

audite

Zoltán Kodály

Marc Coppey cello

Barnabás Kelemen violin

Matan Porat piano



ZOLTÁN KODÁLY (1882-1967)

Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 8

- I. Allegro maestoso ma appassionato 8:31
- II. Adagio 10:45
- III. Allegro molto vivace 11:50

Cello Sonata, Op. 4

- I. Fantasia 8:17
- II. Allegro con spirito 9:42

Sonatina for Cello & Piano

Lento – Tempo principale 8:37

Duo for Violin & Cello, Op. 7

- I. Allegro serioso, non troppo 7:46
- II. Adagio – Andante 7:37
- III. Maestoso e largamente,
ma non troppo lento – Presto 7:58

An espressivo musician from Hungary

The history of Hungarian music clearly does not begin with Kodály and Bartók. There was also a Ferenc Erkel, whose operas bestowed upon him the status of a national composer; and, of course, there was Franz Liszt, whose Hungarian Rhapsodies brought the Magyar inflection into the concert halls. But whilst Liszt was inspired by the music of the Roma bands from the cities to write in a romantic mixture of melancholy and virtuoso ecstasy, the two young graduates of the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music in Budapest had something else in mind.

Zoltán Kodály, born in 1882 in Kecskemét in central Hungary as the son of a railway employee, met the slightly older Béla Bartók around 1905 while they were both studying in Budapest. From the beginning, they were united by a common idea: they wanted to study Hungarian music at its roots, which they no longer could find in the so-called verbunkos tradition of entertainment bands, but in the repertoire of the rural population in the then Hungarian regions of the Danube Monarchy. Kodály's doctoral thesis *The Strophic Structure of the Hungarian Folksong* was a first step in this direction; together with Bartók, from 1908 onwards he undertook several journeys through Hungary, Slovakia and Romania to record songs and dances of the peasant societies, using a wax cylinder phonograph.

With this fundamental research Kodály pursued a double goal. On the one hand, he planned a comprehensive edition of Hungarian folk music, which he produced during the following decades and which would comprise ten volumes. Following the motto of "music is common property", it formed the basis for a pedagogical concept aimed at anchoring music in the curriculum of general education schools. To this day, this "Kodály method" offers an early childhood approach to music which is unique in Europe, and from which contemporary composers also still benefit.

On the other hand, Kodály saw in folk music, with its tonal systems and rhythms that deviated from "art music", the chance to give his own music an unmistakable, "national" signature. Particularly good examples illustrating this are his famous works – the *Psalmus Hungaricus*, the folk opera *Háry János* or the *Dances of Galánta* – but also the magnificent chamber pieces which he composed until the years of the First World War.

The new style – the Cello Sonata Op. 4

In this incredibly mature work by the young composer, similarly as in his friend Bartók's works, a wide variety of influences are mixed, forming a highly energetic style that defined the period of awakening of many avant-garde composers after 1900. The German romantic style of Hans Koessler, who in Budapest taught a whole generation of Hungarian composers from Ernst von Dohnányi to Emmerich Kálmán, was radically changed by Kodály after his sojourn in Paris in 1906/07. He was particularly impressed by the music of Claude Debussy, with its innovative colour effects and the influence of Far Eastern music, which had been presented at the Paris Expositions Universelles. In France, Kodály therefore built a loyal audience who experienced, as part of the "Festival Hongrois" held in Paris in March 1910, the premiere of the *Cello Sonata Op. 4* with János Mihákovics and Béla Bartók at the piano.

Kodály had long mused over the form of this sonata, for which he had initially planned a traditional layout in three movements. Whether this structure tasted too much like convention or whether he was simply dissatisfied with the compositional result, he ended up rejecting the first movement and instead opened the piece with the second movement, a "Fantasia" which programmatically introduced his new style. For Kodály does not locate his music in a salon, where a virtuoso plays for a bourgeois audience, but imagines an intimate scene for two instruments. And right from the cello's long solo, the superimposed fourths introduce a typical feature of Hungarian folk music that defines this "Fantasia", which is essentially an extended improvisation. The focus here is not a purposeful development of musical "material" but, rather, sensitive listening to one another, and engaging in a flexible dialogue where the performers repeatedly draw each other into new expressive spheres.

And it has often been noticed that the harp-like accompaniments of the piano, reminiscent of Debussy, could also come from the Hungarian national instrument, the cimbalom, which is played by striking beaters against the strings.

The following *Allegro con spirito* begins in the style of the Hungarian dances that Kodály and Bartók had recorded or notated by the dozen on their research trips. But here, too, Kodály does not proceed schematically, but lets the themes and motifs be interpreted and combined anew, with surprise pauses and grand gestures – as is to be expected in the context of spontaneous music-making in a small circle. Surprisingly, there is no applause-seeking final effect at the end; instead, Kodály recalls the *Adagio* opening of the “*Fantasia*” and thus convincingly rounds off the unusual two-part form of his sonata.

Shortly after the Paris premiere, the *Sonata Op. 4* was also presented in Budapest – yet Kodály, who earned his living as a professor of music theory, did not find much support in his native country. The concerts of the “*New Hungarian Music Society*”, which he had co-founded with Bartók in 1911 to promote contemporary music, had to be abandoned after a few months due to lack of interest. And it was not until the end of the First World War that Kodály found a publisher for his works: it was the renowned *Universal Edition* in Vienna who printed his *Cello Sonata* in 1922.

At this occasion, Kodály apparently thought again about supplementing the two parts with an opening movement, and it was probably then that he went on to write the music which was not published until 1969, two years after the composer’s death, bearing the title of *Sonatina*. This time, it begins with a long piano solo which evokes even more clearly the cimbalom’s playing and improvisation technique. The main section is a wonderful, expansive, often very elegiac movement in which Kodály reverts to his style of ten years previously. Inwardly, he had probably already bid his farewell to chamber music, seeking with his *Psalmus Hungaricus* a much larger forum in which to address Hungarian identity and the fate of his homeland.

Heart-rending dialogues – the Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7

The two remaining works on this CD, the *Duo Op. 7* and the *Solo Sonata Op. 8*, were first presented alongside Kodály’s *String Quartet Op. 10* in Budapest in May 1918 – shortly before the dissolution of the Danube Monarchy, which was also to tear the Hungarian kingdom apart. For the presentation of his new chamber music pieces, Kodály enlisted the quartet of his friend Imre Waldbauer, who also premiered the *Duo Op. 7* together with the cellist Jenő Kerpely. Kodály thus found optimal conditions for a work that to this day remains at the top of the duo repertoire, despite its gigantic demands.

Waldbauer was a violin student of the legendary Jenő Hubay, while Kerpely had studied with the no less famous David Popper, the teacher of several Hungarian master cellists. Kodály ruthlessly exploits their technical expertise in the duo, leading the instruments into vertiginous heights and uncomfortable registers, and demanding complex multiple stopping, special sound effects and unrestrained expressivity from them. As in the *Sonata Op. 4*, the motifs of the first movement seem to stem from a core that Kodály derives from the tonality of Hungarian folk music, but also from the regional style of playing string instruments. In the first movement, the “academic” sonata form with three thematic complexes is certainly recognisable. More fascinating, however, is how the violin and the cello constantly throw new tunes or short, abrupt figures at each other, how the main part and accompaniment change at very short intervals, or how the two players seem to outdo each other with technical capers.

In the *Adagio*, Kodály also plays masterfully with tension curves and suggestive, almost operatic moments. At the opening, the cello theme and the accompanying figures unfold quite simply, but it soon becomes clear that there are no important and unimportant parts. In the *Andante* middle section, the cello’s murmuring tremolos and the violin’s grand gesture become almost melodramatic – a heartbreaking mood that reverberates at the end of the movement with reversed roles. The two string instruments introduce proceedings in the same “tragic” tone in the *Maestoso* introduction of the finale, but the *Presto* leads into another world, dominated by humour

and biting wit. The rivalry between the instruments, played out with a wink, escalates into virtuoso fireworks of the kind Kodály would later unleash in his dance suites for orchestra, inspired not least by Beethoven and his string quartets.

In the summer of 1914, when Kodály was about to return to Hungary from Valais with his wife Emma, news reached him of the outbreak of the First World War. It was during this time that he began work on the Duo Op. 7; however, he emphasised that there was no direct connection between the work and world history.

No boundaries towards the inside – the Solo Sonata Op. 8

For Kodály's career as a composer, the war represented a severe caesura. His works, most of which were unpublished, were no longer performed abroad, and in Hungary the critics had always been hostile to him. Kodály concentrated on small, "feasible" instrumentations – right down to the smallest imaginable: works for solo string instruments. Since he had a good relationship with the cello class at the Budapest Academy, he composed a sonata for solo cello for Jenő Kerpely in 1915 – to this day the most important counterpart to Johann Sebastian Bach's solo suites.

"Chamber music has the meaning of something that wants to approach the confidential and in so doing can touch the boundaries of the nominal", the composer Hans Werner Henze once wrote, and he went on: "Chamber music considers itself as a soundworld that has boundaries towards the outside but none towards the inside" – an observation that could describe Kodály's state of mind during the war. An extreme form of expression for the approach or treatment of the "confidential" certainly is the "solissimo" style of writing. It was not until the early twentieth century that composers remembered Bach's cello suites, with Max Reger's Suites Op. 131c written at almost exactly the same time as Kodály's Sonata Op. 8 – a parallelism that is not reflected in the works' styles. In any case, Béla Bartók thought that in this genre no one had written a work remotely as original as his friend Kodály, "least of all Reger, with his pale imitations of Bach".

There is indeed little sign of neo-baroque echoes in Kodály's sonata – with the exception, perhaps, of the opening, which is distantly reminiscent of the rhythm of a sarabande, but is soon absorbed by music in which Kodály probably pushes his style furthest in the direction of modernism, somewhere between French impressionism and Hungarian folk music. An old baroque tradition, however, is the alteration of the usual string tuning (scordatura): in order to better reach the central tonality around the note B, Kodály demands that the cello's two lower strings each be tuned down a semitone, to B and F sharp respectively.

The large, preludising gesture of the opening contrasts with a pendulum-like secondary theme that reappears after the main motif has been developed to dizzying heights with double stops, trills and runs. Above the bass line of the following Adagio, a large, improvisatory scene with frequent changes of tempo and expression unfolds, before the ecstatically propulsive dance rhythm in the final allegro sends the performer on a virtuoso tour de force. The record producer and music writer Ateş Orga rather aptly called this monumental work a "dream world" populated by "recitatives, songs and dances, bagpipes, shepherd's shawms, zithers and cimbaloms – a veritable peasants' orchestra".

After the first performance given by its dedicatee Kerpely in May 1918, only a few cellists dared play this highly virtuosic work; at least two performances took place after the war as part of Arnold Schoenberg's "Society for Private Musical Performances", where more courage was shown than in Hungary's music circles. However, the sonata only really became known thanks to the cellist János Starker, who went on to work on the piece for the rest of his life. Since then, Kodály's Op. 8 has been part of the repertoire of all advanced cellists.

MARC COPPEY cello



Recognized for his celebrated interpretations as soloist, his extensive exploration of chamber music with some of today's finest musicians, and his dedication to widening the cello literature, Marc Coppey is considered to be one of the world's leading cellists – recently also with a growing reputation as a conductor on the international podium.

A protégé of Lord Yehudi Menuhin and Mstislav Rostropovich, Coppey first shot to international acclaim at the age of 18, winning First Prize and 'Prize for the Best Bach Performance' at the prestigious Leipzig Bach Competition (1988). Soon thereafter, he made major debuts in Paris and Moscow in collaboration with Yehudi Menuhin and Viktoria Postnikova, and performed at the Évian Festival. Since then, Coppey has carved out an impressive solo career, working regularly with many of the world's finest orchestras and conductors. An avid chamber music player, Marc Coppey has explored and performed the cello repertoire intensively with renowned artists and ensembles. From 1995 to 2000 he was a member of the Ysaÿe Quartet.

The breadth of Coppey's repertoire is testament to his profound musical curiosity: alongside mainstream cello literature, he is a champion of lesser-known and contemporary works. He has given the world premieres of cello concertos by Lenot, Mantovani, Meimoun, Monnet, Tanguy, and the French premieres of works by Carter and Tüür. In addition, numerous leading contemporary composers have dedicated works to Coppey.

His recordings have received critical acclaim worldwide. They include works by Beethoven, Debussy, Emmanuel, Fauré, Grieg, Strauss, Dubois, Bach, Dohnányi, Matalon and Dutilleux. Together with the Pražák Quartet, Marc Coppey has recorded the Schubert Quintet, and with pianist Peter Laul the Beethoven and Brahms Cello Sonatas, Russian Cello Sonatas and a Schubert album. His audite debut recording with Haydn and C.P.E. Bach Cello Concertos (aud. 97.716) raised international attention. The following recording of Bloch's Schelomo and Dvořák's Cello Concerto (aud. 97.734) with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Kirill Karabits received several international awards and was nominated for the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA). His recent recording of Shostakovich's Cello Concertos (aud. 97.777) again received several awards and great critical acclaim.

In addition to his solo career and his chamber music activities, Marc Coppey is Professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and gives master classes across the globe. He is artistic director of the Colmar Chamber Music Festival as well as the Zagreb Soloists. He was made Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres by the French Cultural Ministry in 2021.

Marc Coppey was born in Strasbourg, France. He studied cello at the conservatory of his hometown, continued at the Paris Conservatoire and at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. Today he resides in Paris. He performs on a rare cello by Matteo Goffriller (Venice, 1711), the "Van Wilgenburg".

BARNABÁS KELEMEN violin

Violinist Barnabás Kelemen has conquered the famous international concert halls with his virtuoso technique and his dynamic, passionate playing style. Versatile and open-minded, he is an outstanding soloist and chamber musician, as well as an artistic director of festivals and a teacher at renowned institutions. In recent years, he has also worked as a conductor.

Barnabás Kelemen navigates with confidence through the entire catalogue of music written for violin. His repertoire is thus extremely diverse and he performs Early Baroque, Classical, and Romantic works with just as much authenticity as twentieth-century pieces. He is a devoted advocate of contemporary music, with world or Hungarian premieres of works by Kurtág, Ligeti, Schnittke, Reich, and Wigglesworth to his name.

He regularly performs at the prominent concert venues and is a frequent guest of eminent international ensembles, working with many renowned conductors. An avid conductor himself, in recent seasons he has directed e.g. the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israeli Chamber Ensemble, and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra.

In addition, Barnabás Kelemen is a sensitive and experienced chamber musician who has played with many of today's leading artists. From 2010 to 2018 he was the leader of the Kelemen Quartet which returned to the stage after three years of hiatus in May 2021, introducing two new members.

His impressive discography has received great international acclaim and awards (Gramophone Award, Grand Prix du Disque by the International Liszt Society, Diapason d'Or, BBC Music Magazine Award); it includes e.g. Bartók's complete works for violin, Liszt's complete works for violin and piano, Brahms' sonatas for violin and piano, as well as chamber music works such as Veress' String Trio and Bartók's Piano Quintet in C.

Barnabás Kelemen has achieved outstanding results in prestigious contests, including first prizes at both the International Mozart Violin Competition in Salzburg and the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, and third prize at Brussels' Queen Elisabeth Violin Competition. His artistry has been also recognized with state honours including the Liszt and Kossuth Prizes, as well as the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

Barnabás Kelemen began studying the violin under Valéria Baranyai and continued his studies with Eszter Perényi at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, graduating in 2001. He was enormously influenced by his later teachers Isaac Stern, Ferenc Rados, and Zoltán Kocsis. His conducting teachers were Leif Segerstam and Jorma Panula.

Currently Barnabás Kelemen is a professor at Budapest's Liszt Academy and the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln. He is one of the founders and artistic director of the Festival Academy Budapest's Chamber Music Festival. He performs on the "ex-Dénes Kovács" Guarneri del Gesù violin of 1742, generously loaned to him by the Hungarian State.

MATAN PORAT piano



Hailed by the New York Times for his “magnificent sound and breath of expression”, pianist and composer Matan Porat has performed in distinguished venues including the Philharmonie in Berlin, Carnegie Hall New York, Wigmore Hall London, and Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Auditorium du Louvre in Paris and Alte Oper in Frankfurt, and with orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and Hong Kong Sinfonietta.

He has participated in many acclaimed festivals including Marlboro, Lockenhaus, Ravinia, Verbier, Hohenems, La Folle Journée, La Roque d’Anthéron, Piano aux Jacobins, Musikfest Berlin, Heidelberger Frühling and Rheingau Festival. Chamber music appearances include performances with the Artemis Quartet, Quatuor Ysaÿe, Cuarteto Casals, Pacifica, Modigliani, Schumann and Jerusalem Quartets.

Known for his unique, narrative-based programming, Porat’s varied repertoire ranges from the complete Bach Partitas and Schubert Sonatas to Ives’ Concord Sonata and the Ligeti Piano Concerto.

His debut CD *Variations on a theme by Scarlatti* – a 65-minute program of pieces from Couperin to Boulez which all relate to Scarlatti’s Sonata K. 32 – was praised as “a fantastic album that one should hear over and over again” by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. His following CDs, *Lux*, a recital of pieces around light, from dawn to nightfall and *Carnaval*, a recital around Schumann’s *Carnaval* op. 9, have won 5-star-reviews in Diapason and Classica magazines.

His love for the performing arts has led him to collaborate with legendary director Peter Brook, touring with his production of Mozart’s *Magic Flute* for piano solo and 7 singers, as well as with the Ballett am Rhein in the Opernhaus Düsseldorf and with the music theater group Nico and the Navigators in Bozar Brussels and Konzerthaus Berlin.

Porat also improvises live music for silent films, hailed by *The New-Yorker’s* Alex Ross as “an astounding feat of creative musicianship”.

Born in Tel-Aviv, Matan Porat studied with Emanuel Krasovskiy, Maria João Pires and Murray Perahia, obtaining his Master’s degree from the Juilliard School. His composition teachers were Ruben Seroussi and George Benjamin. His works have been commissioned and performed by Nicolas Altstaedt, Avi Avital, Kim Kashkashian, Andreas Scholl, Vladimir Jurowski, Maria João Pires, Cuarteto Casals and Dover Quartet, as well as ensemble unitedberlin and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra.



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