonic F major and recapitulation and then also repeats. The keyboard part, based on thorough bass, is simple and harmonic while the cello writing is alternately melodic and ornamental.

Max Reger and Ernő (or Ernst von) Dohnányi can both be described as late romantic Central European composers, the former from Germany, the latter Hungarian. One tends to think of them (insofar as one thinks of them at all) quite differently: Reger as a provincial, somewhat academic, late romantic, Dohnányi (who spent his last years after World War II in Florida) as a composer of this century. But all this is very misleading. The two men were almost contemporaries and, as the works on this record will testify, Reger was far more modernist than the unassuming and very classical Dohnányi. In fact, Dohnányi's cello sonata, written in 1899, literally belongs to the nineteenth while Reger's, written four years later, firmly belongs to this century.

Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger was born in Bavaria on March 19, 1873. His father was a schoolmaster and amateur musician but the son's talent, although it appeared early, was not particularly encouraged and his education was haphazard and provincial. His first published work dates from the 1890s and consists of sonatas and other chamber music.

His life is hardly more than a catalogue of his compositions and the places where he wrote them. From 1901 to 1907 he lived in Munich; in 1907 he became professor of composition and director of music at Leipzig University; in 1911 he became the conductor of the court orchestra of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. In the years just before World War I, he began to tour widely in Europe performing his own work as a conductor and pianist. In 1915, during World War I, he moved to Jena; a year later, on May 10, 1916, while visiting Leipzig, he suffered a fatal heart attack.

Reger is probably the composer most often thought of as quintessentially German — that is, exemplifying the best traits in German music but little known or appreciated outside of his native country. His work has been compared with that of Scriabin and Schoenberg in that it is rooted in post-Wagnerian late romanticism but evolved in strikingly new ways.

Reger's direction was, above all else, contrapuntal. His work is so consistently polyphonic that he was called 'the second Bach'. This contrapuntalism, which leads to the complexity and difficulty of his work, is everywhere in his compositions and takes even the simplest and most 'popular' of his pieces to a high place. It overtakes even the harmonic structure of the music; for instance, in the first and last movements of the *F major cello sonata*, there is a counterpoint of keys which makes the music sound atonal for long stretches although, in the manner of traditional counterpoint, all such dissonances are eventually resolved.

Reger's work is rightly regarded as full of brilliant craft, austere, uncompromising and even a bit academic. He was a true neo-classicist but his music is also entirely personal. He followed a very singular line in twentieth-century music, but he had some influence on composers like Hindemith and Schoenberg by his very seriousness and singlemindedness of purpose and by his application of classicism to modern expression. Yet, as this cello sonata shows, he could also be virtuosic and dramatic in a manner that approaches expressionism.

The ***Sonata in F for cello and piano, Op. 78***, is the third of the composer's four works in this medium. It was written in 1904 during his residence in Munich and at what was a relatively fertile period even for a composer as prolific as Reger. It is an amazingly difficult piece — to

play, to listen to, even to analyze. Yet, like many difficult works of music, it has its deeper rewards. This Sonata is an intensely driven piece of music. The first movement, marked *Allegro con brio*, begins fortissimo with a virtually atonal piano part and a wide leaping cello line that seems to contradict the piano. The range, intensity and tension of this opening carries all the way through, interrupted only by the briefest of lyrical moments and only uneasily resolved by the thematic recapitulation and a settling out of the tonality into F major. The second movement is a macabre 6/8 dance/scherzo that begins and ends in C minor and includes a Trio that could be said to be in C major — if it were not for the fact that there is no C major chord anywhere! In many ways, the clearest, most accessible and most engaging music in the work is in the slow movement, an *Andante con variazioni* in the rather distant key of A major. The theme itself is simple; first stated in the cello, it cadences in the dominant and is then picked up by the piano against a cello countersubject. The imaginative variations have a clear design culminating in a return of the theme to form the coda.

The decorated lyricism of this movement is a relatively short interlude and *sturm und drang* break out all over again in the final *Allegro vivace*. This movement, closely related to the first, is in a dark, daemonic 6/8 with brief lyric bits overwhelmed by torrents of dramatic and often quite atonal sound. As in the first movement, the dissonances and ambiguities drive forward and resolution comes only at the very end, a rescue accomplished with only seconds to spare.

Dohnányi — his Hungarian name was **Ernö** but he is now better known by the German for Ernst von — was born on July 27, 1877, in what is today Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, a city with a lot of classical tradition (Haydn was from the area) and a large Hungarian population. Dohnányi's father was an outstanding amateur cellist but the son studied piano and composition in Bratislava and, afterwards, at the Budapest Academy. His first reputation was as a pianist and many of his early works, particularly an early piano quintet championed by Brahms and a concerto that received the Bösendorfer Prize, were written for himself to play.

He was, in effect, the first of the new generation of young Hungarian composers of which Bartók and Kodály were to become the best known. In 1908 he was appointed to a professorship at the Berlin Hochschule where he remained for ten years. After World War I he returned

to Hungary to teach at the Budapest Academy and resume his work of reorganizing Hungarian musical life. In 1919 he became the chief conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Society and began extensive tours of Western Europe and the United States as a pianist and conductor. His work at the Academy, at Hungarian radio and with the orchestra put him frequently in the center of controversies. He remained in Hungary during World War II until 1944 when he abruptly went to Austria under obscure circumstances. Dohnányi, constantly under attack from the right and the left, seems to have been regarded by almost everybody as some sort of collaborator. After World War II he left Europe for Argentina and, eventually, Tallahassee, Florida, where, virtually forgotten by the larger world of music, he became professor, pianist and composer-in-residence at Florida State University. He died in 1960 in New York where he had gone to make some recordings.

As a conductor, Dohnányi championed the new Hungarian school of Bartók and Kodaly but his own music belongs to the history of central European romanticism. The first years of his sixty-five year composing career literally belong to the nineteenth century, culminating in the ***Sonata for cello and piano, Op. 8***, written in 1899.

Although this work is listed in the key of B flat major, it begins in the minor with a *misterioso* octave melody, very much à la Brahms and followed by a very marked theme — or rather series of themes — in the cello. These themes serve both as expressive melodies and as motifs, once again the Brahmsian manner. For example, the marked theme mentioned above appears in both descending and ascending forms and, along with its accompanying triplets, is always easily recognizable as a motif. The development and interplay of all this material is very easy to follow; clarity of form and forward motion are among Dohnányi's strong points. The second movement is a Scherzo in 3/8 marked *Vivace assai* and dominated by little cello tremolos. There is a chordal Trio and a literal recap. An *Adagio non troppo* in E major provides a quietly expressive intro to the finale, a set of nine variations with a neat recap/sum-up coda at the finish line.

Isang Yun was born on September 17, 1919, in Tongyong, South Korea, at the time under Japanese occupation. He studied in Japan at the Osaka Conservatory and in Tokyo but, at the

some time, also participated in underground activities against the Japanese. He was arrested in 1943 and spent much of the final years of World War II in hiding in Korea. After the war, he taught music in Pusan and at Seoul University and he won a Seoul City Award in 1955 which enabled him to continue his studies at the Paris Conservatoire, at the Berlin Hochschule and in Darmstadt. In 1964 he received a Ford Foundation grant to live in Berlin from where, three years later, he was kidnapped by the South Korean secret service, taken to Seoul and put on trial for his life. After two years in prison and a series of international protests he was released and returned to Germany where he has lived ever since. A former professor of composition at the Hochschule in Berlin, he is the recipient of many prizes, performances and recordings. In 1983, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — North Korea — established an annual festival of his music and, two years later, an institute devoted to his work, unusual honors for any contemporary composer let alone a composer of rather advanced tendencies.

Yun's work grows out of his experiences with the European avant-garde of the 1950s and '60s combined with traditional Korean music and philosophy. It is rarely overtly political but is based on principles of Taoism, combining elements of Western serialism with color structures derived from Eastern practice. Simple 'dissonant' harmonies and 'consonant' ornamented melodic lines are both based on tonal centers which move only slowly and with great gravity.

Note was written in 1964; the Korean title suggests sung or vocally-inspired music ("Canto" has been suggested as a Western equivalent). The work, in fact marked *Cantabile*, has a very steady-state quality for much of its length, an impression created by block piano chords that only very occasionally break into ornamentation and a series of melodic fragments in the cello. There is a kind of middle section in which the tempo picks up and coloration assumes a greater role: pizzicato in the cello, tremolos in the piano, double-stops, grace notes, fancy trills and even the so-called Bartók or snap pizz. The tempo eventually settles back into Tempo I and the coda, marked *tranquillo, dolcissimo* and *sempre molto espressivo* is dominated by solo cello double stops.

-- Eric Salzman

Eric Salzman is a composer, writer and co-founder of The American Music Theater Festival

Leslie Parnas was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on November 11, 1931, into a musical family; his father was a clarinetist, his mother a pianist. He began playing the piano at the age of 5, the cello at 8. Parnas' progress was rapid. At 16 he entered the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where he studied with Gregor Piatigorsky for two and a half years. In 1955 he returned to St. Louis as the principal cellist of the Symphony. Two years later he won the Prix Pablo Casals at the Paris International Cello Competition and subsequently served as principal cellist for the Casals Festival Orchestra for fourteen years, in Prades, France, and Puerto Rico; he regards both Casals and Piatigorsky as his mentors. In 1957, Parnas was the first prize winner in the Geneva and Munich Competitions. He made his recital debut in New York in 1959 and has subsequently appeared as a soloist with, among others, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the Moscow Symphony and also at festivals in Marlboro, Tanglewood, Spoleto, London, Paris and Lucerne. Parnas won the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1962 and has since been invited back this past year to participate as a juror. He is a charter member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, was music director of the Kneisel Hall Summer Music School in Blue Hill, Maine for twelve years and is a faculty member at Boston University.

Mr. Parnas, who records exclusively for Arcadia Records, plays the "Rosette" Gofriller cello made in 1698, an instrument named for its unusual carved rosette.

Wonmi Kim was born in Seoul, Korea, and began studying the piano at the age of 4. In 1969 she made her debut playing a Mozart concerto with the Seoul Chamber Orchestra and the following year she played the Beethoven First Piano Concerto with the National Symphony Orchestra of Korea. In 1977, already a seasoned concert artist, she studied with Jorge Bolet at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where she won the Rachmaninov Prize. In 1986 she won the first prize at the Third International Liszt Competition, "Premio Zanfi" in Parma, Italy, and extended her performance career to the continent of Europe.

In January of 1993 she will perform in Seoul with the Philharmonic Orchestra of China in a concert that will mark the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between South Korea and the People's Republic of China. Ms. Kim has also recently recorded "The Art of Transcription" on Arcadia Records for which she records exclusively.

Photography: Beatriz Schiller



WORKS FOR CELLO AND PIANO

NICOLA PORPORA (1686-1768)

Sonata in F major

1. Largo 1:35
 2. Allegro 1:51
 3. Adagio 1:35
 4. Allegro non presto (tempo di minueto) 3:04
- Published by Schott & Co., London

MAX REGER (1873-1916)

Sonata #3 in F major, Op. 78

5. Allegro con brio 8:52
 6. Vivacissimo 3:16
 7. Andante con variazioni 6:49
 8. Allegro vivace 5:53
- Published by Bote & Bock, Berlin

ISANG YUN (b. 1917)

9. Nore (for Cello and Piano (1964) 9:15
- Published by Bote & Bock, Berlin

ERNST VON DOHNANYI (1877-1960)

Sonata in B flat major, Op. 8

10. Allegro, ma non troppo 6:56
 11. Scherzo (vivace assai) 4:20
 12. Adagio non troppo 2:30
 13. Tema con variazioni (allegro moderato) 8:11
- Published by International Music Co., New York City

Recorded June 15-18, 1992 at Radio Sofia's Studio 1, Sofia, Bulgaria

Engineer: Atanas Baynov Mastering: Atanas Baynov, Nicola Tassev

Design: Alix Corn

Produced by Heiner Stadler

Executive Producer: David K. Lee

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Works for Cello and Piano

NICOLAS PORPORA (1686-1768)

Sonata in F major

1. Largo (1:35)
2. Allegro (1:51)
3. Adagio (1:35)
4. Allegro non presto (3:04)
(tempo di minuetto)

MAX REGER (1873-1916)

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5. Allegro con brio (8:52)
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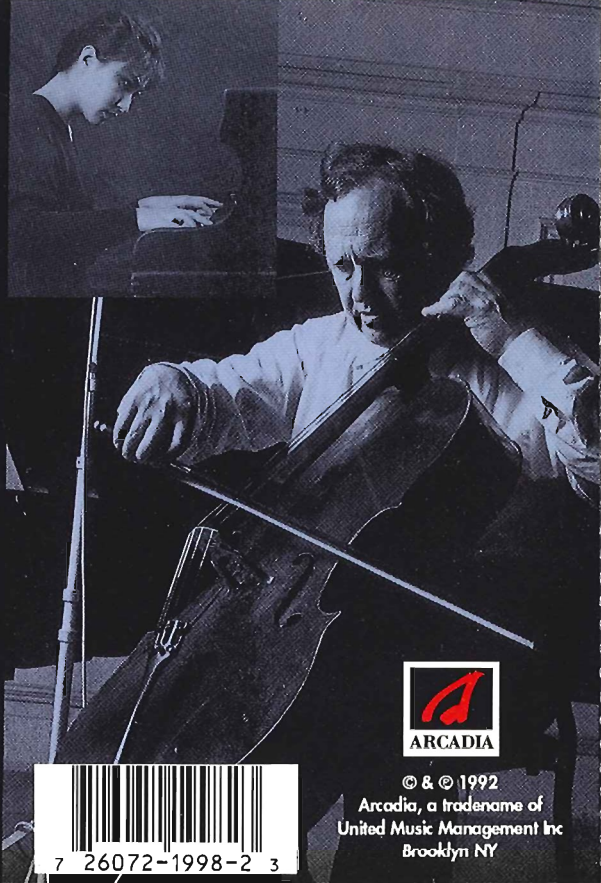
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