

LALO

Cello Concerto in D minor

Cello Sonata • Chants russes

Maria Kliegel, Cello • Bernd Glemser, Piano
Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia • Michael Halász



Edouard Lalo (1823–1892)

Cello Concerto • Sonata for cello & piano • Chants russes

Of remote Spanish ancestry, Edouard Lalo was born in 1823 in Lille, a part of France in which his forebears had settled some 250 years earlier. As a boy he studied the violin and the cello at Lille Conservatory, but his father, a former soldier in a family of continuing military traditions, prudently objected to a musical career for his son. Denied further parental support, Lalo moved to Paris where, in 1839, he entered the violin class of Habeneck, while studying composition privately with the pianist Julius Schulhoff and then with J.E. Crèvecoeur. He went on to earn his living first as a teacher and as a violinist and in 1855 joined with the violinist Jules Armingaud and cellist Léon Jacquard in the establishment of a quartet under Armingaud's leadership. The Armingaud Quartet, in which Lalo at first played the viola, won a considerable reputation for itself, not least for its performances of Beethoven's quartets, which had at that time not been widely heard, and for a repertoire that ranged from Haydn and Mozart to Schumann and Mendelssohn. Lalo's marriage in 1865 to a singer brought the composition of songs and the following year an unsuccessful attempt at opera, *Fiesque*, entered for a competition in which it failed to win a prize, but the source of the later orchestral *Divertissement*, which uses the ballet music from the opera.

It was in the 1870s that Lalo began to come into his own as a composer, materially assisted by the Société Nationale de Musique, established under the leadership of Camille Saint-Saëns and the singing teacher Romain Bussine in the aftermath of the French defeat and capitulation at Sedan in 1871. Lalo had destroyed the two symphonies he had written earlier in his career, but the performance of his *Violin Concerto, Opus 20*, and the *Symphonie espagnole* by Pablo Sarasate, who had commissioned the work, won him increasing recognition. A *Cello Concerto* followed in 1877 and in 1879 the violinist Martin Marsick, a pupil of Joachim,

gave the first performance of the *Concerto russe, Opus 29*. The following decade brought Lalo's only surviving *Symphony* and his *Piano Concerto in F minor*. Turning his attention once more to the theatre, he won appreciation from some for his ballet *Namouna*, at least in the concert hall, with music that was much admired by the young Debussy, who had caused some disturbance at the Opéra by his display of enthusiasm, approval that persuaded the subscribers to secure the future banning of Conservatoire composition students from the Conservatoire box. *Namouna*, centring on the slave-girl of the title, lost in a wager by her master, was given only fifteen performances at the Opéra, where it was staged in 1882 and Lalo was able to make use of some of the score again in his *Symphony*. He enjoyed final theatrical triumph, however, with his opera *Le roi d'Ys*, staged at the Opéra-Comique in 1888. Based on a Breton legend, with a principal mezzo-soprano rôle originally designed for the composer's wife, the opera makes use of Breton folk-songs as an integral part of a particularly French work. His reputation as a composer now secure, Lalo had only a few years to live. In 1891 he suffered a heart-attack and died in April 1892, leaving unfinished a new opera, *La jacquerie*, to be completed by Arthur Cocquard and mounted in Monte Carlo in 1895.

As a composer, whether of orchestral or chamber music, Lalo has a strong command of structure. His orchestration is often colourful, while his harmonic vocabulary can be dramatic in its choice of chord. His early contribution to chamber music repertoire, primarily in the 1850s, but with a return to these forms in the 1880s, is matched by the significant orchestral compositions of the 1870s, with the colourful use of Spanish elements in the *Symphonie espagnole*, Russian themes in the second and fourth movement of the *Concerto russe* and Norwegian material in his *Rapsodie norvégienne* of 1879. His compositional techniques

have been compared to those of German composers of the time and his use of relatively exotic material to the current practices of the Russian nationalists. He remains, however, a distinctive voice in French music of the second half of the nineteenth century.

The *Cello Concerto* starts with a slow and impressive introduction, interrupted by passages for the soloist, who then, in the following *Allegro maestoso*, launches into the principal subject of the movement, contrasted with the major key of the more lyrical secondary theme. Elements of the introduction are to return throughout, but specifically in the course of the central development. The abridged recapitulation brings back the two subjects, followed by a coda of some brilliance, capped by ominous reference to the slow introduction. The *Intermezzo* combines slow movement and scherzo, with the opening G minor *Andantino con moto* breaking into a G major *Allegro-Presto*, a process that is repeated. There is a Spanish touch in the *Introduction* of the last movement and this continues intermittently in the lively thematic material

that follows, present in both melody and in jaunty rhythmic elements.

Lalo's *Cello Sonata* was written in 1856, at a time when he was preoccupied as a performer and as a composer with chamber music. The sonata opens dramatically, with a secondary theme providing the necessary contrast of key and mood to the threat implicit in the motif with which the sonata had begun. There is a gentle lyricism and serenity in the second movement. This is dispelled at once by the forthright vigour of the final *Allegro*, interrupted by a hesitant passage, before the movement resumes its original impetus and proceeds to its rhetorical conclusion.

The *Chants russes* is a transcription for cello and piano of the second movement of Lalo's *Concerto russe*. The movement first offers the Russian theme in conjunction with the solemn chords of the piano, before going forward to a more impassioned central section.

Keith Anderson

Maria Kliegel

Maria Kliegel is among the leading cellists of our time. Her international career began when she won the Grand Prix in the 1981 Concours Rostropovich in Paris. Since then she has appeared regularly as a soloist with leading orchestras in major concert-halls and festivals and has given the first performances of a number of new compositions, among which Wilhelm Kaiser-Lindemann's 1996 *Hommage à Nelson M.*, dedicated to Nelson Mandela (recorded on Naxos 8.554485), is of particular interest. Her acclaimed recordings include a release of Schnittke's *Cello Concerto No. 1* (Naxos 8.554465), a performance regarded by the composer as the standard recording of

his work. For Naxos she has also recorded concertos and chamber music by a number of composers, ranging from the core cello concerto and chamber-music repertoire of Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Dvořák, Elgar, Lalo, Saint-Saëns, Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky, to the major cello compositions of Kodály, Shostakovich, Tavener and Gubaidulina. Since 1986 Maria Kliegel has taught a master-class at the Cologne Music Academy. She plays a 1693 Stradivarius cello previously the property of Maurice Gendron and placed at her disposal by the North-Rhine-Westphalia Foundation for Arts and Culture.

Bernd Glemser

A prize-winner on no less than seventeen occasions in international competitions, the German pianist Bernd Glemser was born in Dübheim and was still a pupil of Vitalij Margulis when he was appointed professor at the Saarbrücken Musikhochschule, in succession to Andor Foldes, himself the successor of Walter Gieseking. In 1992 he won the Andor Foldes Prize and in 1993 the first European Pianists' Prize.

Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia

The Hungarian-based Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia was formed in 1992 by Ibolya Tóth, recording producer of the Hungarian Phoenix Studio, initially as a recording orchestra for Naxos. Under its permanent conductor, Béla Drahos, the Sinfonia also undertakes public concerts. The orchestra consists of the leading players in Budapest, including string and wind principals of the major Hungarian orchestras, many of whom have already recorded concertos for Naxos. The

With a wide repertoire ranging from the Baroque to the contemporary, Bernd Glemser has a particular affection for the virtuoso music of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, the work of Liszt, Tausig, Godowsky, Busoni and especially that of Rachmaninov. His career has brought appearances at major music festivals and leading concert halls throughout Europe and further afield.

Sinfonia ranges in size from a Baroque string orchestra to an ensemble suitable for Haydn or Mozart, or, augmented, for performance of Beethoven. The orchestra's recordings of Haydn and Beethoven symphonies and Beethoven's *Fidelio* have met with particularly warm critical acclaim and its recording of Vaňhal symphonies (Naxos 8.554341) was rewarded a Cannes Classical Award at Midem 2000.

Michael Halász

Michael Halász began his career as a conductor at the Munich Gärtnerplatz Theatre. In 1975 he moved to Frankfurt as Principal Conductor under Christoph von Dohnányi, working with the most distinguished singers and conducting all the important works of operatic repertoire. Engagements as a guest-conductor followed at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, State Opera Hamburg and in Turin, and in 1977 Dohnányi brought him to the Hamburg State Opera as Principal Conductor. From

1978 to 1991 he was General Music Director of the Hagen Opera House. During this time he made guest appearances in the major opera houses of Germany. In 1991 he took up the post of Resident Conductor of the Vienna State Opera. In the past fifteen years he has conducted concerts all over the world and made over thirty recordings. Since 1995 he has made several guest appearances with the ABC orchestras in Australia.

8.554469

LALO: Cello Concerto • Cello Sonata • Chants russes

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STEREO

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Edouard

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Playing
Time
59:31

NAXOS

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**Concerto for cello and orchestra
in D minor (1877) 28:04**

- 1 Prélude: Lento – Allegro maestoso 13:53
2 Intermezzo: Andantino con moto –
Allegro – Presto 6:43
3 Introduction: Andante –
Allegro vivace 7:20

Sonata for cello and piano 25:30

- 4 Andante non troppo 9:58
5 Andante 8:20
6 Allegro 7:09

**7 Chants russes for
cello and piano 5:41**

Edouard Lalo was already fifty-one when his *Violin Concerto* brought him the first taste of success as a composer. Over the next eighteen years a series of outstanding works, including the opera, *Le roi d'Ys*, together with the *Symphonie espagnole*, *Concerto russe* and a fine *Cello Concerto*, established him as one of the major French composers in the late nineteenth century. Having studied the cello as a young man, Lalo had a deep understanding of the instrument, and produced a concerto that combines the yearning intensity of the central *Intermezzo* with brilliant virtuosity in the outer movements. The *Cello Sonata*, composed in 1856, is essentially a lyrical work.

Recorded at Phoenix Studio, Budapest, Hungary (tracks 1–3) on 9th and 10th May 1998, and at Tonstudio Teije van Geest, Sandhausen, Germany on 8th May 1998 (tracks 4–7).

Producers: Ibolya Tóth (1–3), Günter Appenheimer, Tonstudio van Geest (4–7)
Engineer: János Bohus (1–3) • Editors: István Berényi, Veronika Vincze (1–3)

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