

Dmitry Kabalevsky: Cello Concerto No. 2 in C Minor Op. 77

I Molto sostenuto 12.18

II Presto marcato 9.34

III Andante con moto 7.59

Robert Schumann: Cello Concerto in A Minor Op. 129

IV Nicht zu schnell 11.01

V Langsam 3.58

VI Sehr lebhaft 7.49

Total 52.39

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KABALEVSKY 2nd & SCHUMANN
CELLO CONCERTOS

THEODOR LYGSTAD CELLO
COPENHAGEN PHIL
EVA OLLIKAINEN CONDUCTOR



Norwegian artist Eigil Nordstrøm (born 1991)
Title: "Counterforce" (2023) Acrylic on hessian.

PERSONAL NOTES BY THEODOR LYGSTAD

Although the two concertos featured on this album seem stylistically far apart from each other, I find them bound together in an introspective and somewhat defiant spirit. They are similar in form, with three continuous movements, written out cadenzas and the overall development of minor to major. But even more interestingly I see a strong link in the personality and psychology of the pieces.

Kabalevsky's image as a sly and loyal servant of the communist party is challenged in this concerto. Although he uses Russian folk songs and a grand symphonic sound, there is a darkness and nostalgic feel to the music. It is undeniably inspired by his professor Myaskovsky's cello concerto in the same key, a composer that became an accused 'formalist' by the Soviet regime. Myaskovsky was dead by the time Kabalevsky wrote this concerto, but it could easily be seen as a tribute to him, and perhaps even a subtle criticism or defiance of the Soviet regime.

Schumann's cello concerto is often characterized as nervous or haunting, although Schumann himself described it as a jolly piece. During his challenging last years, he kept reworking and editing the concerto, and it can be seen as a window into Schumann's inner life at the time, where happiness seems to never have been far away from despair. Like Kabalevsky it has grandiose gestures, but the magic of the concerto lies in the intimate moments.

Neither of the pieces are written for the soloist to show off. To me they are equal conversations between the soloist and orchestra, where the music tells us something rather intimate, honest and true. With melodic styles they show a tension between minor and major, darkness and light, hope and despair.

The release of this album sees the end of a long personal journey. Starting with frustration when performances of this project were cancelled during lockdowns, leading to the excitement of this release today. Knowing that the music now will reach an

even bigger audience than the original concerts planned, it is a journey that fits the profile of the two concertos on the album. A journey from minor to major.

I am deeply grateful to the people who have believed in this project and the music. A big thank you to Copenhagen Phil and all my colleagues who play with me on the recording. It was a dream to perform this music that I love with such good friends and musicians. Thank you to Eva Ollikainen for doing a fantastic job putting it all together. Thank you to Daniel Davidsen for excellent sound and to OUR Recordings for bringing this project to life.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. I hope you will find the music as gripping as I do.



Photo: Kaspar Vig

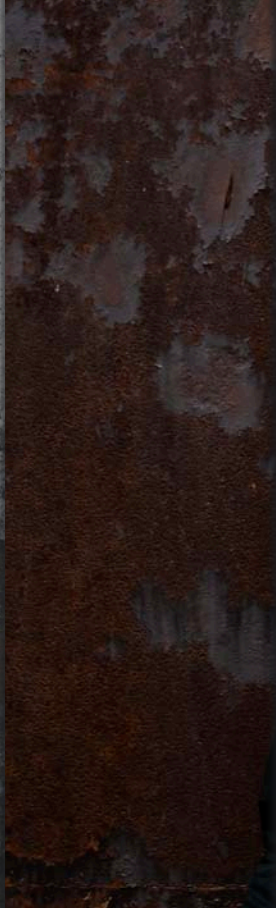
DMITRY KABALEVSKY

(1904-1987)



ROBERT SCHUMANN

(1810-1856)



NOTES BY JOSHUA CHEEK

Regarded today as the embodiment of classical music at its most lyrical and poetic, the cello was born into an age all too willing to relegate it to second class status. As late as 1740, the battle raged on between the glorious burnished tones of ‘La Basse De Viole Contre... Les Prétentions Du Violoncelle.’ Regarded as largely an Italian conceit, a tenor cousin to the violin, it was primarily assigned the ignominious role as accompanist, and as a result, few important cello concertos were written before the 19th century – with the notable exceptions of those by Vivaldi, C.P.E. Bach, Haydn and Boccherini. Its full recognition as a solo instrument would not come until the Romantic era with the concertos of Schumann, Saint-Saëns, Lalo and Dvořák, and later, Shostakovich and Kabalevsky.

DMITRY KABALEVSKY: CELLO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN C MINOR OP. 77

As with many Soviet era composers, Dmitry Kabalevsky’s (1904-1987) reputation has not been received very well over the decades. Was he the voice of ideological oppression, spreading misery through the ranks of his more gifted colleagues? Kabalevsky even managed to get his name taken off Zhdanov’s musical hit list in 1948 and replaced it with the name of another composer. Other noticeable remarks about Kabalevsky are that he was self-serving, and opportunistic to the extreme. His musical comrade Tikhon Khrennikov (1913-2007) suffered a similar and even worse fate!

Of course, the above perceptions do not address Kabalevsky’s musical style or level of inspiration. Were temperament and political incorrectness and viciously exploiting the misery of others to fuel one’s personal ambition a true musical anathema, we’d never hear a note of Wagner’s music ever! While it is true, Kabalevsky churned out pretty average music at the behest of his political overlords, so, too, did Mozart and

Beethoven, were we to be totally honest! Suffice to say that Kabalevsky was definitely a fine composer, and his music found favor with some of the greatest Western artists of the day – Horowitz, Toscanini, Ashkenazy, Reiner and Barenboim amongst. Through it all, Kabalevsky remained true to himself and to his Russian heritage.

Dmitri Borisovich Kabalevsky was born in St. Petersburg on 30 December 1904. He entered the *Moscow Conservatory* in 1925 where he studied piano with Alexander Goldenweiser and composition with Nikolai Myaskovsky, graduating in 1930. Following his graduation, Kabalevsky soon established himself in both musical academic and political circles. He would ultimately become a senior figure in the newly formed Union of Composers in 1938. As senior editor of *Sovietskaya Muzyka*, a leading publication ordaining Soviet musical orthodoxy, he had tremendous power over the fate of other composers’ music. Narrowly escaping later artistic purges, Kabalevsky “played the game” far too well, advocating for music with a strong basis in folk-song and 19th century Russian romantic models, and a full-throated embrace of Socialist Realist optimism. In the 1950s and 1960s, along with Tikhon Khrennikov, he was one of the most powerful figures in Soviet musical life.

By 1948 Kabalevsky had written several notable works for young musicians and after the Zhdanov Decree he conceived the idea of writing a trio of concertos dedicated to Soviet Youth: the *Violin Concerto in C major, Op. 48*, the (first) *Cello Concerto (1949) in G minor, Op. 49* and the *Third Piano Concerto in D major, Op. 50* – the last premiered in 1953 by the 14-year-old Vladimir Ashkenazy. Ten years later Kabalevsky composed a *Second Cello Concerto*, which was premiered on 15th January 1965 under the baton of the composer, with Daniil Shafran as cello soloist.

The *Cello Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 77*, is a far more serious work than its predecessor and owes an obvious debt to his colleague and one-time neighbor Dmitri Shostakovich, though never approaching the acerbic wit of the latter. Throughout, Kabalevsky displays his mastery of orchestration – the inclusion of the saxophone in

the second movement, while not ground-breaking, deftly highlights the bizarre atmosphere. Likewise, the music's structure is transparent and both enjoyable and easy to grasp. Similar to the Schumann concerto, it is in three continuous monothematic movements, bridged by cadenzas.

The work establishes the C minor tonality immediately with a low pedal "C" in the double basses, over which the main theme immediately appears in the solo cello played pizzicato. This haunting idea is restated by the flutes, in a manner akin to late Shostakovich, with an expressive counterpoint from the soloist. A couple of low rumbles from a solo bassoon provide a restless sixteenth note figure that will form the basis of the Allegro molto ed energico sequence. There is a sinister mood throughout this macabre episode with mocking stopped horns, clarinets in their throaty chalumeau register, wisps of harp glissandos and muted tremolos on the strings. A written out ritardando leads to a ruminative cadenza, which gradually becomes more agitated until abrupt orchestral chords usher in the second movement: *Presto marcato*. This bumptious 3/8 scherzo, dominated by a grotesque variant of the main theme on solo saxophone is Kabalevsky at his most Shostakovichian that is further emphasized by the opening theme now appearing as a sardonic march. The scherzo finally triumphs and following a series of flashy double-stops, the cello launches a brilliantly fast second cadenza, landing on a discordant D flat-G with left-hand pizzicato, whilst the timpani reinforce the C in the bass. The mood gradually becomes more subdued, leading to the third movement, *Andante con moto*. An elegiac mood, with throbbing string showcases the cello at its most lyrical. Gradually, fragments of the restless sixteenth note figure return, setting the stage for a musical duel between alternating lyric and rhythmic episodes. Almost magically, the mood lightens, and the previous turbulence resolves itself with a warm, comforting C Major chord, as the cello plays an almost naïve sixteenth note figure in its lowest octave.

ROBERT SCHUMANN: CONCERTO FOR CELLO IN A MINOR

Schumann's *Cello Concerto*, originally titled *Konzertstück für Violoncello mit Begleitung des Orchesters*, was the first large-scale work that Schumann completed after assuming his duties as Municipal Music Director in Düsseldorf in the autumn of 1850. Three introductory wind chords – with pizzicato support from the upper strings, are all the preamble Schumann required to prepare for the cello's soaring first-subject melody; a gesture that would become de rigueur for practically ALL Romantic concertos! This chordal motto will recur throughout the work.

Composed in 1850, over a period of just two weeks, the concerto was never publicly performed during Schumann's lifetime. The first performance with an orchestra would not take place until 1860. Slowly, the work's value would be recognized, first by the great cellist Piatti and then, gradually, with performances across Europe.

Schumann freed the compositional requirements of the Baroque-Classical concerto to one of a free-flowing and highly original musical dialogue between soloist and orchestra. Clara Schumann writes about the elements of his new style as a 'Romantic quality, the vivacity, the freshness and humor, also the highly interesting interweaving of violoncello and orchestra are indeed wholly ravishing, and what euphony and deep feeling one finds in all the melodic passages!' When compared to the stark contrast of "solo" and "tutti" of previous generations, this was a remarkable innovation. Schumann's prediction that "Since there is a great dearth of such works, the cello concerto is something which will perhaps be welcomed by many" has certainly come true, although it only became standard repertoire decades after Schumann's death.

The work very much owes today's prominence to the championship of cellist Pablo Casals who had a particular fondness for the work. One of the outstanding features that have earned the work such an honored place in the repertoire stems from its wide-ranging emotional palette, touching us with mood shifts from profound intimacy to joyous extroversion, all the while creating a coherent narrative expressed by soloist and orchestra.

Another highly Schumannesque feature was his inclusion of his trademark tonal ciphers, most notably around the name of his beloved Clara (the infamous “Clara motif”), first appearing towards the end of the second movement and later throughout the finale. Clara herself also commented that the concerto was ‘written in a way which is most befitting to the cello character’. That is to say that the lyrical nature of the instrument could be framed around the greater potential of virtuosity, and also in no small part at that time helped by the technical development of the cello ‘end-pin’, which came into prominent usage in the 1850’s and gave greater physical freedom of expression and technical ease for cellists.

Following the rhapsodic dialogue of the opening movement, the slow second movement (marked “Langsam”) presents a daring gesture as a second orchestral cello joins the soloist for an all-too-brief duet, concluding with several expressions of the “Clara motif.”

The finale brings the forceful chords of the main theme, this time marked in sharp sforzandi. After a final return of the main theme in the orchestra, the cello begins an improvisatory cadenza with orchestral accompaniment – another Schumann innovation. The orchestra reenters, this time in a sunny A major (contrasting with the prevailing A minor tonality) leading to a thrilling conclusion.



THEODOR LYGSTAD

Theodor Lyngstad, born in 1993, is a Norwegian cellist based in Copenhagen, holding the position of solo cellist in *Copenhagen Phil* since 2019. A position he won at the age of 25. He studied, and graduated from the soloist class, at the *Royal Danish Academy of Music* with Morten Zeuthen as well as Lars Anders Tomter, in Oslo with Torleif Thedéen, and David Geber at the *Manhattan School of Music* in New York.

Lyngstad's numerous awards include 1st prize in the *Sparre Olsen Competition*, the musician of the year at the *Youth Music Championship* in Oslo in 2011 and most significantly, the *Léonie Sonning Talent Prize*.

He has previously been a member of the *Norwegian Chamber Orchestra* and is sought after as guest leader in major orchestras across Europe. He plays chamber music regularly at festivals and venues throughout Scandinavia and recent chamber music highlights include performances in halls such as the *Berliner Philharmonie* and *Carnegie Hall*.

He has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as *Aarhus Symphony Orchestra*, *Copenhagen Phil* and *Trondheim Symphony Orchestra*.

For the last couple of years Theodor has been teaching at the *Copenhagen Phil Orchestra Academy* as well as giving masterclasses in Norway and Denmark.

Theodor plays an 1871 J. B. Vuillaume cello on loan from the *Augustinus Foundation*. On this recording he plays a Testore cello, owned by the *Royal Danish Academy of Music*.

This album is Theodor Lyngstad's debut album as a soloist.



COPENHAGEN PHIL

The *Copenhagen Phil* traces its roots back to 1843, when H.C. Lumbye became the first music director of the *Tivoli Concert Hall Orchestra* – consisting of 22 musicians – upon the opening of *The Tivoli Garden*. Since then, the orchestra has grown to a full-size symphonic body, which continues to play concerts for a large domestic and foreign audience in Tivoli each summer.

From its very founding, the *Copenhagen Phil* had a clear sense of mission to bring unique musical experiences for audiences of all ages, exploring both traditional and unconventional settings, as well as embracing innovative and creative activities. In addition to programming classical concerts with world class conductors and soloists, the *Copenhagen Phil* also offers popular 60-minute concerts where musicians from all genres are welcome guests. Whether through their *Open Orchestra Concerts* where the audience is invited to walk around a live orchestra as it plays, or their *PHIL:LAB* events – a true realization of Gesamtkunstwerk – exploring the intersection between classical music, theatre, movement, installation art and gastronomy, the *Copenhagen Phil* stands in the vanguard of cultural institutions in Denmark committed to reaching new audiences and introducing them to the wonders of classical music. The orchestra's chief conductor is the German Christoph Gedschold. The honorary guest conductor is the Danish conductor, Thomas Dausgaard.



EVA OLLIKAINEN CONDUCTOR

Eva Ollikainen was born in Espoo, Finland, near Helsinki, on February 12, 1982. As a child she studied piano, violin and french horn. Displaying a prodigious talent for music, Ollikainen enrolled at the *Sibelius Academy* in Helsinki at 12 and began studying conducting. She stayed on there through the master's degree level studying with Jorma Panula and Leif Segerstam. Ollikainen won the *Jorma Panula Conductors' Competition* in 2003 and rounded out her education at the *Conducting Academy* of the *Allianz Cultural Foundation* in Germany and the *Tanglewood Music Center* where she received instruction from Bernard Haitink and Herbert Blomstedt. She joined the Finnish contemporary music ensemble *Uusinta* as pianist, and participated in the world premieres of several works by Finnish composers. In 2005, Ollikainen made the first of several guest conducting appearances with the *Iceland Symphony Orchestra* additionally appearing as guest conductor with orchestras in various countries, including the *Helsinki Philharmonic*, the *Vienna Symphony*, the *BBC Symphony Orchestra*, and the *Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra*.

In 2017 she was named chief conductor of the *Nordic Symphony Orchestra*, and in 2018, she led the *Turku Philharmonic* in a recording of Kalevi Aho's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. In 2020, Ollikainen became principal conductor of the *Orchestra della Toscana*, and in 2021, she ascended the podium at the *Iceland Symphony Orchestra* as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor. Her 2023 album of works by Anna Thorvaldsdottir (*Archora/ Aiön*, released on the *BIS* label) earned wide critical acclaim including the *New York Times' Best Classical Music Album of 2023* and *Boston Globe's 10 Best Classical Albums of the Year*.



Photo: Nikolaj Lund



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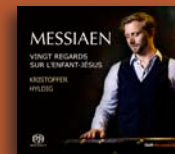
- OS** Orchestra & soloist
- OE** Orchestra/Ensemble
- PH** Petri/Hannibal Duo
- LP** Vinyl
- VG** Violin/Guitar
- EP** Digital only
- CR** Choir & Recorder
- OM** Organ music
- VE** Danish National Vocal Ensemble
- RH** Recorder & Harpsichord
- SW** Spoken words
- CH** Chinese
- RC** Recorder Concertos
- BJ** Borup-Jørgensen
- IS** Instrumental solo
- ID** Instrumental duo



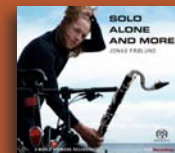
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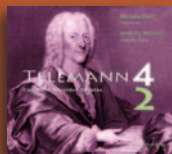
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