

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) Works for Cello and Piano

Florentine-born Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was part of a generation of musicians - composers and performers - who, uprooted from war-torn Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s, came to America in search of new opportunities. Like many of his fellow émigrés - Miklós Rózsa, Eugene Zádor, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Franz Waxman and others - Castelnuovo-Tedesco eventually settled in Los Angeles and found work in the film industry. But a great deal of his film work went uncredited and unheralded, and his greatest impact on the genre was as a teacher of such later-generation greats as Henry Mancini, Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams. More importantly, like Rózsa et al. he continued to compose music for the concert stage and recital hall just as he had in Europe. His vast catalogue, spanning his time in both Italy and America, includes orchestral works, concertos, operas, oratorios, film scores, chamber music, songs, and many works for guitar. His music, exhibiting facets of neo-Classicism, neo-Romanticism and Impressionism, is always tonal but not without dissonance. 'I believe that music is a form of language capable of progress and renewal', he wrote, 'yet music should not discard what was contributed by preceding generations. ... What I have sought to do, during my artistic evolution, has been to express myself with means always simpler and more direct, in a language clearer and more precise.'

Composed in 1935. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Cello Sonata demonstrates the composer's mastery of traditional structures. The first movement is a sophisticated sonata form featuring three themes. The first theme is a languorous barcarole, initially accompanied by simple rolled chords on the piano. The piano introduces the second theme, broader in shape but already implicit in the first. The third heard first on cello, is seemingly an afterthought at the end of the exposition, but its true importance manifests itself in the development, which begins after a brief pause. A highlight of this section is a combination of the first and third ideas. The recapitulation begins with the first theme, unadorned, but proceeds to develop both it and the third theme further; the second theme is conspicuously absent. The second movement is a set of variations on a melancholy tune. Both in the original presentation of the material and in the five variations and coda which follow. cello and piano freely exchange the roles of melody and accompaniment as well as texture. The second variation is imbued with augmented seconds that give it an oriental flavour, while the third suggests a peasant dance. The fifth variation takes a more academic turn with what begins as a strict fugue, but Castelnuovo-Tedesco soon abandons that structure for a more fantasia-like take on the material. In the coda, the theme transforms into the major mode and concludes more dreamily than it had begun.

The Sonatina, completed in Beverly Hills, California, in July 1946, was composed for either bassoon or cello (with slight differences in the solo parts involving articulation. octave displacement and occasionally pitches). The composer premiered the work with bassoonist Adolph Weiss, the dedicatee, in Los Angeles in March 1947. In the first movement, a charming Allegretto, the two instruments again take equal roles; melodic ideas flow easily between them, sometimes contrapuntally and at other times overlapping. This symbiotic relationship continues in the middle movement, which juxtaposes a flowing, mixed-metre idea with a rising chromatic motif and a more elegant melodic line. The cello leads off the final movement with a rhythmic, spiky motif that suggests a brisk military march. There are two short-lived attempts to slow the tempo and introduce more lyricism, but neither instrument seems willing to move away from the opening idea. In the coda, the cello resumes the lead, relegating the piano to accompanying chords and a near-whispered conclusion

Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed I nottambuli ('Night Owls' – in the figurative sense: persons active at night) in 1927 and dedicated it to the noted Catalan cellist Gaspar Cassadó. The work is subtitled Variazioni fantastiche ('Fantastic Variations') and, as it unfolds, the 'fantastic' element clearly predominates. The composer makes full use of the colours of both instruments in a free-wheeling extended form that consists of a prelude and five overlapped sections. The languid melody introduced by the cello in the first section leads to much florid passagework. The second section introduces an Impressionistic flavour, with pizzicato, guitar-like accompaniment from the cello supporting an idea that begins in open fifths from the piano; the two instruments quickly exchange roles.

however, with the piano becoming the accompanist. The third section initially evokes a popular Spanish dance and ends in cello harmonics over piano flourishes. The fourth is more lyrical, continuing the florid piano part in support of a pleasing melodic cello line. Both instruments heat up the argument, however, before an ease of tension leads to the final segment: an energetic, vigorous dance that opens in 7/8. Here, the virtuosity of both players is tested in a whirlwind of notes before an abrupt break segues to a ghostly coda coloured by cello harmonics and sustained piano chords. The composer orchestrated I nottambulli in 1960. but that version remains unpublished.

Toccata was composed during the summer of 1935 and dedicated to Ukrainian-born cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (who had premiered Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Cello Concerto under Arturo Toscanini earlier the same vear). It is a work in three linked movements that blends fireworks with lyricism. Castelnuovo-Tedesco develops the same theme in all three movements: a rising/falling motif with a fanfare-like shape (5-1-2-5-3-1-2-5). The Introduzione opens with cello passagework before the piano introduces the theme, which the two instruments proceed to trade back and forth in numerous, inventive ways. The movement ends with more cello passagework (a mini-cadenza, in fact), before segueing to Aria. This central movement provides a textural contrast, the cellointroducing a long, lyrical melody underneath which the piano assumes an uncharacteristically submissive role. But it isn't long before both cello and piano return to the principal theme, tossing it around until the cello leads the musical argument back to the movement's opening lyrical idea, now extended and seemingly triumphant. And yet ... the piano can't help returning to the main motif, which totally dominates the concluding Finale.

In his autobiography, Cellist, dedicatee Piatigorsky recalled that at his first American performance of Toccata, in Cleveland, he had a memory lapse about 50 measures into the first movement and had to start improvising. The pianist, realising what his partner was playing was not in the score, began to improvise as well. "We gradually built up to a great climax that led straight back to the beginning of the piece." Afterward, conductor Artur Rodzinski and the concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra told Piatigorsky the piece was very impressive. 'In fairness to my dear friend Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco', he wrote, 'I wanted to tell them the truth. Now. I have!'

Prior to his mid-twenties, Castelnuovo-Tedesco showed relatively little interest in the musical aspects of his Jewish heritage. That changed when he heard Ernest Bloch's Schelomo, followed by the discovery of a collection of musical prayer settings among his grandfather's papers. This led to composing Le danze del Re David for solo piano in 1925, followed by a Vocalise-Étude (aka Chant hébraïque) that was written for a collection of vocalises published by Alfonse Leduc. It became so popular that he asked his friend Gioachino Magliani to transcribe it for violin and piano. Later, the composer agreed to a request from Gaspar Cassadó to transcribe it for cello and piano as well (a transcription the composer dedicated to Pablo Casals). The piece is in a simple tripartite form. The piano opens with a soft but brusque gesture (marked 'almost drum-like') before the cello intones the mournful melody. The piano has a go at the melody as well, but the cello takes it back before engaging in a brief, accompanied cadenza. The middle section, 'lively and obstinate' is a 'dance of defiance' that honours the resiliency of the Jewish people. The plaintive melody returns to complete the A-B-A structure, with a brief echo of the dance providing a mysterious coda.

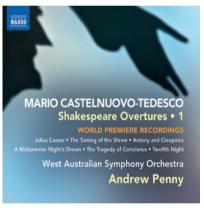
As its title suggests, *Scherzino'* is a playful piece. Composed in 1935, it tosses around two thematic ideas with a light touch. The first motif uses heavily accented non-harmonic tones resolving up a semitone to figuratively thumb its nose at the listener. But the second might, indeed, be the 'joke' referred to in the title because it comes from such an unexpected source: 13th-century England. The traditional tune *Sumer is icumen in* ('Summer has arrived') makes an appearance about mid-way through the piece, offering a lyrical contrast to the jumpier, more nervous opening idea. Castelnuovo-Tedesco alternates and sometimes combines the two motifs, with the piano providing a final, distant echo of *Sumer*.

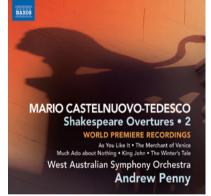
Written in the same year, Notturno sull'acqua evokes a specific memory for the composer, 'on the banks of the Arno River, one evening in June'. It must have been a peaceful although somewhat troublesome night. In the opening, cello and piano exchange languid, melancholy ideas in a chromatically laden G minor. Castelnuovo-Tedesco develops this material into a tumultuous cadence that quickly dissipates and returns to calmer, more fluid movement. Ultimately, the opening material returns in a placid B flat maior.

The final piece in this programme is an unpublished gem, performed from the composer's manuscript. Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed *Kol nidre 'Meditation'* in 1941 while he was under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Hollywood. Infused with melancholy, it has no clear-cut formal structure. The opening motif weaves itself throughout the score, generating new material but always returning, albeit often with a different harmonisation and texture. The liquid flow of triplet motion throughout the piece keeps the material moving forward.

In his autobiography, *Una vita da musica*, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote, 'The cello is an instrument I've always particularly loved.' That love is reflected in the way the instrument's colours and techniques are so deftly exploited in these chamber works. And, he adds, 'I've known (and accompanied) many great cellists.' Himself a superb pianist, he clearly valued the role of the keyboard as a duo partner. His affinity for idiomatic writing for both instruments make his works a gratifying experience not only for listeners but also for the musicians who play them.

Frank K. DeWald





8.572500

8.572501

Enrico Dindo

Enrico Dindo became principal cellist of the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra at the age of 22. In 1997 he won First Prize at the Rostropovich Competition in Paris and has since performed with many prestigious orchestras worldwide with conductors including Riccardo Chailly, Daniele Gatti, Paavo Järvi, Valery Gergiev, Riccardo Muti and Mstislav Rostropovich. In May 2000, he was awarded the 'Abbiati' Prize and the 'Vittorio De Sica' Prize for Music. He plays a Pietro Giacomo Rogeri cello of 1717 (ex Piatti).

www.enricodindo.com



Alessandro Marangoni

Alessandro Marangoni studied piano with Maria Tipo. A winner of several national and international awards, including the prestigious Yamici di Milano' International Prize, he has appeared throughout Europe, America and China, as a soloist and as a chamber musician, collaborating with leading performers, including Daniel Barenboim, Mario Ancillotti, Aldo Ceccato, Valentina Cortese, Enrico Dindo, Quirino Principe and Massimo Quarta. His recordings include an album of the piano works of Victor de Sabata for the 40th anniversary of Sabata's death. For Naxos he has recorded the complete piano works of Rossini (Péchés de vieillesse), Clementi's Gradus ad Parnassum (8.572325-28) and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Piano Concertos (8.572823).

www.alessandromarangoni.com



Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote that 'the cello is an instrument I've always particularly loved', and this is reflected in the deft way he exploits its colours and techniques in chamber works recorded here that include unpublished gems and a world premiere. The sophisticated *Cello Sonata* and *Sonatina* also reveal the composer's skill as a pianist, giving equal roles in a symbiotic relationship that tests both players' virtuosity. Impressionist flavours in *I nottambuli* or 'Night Owls' contrast with a *Toccata* that blends fireworks with lyricism, as does the Jewish soulfulness of the popular *Chant hébraïque* with the playful *Scherzo* that uses the English traditional tune *Sumer is icumen in*.

CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO

Playing Time 74:31

WORKS FOR CELLO AND PIANO

13	Kol nidre 'Meditation' (1941)	4:03
12	Notturno sull'acqua, Op. 82, No. 1 (1935)	5:29
11	Scherzino, Op. 82, No. 2 (1935)	4:27
10	Chant hébraïque, Op. 53 (arr. for cello and piano by Gaspar Cassadó) (1928)	4:28
7 8 9	Toccata, Op. 83 (1935) I. Introduzione – II. Aria – III. Finale	10:55 3:33 4:35 2:47
6	I nottambuli (Variazioni fantastiche), Op. 47 (1927)	14:45
3 4 5	Sonatina, Op. 130 (1946)* I. Allegretto II. Andantino grazioso e un poco malinconico III. Rondo alla marcia; Allegro con spirito	12:25 4:41 3:57 3:44
1	Cello Sonata, Op. 50 (1928) I. Arioso e sereno II. Arietta con variazioni	17:30 7:38 9:47

* WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Enrico Dindo, Cello Alessandro Marangoni, Piano

Recorded 17–19 May 2018 at SMC Records, Ivrea, Italy • Producers and engineers: Renato Campajola and Mario Bertodo Assistant producer: Jacopo Di Tonno • Piano: Steinway & Sons 'Serazio e Negro' Cover: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco in Beverly Hills, 1968; Photo by Mary Frampton Booklet notes: Frank K. DeWald • Publishers: Forlivesi 1–2, composer's manuscript 3–5, Universal Edition 6, Ricordi 7–9, fil, f2, Éditions Alphonse Leduc 6, composer's manuscript (copyright MGM) 13