



48 Strings

Music for One, Two,
Four and Twelve Cellos

Piatti • Popper
Fitzenhagen • Klengel

Andreas Brantelid

Ingemar Brantelid
and friends



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Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901)

12 Caprices, Op. 25

41:07

1	Allegro quasi presto	1:36
2	Andante religioso	5:15
3	Moderato	2:31
4	Allegretto	5:10
5	Allegro comodo	2:47
6	Adagio largamente	4:14
7	Maestoso	2:56
8	Moderato ma energico	2:58
9	Allegro	1:45
10	Allegro deciso	3:39
11	Adagio – Allegro	3:41
12	Allegretto capriccioso	4:30

David Popper (1843–1913)

Suite for Two Cellos, Op. 16

18:20

13	Andante grazioso	3:02
14	Gavotte – Allegro vivace ma non troppo	3:14
15	Scherzo – Quasi presto	3:02
16	Largo espressivo	4:55
17	Marcia – Finale – Allegro ma non troppo	4:00

Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (1848–1890)

18 Concert Waltzes for Four Cellos, Op. 31

7:03

Julius Klengel (1859–1933)

19 Hymnus for Twelve Cellos, Op. 57

5:19

Total Time: 71:49

Andreas Brantelid tracks 1–19

Ingemar Brantelid tracks 13–19

Henrik Dam Thomsen tracks 18–19

Fredrik Sjølin track 18

Øystein Sonstad, Nils Ullner, Emilie Eskær, Jakob La Cour, Louisa Schwab, Morten Zeuthen, Live Johansson, Samira Dayyani and Lea Brøndal track 19

This album is dedicated in loving memory to
my teacher Mats Rondin (1960–2014)



© Tommy Svensson

Andreas Brantelid and Mats Rondin in 2006

A golden generation of cello players

When one listens to a symphony orchestra with the string section placed at the front, this means that the larger the instruments (placed towards the rear of the orchestra), the deeper the range (*ambitus*) will be. Some may not notice that double basses also have a different appearance, with much more slender and hanging 'shoulders' than the other string instruments. They do, in fact, belong to a completely different family of strings and are descendants of the gamba, whereas the cello belongs to the violin family – earlier versions were called bass violins. But the cello existed side by side with the gamba for a couple of centuries, its role only becoming increasingly independent around 1700. When Bach died in 1750, it was by far the more dominant instrument. Later on, composers such as Wagner and Strauss wrote orchestral works that were full of music which required as much technical skill of the cellist as it did of the violinist. First Haydn, then Schumann, and later Saint-Saëns, Dvořák, Elgar as well as several other iconic names, wrote immensely popular cello concertos, and in our own times the solo repertoire has exploded – great cellist-composers such as Gregor Piatigorsky and especially Mstislav Rostropovich, have motivated hundreds of composers to write for the cello.

When Andreas Brantelid casts a retrospective spotlight on four of the greatest cellist-composers during the period leading up to the start of the 20th century, it is not only to pay homage to four formidable musicians who left their stamp on the way their age perceived the instrument, but also to emphasise the degree to which later conceptions of the nature and being of the cello are down to them and their peers. The violin was never the same again after Paganini, nor the piano after Liszt. By composing innovative music for the cello our perception of the instrument was changed definitively.

The four composers share many common features. They came from musical families, they started to play the cello when they were children, from an early age they played as soloists in excellent orchestras, and despite busy solo careers they taught a great many top names. And, first and foremost, their cello music challenges young musicians even now to strive for the sublime.

Some people may think – and perhaps not unjustly – that certain types of music are better suited to the rehearsal room than the concert hall. But, as Andreas Brantelid's selection shows, this is not always 'applied music', but music that explores technical and sound-related boundaries, thereby attaining a quite exceptional emotional proximity – glimpses even of breath-taking intensity.

Few cellists will complete their education nowadays without having pitted their strength against the *Caprices, Op. 25* by the Italian composer Carlo Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901), published in 1875. Paganini's *24 Caprices* for solo violin were composed in the course of 15 years at the beginning of the 19th century, since when they have had almost biblical status and been paid homage to in countless works by later violinists. Franz Liszt exerted an enormous influence and was known to have generously supported young, talented musicians. He donated to the young Piatti an expensive Amati cello (which he later replaced with a Stradivarius), and Piatti became a well-known figure in European musical life. He spent many years in London, counted Verdi among his close friends and was promised a cello concerto by Mendelssohn, which, however, never came to be written.

The *12 Caprices* manage in an inimitable way to combine a didactic collection of concrete technical exercises – arpeggios, intonation, octaves, formidable double-stoppings and an ultra-high register – with a spontaneous melodic charm, joy of sound and at times amazing harmonic richness. Pedantry and monotony

are nowhere to be found, instead a good deal of opera-like drama.

Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (1848–1890) came from a German musical family and, when only 20 years old, gained the position of solo cellist in the star orchestra of the time, the Dresden Philharmonic. In 1870, Liszt was once more in action, offering the young musician a prestigious position in his home town of Weimar, but by then Fitzenhagen had already become a professor at the Moscow Conservatory. He gained the reputation of being the best cello teacher in Russia, became a close acquaintance of Tchaikovsky, and later took part in the first performance of both his string quartets and later his *Piano Trio*. In 1877, Tchaikovsky dedicated the exceedingly popular *Rococo Variations* for cello and orchestra to him, but this placed a strain on their friendship. Fitzenhagen played the work with great success, but carried out so many alterations – not only in the solo part – that Tchaikovsky is reputed to have remarked ‘The idiot has changed everything!’ The original version has later been reconstructed, but today one nearly always hears the version with Fitzenhagen’s ‘improvements’. The five *Concert Waltzes* for four cellos by Fitzenhagen were composed in the 1880s, but were apparently not published during his lifetime. They make such prolonged use of high registers that as a listener one sometimes thinks one is listening to a scorching hot, all-embracing mega string quartet!

David Popper (1843–1913) is another name that all cellists are familiar with. He was born in Prague of a Jewish family and in 1867 became solo cellist in the Vienna Court Orchestra, although he soon decided to concentrate on a solo career. One again, Liszt was waiting in the wings. He ensured Popper a position at the Academy of Music in Budapest. And Popper also had close contacts in western Europe: when Brahms’ *Third Piano Trio* was given its first performance in Budapest in 1886, he played the cello part. His *Suite, Op. 16* – a duo for two cellos – is still highly popular

among cellists, and if perhaps some people would regard it as ‘salon music’, one has to be something of a stick-in-the-mud not to experience the scherzo or the gripping, virtuoso finale as a booster to one’s spirits.

The last, and youngest, of the album’s memorable cellist-composers is Julius Klengel (1859–1933). He came from Leipzig, his father was a close friend of Mendelssohn, and professional musicians had dominated the family for generations. As a conductor, Mendelssohn had turned the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into an international cultural institution; here Klengel became solo cellist at the age of 22, retaining the position for more than 40 years. Composers such as Brahms and Reger were among his circle of acquaintances, he composed eagerly and with considerable success throughout his life: cello concertos, double concertos and countless exercise pieces. Today, however, he is best remembered for a deeply-felt elegy written for the funeral of the great Hungarian-born conductor Arthur Nikisch in January 1922. *Hymnus* was composed for no less than 12 cellos and is an exceptionally rich-sounding, refined lyrical meditation that, understandably enough, was later transcribed and modified for a great many different types of ensemble.

Andreas Brantelid

Andreas Brantelid was born in Copenhagen in 1987 to Swedish/Danish parents. After receiving early tuition from his father Ingemar, Andreas made his soloist debut at the age of 14 in a performance of the Elgar concerto with the Royal Danish Orchestra in Copenhagen. Today, Andreas is one of the most sought-after performing artists from Scandinavia, winning worldwide critical acclaim for his thought-provoking interpretations, uniquely colourful sound and engaging personality. Andreas plays the 1707 'Boni-Hegar' Stradivarius, which has been made available to him by the generous support of Norwegian art collector Christen Sveaas.

Brantelid has previously released albums on such labels as Proprius, EMI and BIS. His previous releases on Naxos – *Russian Tales*, released in 2020 with music by Myaskovsky and Glazunov for cello and piano (8.573985) and *Times of Transition*, release 2021 with music by C.P.E. Bach and Haydn (8.574365) – were highly praised by both the national and international press.



Andreas Brantelid er født i København i 1987 af svensk-danske forældre. Efter at have modtaget undervisning fra sin far, Ingemar, fik Andreas sin solodebut i en alder af 14 år med Elgars cellokoncert sammen med Det Kgl. Kapel i København. I dag er Andreas en af de mest eftertragtede skandinaviske musikere, som har modtaget anmelderroser fra kritikere i hele verden. Andreas spiller på en 1707 'Boni-Hegar' Stradivarius udlånt af den norske kunstsamler Christen Sveaas.

Andreas har tidligere udgivet album på blandt andre Proprius, EMI og BIS. Hans første indspilninger på Naxos, *Russian Tales*, udgivet i 2020 med musik af N. Mjaskovskij og A.K. Glazunov for cello og klaver, og *Times of Transition*, udgivet 2021 med music af C.P.E. Bach and Haydn (8.574365), modtog stor ros fra både dansk og international presse.

Ingemar Brantelid

Ingemar Brantelid studied at the Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg as well as at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. He subsequently studied as a postgraduate under William Pleeth and Ralph Kirschbaum in London.

After many years as a solo cellist in the Royal Danish Orchestra he now devotes himself to chamber music and teaching, also at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

He has toured most of Europe with the chamber ensemble Salzburger Solisten and has also played in such ensembles as Copenhagen Chamber Soloists, the Stadler Quintet, the Poseidon Quartet and Copenhagen Classic. For the past ten years he has been a member of Arildkvartetten, which during this period has performed all of Beethoven's string quartets. He is also artistic director of Ekestad Kammermusikdagar (Ekestad Chamber Music Days) in Sweden and of the Summer Concerts at the Glyptotek in Copenhagen.



Ingemar Brantelid er uddannet på Musikhögskolan i Göteborg og på det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium i København. Derefter gennemførte han videregående studier hos William Pleeth og Ralph Kirschbaum i London.

Efter mange år som solist i Det Kgl. Kapel i København helliger han sig nu kammermusik og undervisning, blandt andet på det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium i København.

Han har turneret i det meste af Europa med kammerensemblet Salzburger Solisten og har desuden spillet i ensembler som Københavns Kammersolister, Stadlerkvintetten, Poseidonkvartetten og Copenhagen Classic. Han har i de seneste 10 år været medlem af Arildkvartetten, som i disse år spiller alle Beethovens strygekvartetter. Han er desuden kunstnerisk leder af Konsertdagar i Ekestad i Sverige og Glyptotekets Sommerkoncerter i København.



En gylden generation af cellospillere

Når man lytter til et symfoniorkester, med strygergruppen som vanligt anbragt forrest, er det klart, at jo dybere toneomfang, desto større instrumenter. Og kun få bemærker nok, at kontrabasserne desuden har en særlig udformning: De har meget smallere og mere hængende 'skuldre' end de øvrige strygere. Faktisk tilhører de en helt anden familie, de stammer fra gamben, mens celloen er af violinfamilien – dens forløber hed en basviolin. Men celloen eksisterede side om side med gamben i et par hundrede år, først omkring 1700 blev dens rolle mere og mere selvstændig, og da Bach døde i 1750, var den dominerende. Og senere skrev blandt andre Wagner og Strauss orkestermusik, der var fuldt ud lige så teknisk krævende for cello som for violinerne. Først Haydn, senere Schumann, Saint-Saëns, Dvořák, Elgar og flere andre ikoniske navne skrev kolossalt populære cellokoncerter, og i vor egen tid er solorepertoiret eksploderet – store cellister som for eksempel Gregor Piatigorskij og ikke mindst Mstislav Rostropovitj har motiveret i hundredvis af komponister til at skrive for cello.

Når Andreas Brantelid her kaster søgelys bagud til fire af de største cellister i perioden omkring overgangen til det 20. århundrede, er det ikke blot en hyldest til fire formidable musikere, som prægede deres egen tids opfattelse af instrumentet, men også en understregning af i hvor høj grad senere tiders forståelse af celloens natur og væsen skyldes dem og deres ligemænd. En violin var ikke det samme efter Paganini, et klaver ikke det samme efter Liszt. Ved at komponere grænseoverskridende musik for cello ændrede de i realiteten vores opfattelse af instrumentet.

De fire historiske cellister her har mange fællestræk. De kommer fra musikerfamilier, de begynder at spille som børn, de bliver tidligt solister i fremragende orkestre, og trods en travl solokarriere

underviser de i stribevis af senere topnavne. Og frem for alt udfordrer deres cellomusik den dag i dag unge musikere til at stræbe efter det ypperste.

Nogle vil mene – nok med en vis ret – at der er musik, som hører mere naturligt hjemme i øvelokalet end i koncertsalen. Men som Andreas Brantelids udvalg viser, er det ikke altid 'brugsmusik', men musik som afsøger de tekniske og klanglige muligheder til grænserne og derved opnår en helt usædvanlig hudløs nærhed, i glimt en ligefrem åndeløs intensitet.

Få cellister vil i dag fuldende en uddannelse uden at have prøvet kræfter med italieneren Carlo Alfredo Piattis (1822–1901) Capricer, op. 25, udgivet i 1875. Paganinis 24 capricer for soloviolin blev til i løbet af 15 år i begyndelsen af 1800-tallet, og siden har de haft nærmest bibelsk status og er hyldet i talløse værker af senere violinister. Franz Liszt havde uhyre indflydelse og var kendt som en generøs støtte for unge, talentfulde musikere. Han forærede den unge Piatti en kostbar Amati-cello (som han senere skiftede ud med en Stradivarius), og Piatti blev en kendt personlighed i europæisk musikliv. Han tilbragte mange år i London, talte Verdi blandt sine nære venner og fik løfte af Mendelssohn om en cellokoncert, der dog aldrig blev skrevet.

De 12 capricer formår på enestående vis at kombinere en didaktisk samling af konkrete tekniske udfordringer – arpeggio, intonation, oktaver, vældige dobbeltgreb og ultrahøjt register – med spontan melodisk charme, klangglæde og undertiden forbløffende harmonisk fylde. Pedanteri og ensformighed er der intet af, snarere en del operagtig dramatik.

Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (1848–1890) var af tysk musikerfamilie og opnåede – 20 år gammel – stillingen som solocellist i datidens stjerneorkester, Dresdens Philharmoni. I 1870 var Franz Liszt igen på færde, han tilbød den unge musiker et prestigejob i sin hjemby, Weimar, men da var Fitzenhagen allerede engageret

som professor ved konservatoriet i Moskva. Han fik ry som den bedste cellolærer i Rusland, blev en nær bekendt af Tjajkovskij og deltog i uropførelsen både af hans strygekvartetter og senere af hans klavertrio. I 1877 tilegnede Tjajkovskij ham de senere umådelig populære *Rokokovariationer* for cello og orkester, men det satte venskabet på prøve. Fitzenhagen spillede værket til stor succes, men foretog så mange ændringer – ikke kun i solostemmen – at Tjajkovskij citeres for bemærkningen “Idioten har ændret alt!” Den oprindelige version er senere rekonstrueret, men i dag hører man stadig næsten altid udgaven med Fitzenhagens ’forbedringer’. De fem ’Koncertvalser’ for fire celloer blev til i 1880’erne, men blev tilsyneladende ikke udgivet i Fitzenhagens levetid. De gør så vedvarende brug af høje registre, at man som lytter undertiden tror at høre en brændende varm, altomfavnende megastrygekvartet!

David Popper (1843–1913) er endnu et navn, som alle cellister kender. Han er født i Prag i en jødisk familie og blev i 1867 solocellist på hofoperaen i Wien, men valgte snart at samle sig om en solokarriere. Og igen optræder Liszt i kulissen, han sikrede Popper en stilling på konservatoriet i Budapest. Og Popper havde nære kontakter også i Vesteuropa – da Brahms’ tredje klavertrio i 1886 blev uropført i Budapest, spillede han cello. Hans ’Suite’, opus 16 – en duo for to celloer – nyder stadig stor yndest blandt cellister, og vil én og anden nok kalde det et ’salonstykke’ i dag, skal man være lidt af en tørvetriller for ikke at opleve scherzoen eller den medrivende, virtuose finale som et humørløft!

Den sidste, og yngste, af albummets mindeværdige cellospillere er Julius Klengel (1859–1933). Han kom fra Leipzig, hans far var en nær ven af Mendelssohn, og fagmusikere havde domineret familien i generationer. Som dirigent havde Mendelssohn fra midt i 1830’erne gjort Leipzigs Gewandhaus-orkester til en international kulturinstitution; her blev Klengel solocellist som 22-årig og beholdt stillingen i mere end 40 år. Komponister som Brahms og Reger

indgik i hans omgangskreds, og han komponerede ivrigt – og med betydelig succes gennem hele sit liv – cellokoncerter, dobbeltkoncerter og talløse øvelsesstykker. Men i dag huskes han nok bedst for en dybtfølt klagesang skrevet til jordfæstelsen af den store, ungarskfødte dirigent Arthur Nikisch i januar 1922. *Hymnus* er komponeret for ikke mindre end 12 celloer, en umådelig klangrig og forfinet lyrisk meditation, som forståeligt nok senere er blevet overført og omarbejdet for en hel række andre besætninger.



Thanks

Henrik Dam Thomsen, Fredrik Sjølin, Øystein Sonstad, Nils Ullner,
Emilie Eskær, Jakob La Cour, Louisa Schwab, Morten Zeuthen,
Live Johansson, Samira Dayyani and Lea Brøndal



Recorded: 2–4 June 2020 at Søllerød Kirke, Holte & 7–9 December 2020
at Koncertkirken, Copenhagen
Producer and engineer: Preben Iwan
Photos: Tommy Svensson, Ida Wang, Tobias Durholm and Philip Wareborn
Booklet notes: Karl Aage Rasmussen
English translation: John Irons
Layout: Manila Design
Cover: *Parisian bridge* © Léonard Cotte | www.Unsplash.com

The four cellist-composers in this recital share a common background: from musical families they played as soloists in outstanding orchestras, taught many students, and wrote music for the instrument that continues to challenge players of our own time with its virtuosity and intensity. In his *12 Caprices* Alfredo Piatti fused dazzling technical demands with operatic drama, whilst David Popper's *Suite* remains an admired piece for two cellists. Wilhelm Fitzenhagen's *Concert Waltzes* for four cellos makes prolonged use of the upper register, and in contrast Julius Klengel's *Hymnus* is a sonorously beautiful elegy for twelve cellists.

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	Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901)	
1–12	12 Caprices, Op. 25	41:07
	David Popper (1843–1913)	
13–17	Suite for Two Cellos, Op. 16	18:20
	Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (1848–1890)	
18	Concert Waltzes for Four Cellos, Op. 31	7:03
	Julius Klengel (1859–1933)	
19	Hymnus for Twelve Cellos, Op. 57	5:19

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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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