

REPERTOIRE TIPS

Cello concertos – classics & more unusual ones



ERIK BERGMAN

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra
(1998) Dur: 15'

0001(l=c.fag)/0000/str, bullroarer

This intensive Bergman concerto is a product of his late period. Its breath-taking progress is interrupted by a magical interlude for bullroarer – possibly an instrument he picked up on his travel in 1998 around the world. The contrabassoon is also assigned a big role and adds contrast to the cello's magnetic, expressive force.



TOBIAS BROSTRÖM

Cello Concerto No. 1 (2011) Dur: 21'
2222/2200/10/str

Composed for conducting solo cellist, the concerto opens suggestively and slowly with repetitive chords in the orchestra, forming the harmonic basis that is expanded gradually. The solo cello's pentatonic motif develops from out of the orchestra's carpet of sound, a motif that recurs throughout the entire work. Brisk sections with more temperament and rhythmic accents alternate with parts that are linked to the harmonies and motif of the beginning. The end is a slow diminuendo that fades away far off in the distance.



SOFIA GUBAIDULINA

Aus dem Stundenbuch (The Book of Hours) (1991) Dur: 58'

4243/4242/14/2hp, zither, egtr, e-bgtr, cel. amp-hpd.pf/str, baritone, narrator, male chorus

This cello concerto is scored for an unusual combination; it also has a narrator, a baritone soloist and a male chorus. The text is borrowed from Rainer Maria Rilke and well reflects Gubaidulina's musical credo: Ich kreise um Gott, um den uralten Turm, und ich kreise Jahrtausendlang; und ich weiß noch nicht: bin ich ein Falke, ein Sturm oder ein großer Gesang. (I circle around God, around the most ancient tower, and I circle for a thousand years; and yet I still don't know: am I a falcon, a storm, or a much larger song?)



TOMMIE HAGLUND

Flaminis Aura (2000) Dur: 37'
3222/4231/13/pf/str

Tommie Haglund has a sound world all his own. In the Cello Concerto the fervent cantabile solo part rests against almost unearthly sonorities. The music expresses both pain and hope, but here is also an implicit dimension, a cosmic perspective. In the final section of the concerto the cello is left alone against a sound background of solar winds and electromagnetic fields (registered by the American space bureau NASA), and "the harmony of the spheres" arises.



JOONAS KOKKONEN

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra
(1969) Dur: 25'

2232/4220/timp.2perc/hp/str

Kokkonen's concerto has been a firm favourite with cellists for decades now. It has brilliance, natural solo writing and a touch of both the playful and the heart-rending. The orchestration is light and airy, so that it never drowns the soloist. A work in five movements dedicated to Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, it is woven around a wistful Adagio movement and is a fine demonstration of Kokkonen's musical architecture.



ROLF MARTINSSON

Cello Concerto No. 1 (2005) Dur: 26'
2222/4330/12/hp/pf/cel/strings

A concerto that fires the imagination. Martinsson brings out all the cello's possibilities of expression, from lyrical cantabile to violent frenzy. The romantic features alternate with highly dramatic sections. Add to that a refined orchestral texture and a concluding rapid and rhythmically driving race between cello and orchestra.



HERMAN RECHBERGER

Kahraba (Yellow Amber) (1996) Dur: 19'
1111/0000/00/str, darabuka

Kahraba (the Arabic word for electricity) was commissioned by the Cairo Symphony Orchestra. Its main features are superimposed oriental rhythms, maqâm-scale material and the soloistic dialogue of a Western and an oriental instrument. However, it only uses scales that are playable without micro-intervals or non-tempered tuning.



SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra
(1988) Dur: 28'

2222/2220/11/str

Sandström has called his cello concerto "an autobiographical diary". The form is somewhat rhapsodic and consists of thirteen short sections, "emotional pages of my life", in which we find both sentimentality and playfulness. He lets the romanticism burst into full blossom, but combines this with modernistic outbursts. The concerto concludes with a long drawn-out, varied allusion to the hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee".



ALBERT SCHNELZER

Cello Concerto – Crazy Diamond
(2011) Dur: 23'

2222/4321/12/pf/cel/str (version for orchestra)
2222/2200/11/pf/cel/str (version for chamber orchestra)

Schnelzer reawakens the feelings of melancholy and loss that Pink Floyd's music evoked when he listened to them as a teenager. The music is full of wondrous sonorities and lyrical, lengthy melodic lines, as well as Schnelzer's unmistakable rhythmic, dance-like motives. It is dramatic and expressive. The concerto concludes with an achingly beautiful song for the cello that lingers on after the music has fallen silent.



VICTORIA YAGLING

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra
No. 1 (1975) Dur: 22'

3223/4231/11/hp/str

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 2

(1984) Dur: 23'

3222/4231/11/hp/str

Yagling's cello concertos are works of virtuosic brilliance and violent outbursts but also of a melancholy emotional charge that strikes straight to the heart. The slow movements of both well reflect the lyrical side of her music. The beauty is often tinged with a certain mournfulness and a striving towards unfamiliar paths reaching out into new realms. Yagling has written three concertos in all; the third is entitled the Symphonic Concerto for Cello and Orchestra.