



French Cello

aud 97.802

EAN: 4022143978028



Nineteenth-Century Music Review (2024.01.30)

source: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/...>



In the nineteenth century, the Paris Conservatoire – now known officially as the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris, or by its acronym CNSMDP – was a European centre of virtuosic cello pedagogy. This vaunted status was earned through a series of celebrity professors that cycled through the institution in its first half-century, including Louis Duport, Charles-Nicolas Baudiot, and Auguste-Joseph Franchomme.¹ These teachers and their students cultivated a style of soloistic playing that focused on advanced bow techniques, which became a hallmark of French playing, as Valerie Walden notes.² Such virtuosity provided fertile ground for French composers, who by the end of the century were writing expansive and ambitious works for the instrument, putting it second only to the violin in terms of string solo repertoire. The album “French Cello”, released by audite and featuring soloist Marc Coppey, presents five of those works in exemplary interpretations, which are contextualized by excellent and approachable liner notes by German musicologist and music critic Michael Struck-Schloen, with English translations by Viola Scheffel.

Coppey is both a product of the Conservatoire and a member of its faculty, and clearly intends to honour this lineage. While elsewhere in his discography and concert repertoire, Coppey is a passionate champion of contemporary and lesser-known works for solo cello, this is not the matter of the day. Press text for the album rightly refers to the concertos by Camille Saint-Saëns and Édouard Lalo as ‘warhorses’, and four out of five of these works are pedagogical mainstays. Both ‘The Swan’ by Camille Saint-Saëns (1886, pub. 1922) and Gabriel Fauré’s *Elégie* (1880) are included in the Suzuki method books for the cello, and the [...]



¹ In his liner notes to the album, Michael Struck-Schloen also highlights this pedagogical aspect (p. 58).

² Valerie Walden, *Technique, Style and Performance Practice in 19th-Century Cello* (The Cambridge Companion to the Cello, ed. Robin Dreyer, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 109. Interestingly, David Wilson challenges the notion of almost Franco-Belgian and Germanic models of cello playing, arguing that cello technique is characterized by a more open, as well as more virtuosic, style and practice in late nineteenth-century French performance (Oxford: Ashgate, 2003, 10–12).

CD Review

French Cello

Marc Coppey, *violoncello*
 Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg
 John Nelson, conductor
 Audite, 97.802, 2022
 (1 CD: 71 minutes) \$19.99

In the nineteenth century, the Paris Conservatoire – now known officially as the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris, or by its acronym CNSMDP – was a European centre of virtuosic cello pedagogy. This vaunted status was earned through a series of celebrity professors that cycled through the institution in its first half-century, including Louis Duport, Charles-Nicolas Baudiot, and Auguste-Joseph Franchomme.¹ These teachers and their students cultivated a style of soloistic playing that focused on advanced bow techniques, which became a hallmark of French playing, as Valerie Walden notes.² Such virtuosity provided fertile ground for French composers, who by the end of the century were writing expansive and ambitious works for the instrument, putting it second only to the violin in terms of string solo repertoire. The album *French Cello*, released by Audite and featuring soloist Marc Coppey, presents five of those works in exemplary interpretations, which are contextualized by excellent and approachable liner notes by German musicologist and music critic Michael Struck-Schloen, with English translations by Viola Scheffel.

Coppey is both a product of the Conservatoire and a member of its faculty, and clearly intends to honour this lineage. While elsewhere in his discography and concert repertoire, Coppey is a passionate champion of contemporary and lesser-known works for solo cello, this is not the matter of the day. Press text for the album rightly refers to the concertos by Camille Saint-Saëns and Édouard Lalo as ‘warhorses’, and four out of five of these works are pedagogical mainstays. Both ‘The Swan’ by Camille Saint-Saëns (1886, pub. 1922) and Gabriel Fauré’s *Élégie* (1880) are included in the Suzuki method books for the cello, and the

¹ In his liner notes to the album, Michael Struck-Schloen also highlights this pedagogical legacy (p. 18).

² Valerie Walden, ‘Technique, Style and Performing Practice to c.1900’, *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 191. Importantly, David Milsom challenges the notion of distinct Franco-Belgian and German schools of violin playing, a critique that is relevant to the coherence of cello lineages as well; see Milsom, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 13–27.