

Pál HERMANN

**COMPLETE SURVIVING MUSIC, VOLUME TWO:
CHAMBER AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

TWO DUOS FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO

INVENZIONI A TRE VOCI

SUITE FOR SOLO VIOLIN

STRING TRIO

PIANO TRIO

Marko Komonko, violin
Theodore Kuchar, viola
Denys Lytvynenko, cello
Myroslav Drahan, piano

PÁL HERMANN, FORGOTTEN MASTER

by Kate Kennedy

Pál Hermann (1902–44) is the composer, and the cellist, the world should have heard about. His name should be familiar as that of one of the major instrumentalists of the mid-twentieth century, who was equally skilled as a composer. His work should be well known as a highly accomplished intertwining of the folk idiom of his native Hungary with the most contemporary influences European music had to offer before the Second World War. But fate intervened. The Nazis intended to erase the Jews from history and, in the case of Hermann, they almost succeeded. Until very recently, his music was unpublished and unperformed – and even a celebrity musician with near-legendary status is quickly forgotten if few recordings are made, and if the life is ended early. This second album is another critical step towards giving Hermann's music the afterlife and acknowledgement that has been so long delayed.

Hermann hardly noticed he was Jewish. His parents did not go to the synagogue, and Jews were so thoroughly integrated in his home-town of Budapest that singling them out as 'different' would have been absurd. He was born on 27 March 1902 into a middle class which valued culture highly, and his parents found a little cello for him as soon as he started to show interest in music. By the time he was thirteen it was obvious that music was going to be his career, and they then took him to the ornate marble halls of the nearby Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music (now the Franz Liszt Academy). The professors agreed that this young boy did indeed have considerable potential, and he began seven years of study there, both as cellist and composer.

It was a golden time for the Academy, and the teenage Hermann found himself surrounded by great names. Bartók and Kodály presided over the composition students, and their music haunts Hermann's later works. His fellow students were

equally inspiring, and the friendships he formed at the Academy went on to become the professional chamber-music partnerships that defined his career. The virtuoso violinist Zoltán Székely (1903–2001) was a year younger than Hermann, and they became close friends and musical partners. After their studies they toured Europe throughout the 1920s as the Székely Duo, writing duos for each other and performing their own compositions in their programmes. They attracted serious attention when they performed in Vienna for the Society for the Private Performance of Music, at the invitation of Arnold Schoenberg, and quickly became recognised as two of the most exciting young European string-players of the time.

In the early 1920s, it was contemporary music for which Hermann was known, as he took the colourful, special effects of the Debussy Cello Sonata and the fiendishly difficult Kodály Sonata for Solo Cello around Europe. A selection of reviews of his concerts gives an idea of the rapturous response his playing elicited. He was hailed as a ‘world-famous Hungarian cello genius’,¹ and the second Pablo Casals. To be likened to one of the greatest cellists of all time, before your 21st birthday, was no mean achievement. One reads, again and again, how impressive, how fluent Hermann’s playing was, how technically superb. In short, Hermann was an international phenomenon, even before he had finished studying. In the course of 1923, he performed as a soloist to rapturous acclaim in Berlin, Dresden, Budapest, New York, Rotterdam and London.

Around that time Hermann moved to Berlin to continue his cello studies with Hugo Becker (1863–1941). He hardly needed to study any further, and indeed Franz Schreker, director of the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, wrote of Hermann in November 1923 that he was already ‘a very outstanding artist, and one of the first in his field’, despite his youth.² In 1929, shortly after he finished studying, he became one of twenty teachers at the Städtische Volks- und Jugendmusikschule Süd in Neukölln, a suburb of Berlin. He continued to teach there, alongside Paul Hindemith, until 1933.

By this time, he had married a Dutch medical student, Ada Weevers, and they had a baby daughter, Cornelia, always known as Corrie. But their domestic happiness

¹ Review in the *Pesti Napló*, Budapest, 12 December 1923.

² Schreker’s letter of recommendation, 5 November 1923, in the possession of the Hermann family.

coincided with Hitler's rise to power, and it became increasingly clear that Hermann's Jewishness would make life impossible for the family. They left Berlin for Ada's family summer home in Oudorp, in south-west Holland, as they did every summer. At this point, only two of Hermann's compositions had been published. He had played his works with his friends, and performed his duos with Székely, but in the midst of all the performances and the international touring, there had been no time and no obvious necessity to publish his manuscripts. They left Berlin in the summer of 1933 with one-year-old Corrie, Hermann's cello and whatever else they could salvage from their apartment. But in the hurry to leave, it seems that many of Hermann's manuscript compositions were probably lost. He may have planned to return, but it was not to be. That summer, Ada, swimming in the sea with friends, was caught in a rip tide, and by the time she was rescued, she had inhaled so much water that she never fully recovered; she died of pneumonia shortly after. At what should have been the height of his brilliant career, Hermann suddenly found himself homeless, widowed and facing increasing anti-Semitism. Leaving his daughter with Ada's sister for her safety, he moved to Brussels to perform as chamber musician and soloist.

The peripatetic life he was forced to lead means that he is missing even from periods of his own story, as he floated from one country to another, in and out of history, moving between nationalities and languages. Among the purposes of his move to Brussels was to take up the position of cellist with the Gertler Quartet, which was based there, although whenever he could, he continued to play with Székely.

In 1936 Hermann decided to leave Brussels and move to Paris, believing conditions in France were better for Jewish musicians, and hoping that he might be able to settle there. Corrie remembers his visits to her in Holland as joyful, full of laughter and games. Her last memories of her father are from the summer of 1939. After that point, the borders between countries were closed when war was declared across Europe.

The last public record of Hermann dates from February 1940, in an article about Parisian musical life in the daily *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (an influential Rotterdam-based liberal newspaper): Hermann had given an excellent performance of

Milhaud's Cello Concerto in the Salle Cortot.³ Thereafter he seems to have withdrawn from performance, but with nothing to occupy his time other than composition and practice, he decided to volunteer to join the French army as part of one of the regiments of Marching Overseas Volunteers – a varied assortment of men from every nationality, who had volunteered to bolster the French war effort. Taking little else but his cello, he left Paris for the comparative safety of the Zone Libre around Toulouse, one of a stream of refugees fleeing south. He became one of around 15,000 internationals living in France who were trained in a military academy established for the purpose at Le Barcarès, a tiny seaside town near Perpignan. In the family photo album, there is a picture of Hermann in uniform, standing on a sandy beach by army huts. It was taken on his very first day in the army, and his hands are clasped unmilitarily together, his weight on one leg like a slightly awkward civilian.

Hermann kept a war diary, written in Hungarian. He never mentions his family or other names; he doesn't write about his past. On occasion, he writes in code: for example, 'we often play here, but I do not play' was intended to communicate that there was fighting around him, but that he was not part of it. It is a precious document, a rare record of his voice and impressions. Beautifully written, elegant, understated and acutely observational, it documents the mayhem as his regiment, only semi-trained, were ordered up to the front line to confront the German army, and almost immediately beaten back. But alongside boredom, confusion and terror under fire, Hermann records the moments of music. The platoon had a violin and harmonica when mobilised from Le Barcarès, an indication that it was intended to be a marching band. He delighted in the musical expression of the different nationalities that made up his regiment. He watched as the Spanish soldiers would pass the time during lengthy train stops or quiet moments in the evenings by forming a ring around one man, and dancing around him, clapping and stamping. Hermann listened to the men singing in their native languages, captivated by the peculiarly distinctive timbre of the high tenor voices of the Russian soldiers.

³ That is, Milhaud's Cello Concerto No. 1, Op. 136, of 1934. The Second Cello Concerto, Op. 255, dates from 1945.

His time in the army came to an abrupt end when France fell to the Germans, and his regiment was disbanded. He returned to the house at Beaussiet where Ada's relatives lived, between the villages of Monghuilhem and Toujouse, to the east of Mont-de-Marsan in south-western France, and took shelter there. But unable to make a living, and frustrated with life in hiding, he moved to the larger city of Toulouse and acquired some cello pupils. The last surviving photographs of him show him in and around the streets of Toulouse. He is smiling for the camera, but with an unmistakable air of sadness. He managed to escape detection for two more years, but one sunny afternoon in April 1944 he left his cello in his apartment, and decided to risk walking into the streets of the city. He was caught up in a mass street arrest. The Gestapo demanded to see his papers, and suspected that they were false. He was apprehended, herded up with other prisoners and taken by train to the Drancy concentration camp on the outskirts of Paris.

Nearly 67,500 French, Polish and German Jews were held there between 1942 and 1944, awaiting their deportation to the death camps in Poland or further East. Fewer than 2,000 of those who were interned in Drancy survived the war. It had been built as a housing complex and stadium, but the structure had not been finished because of the intervention of the war. The rooms still had piping lying around, loose wires and openings where the windows were supposed to have been. There was straw scattered on the concrete floors, hardly any facilities for washing – hundreds of prisoners shared a trough with a trickle of water. Hermann was surrounded by watchtowers, and half starved. Yet the inhabitants of Drancy were so close to civilisation that they could almost shout down to the free Parisians going about their lives, but the barbed wire and the guards at the entrance marked the division between two different worlds.

Somehow, Hermann had managed to scribble a note on a scrap of paper and gave it to someone before the train left Toulouse. Against some odds, the note found its way to Ada's relatives near Toujouse. It told them that he had been captured, but that his cello was left, sealed in his apartment by the Gestapo. They managed to break into his flat, swap the valuable Gagliano cello for a worthless student instrument, squeezing them

both through a tiny window under cover of darkness, and escaping by bicycle, all the time in danger of arrest.

Hermann was not as lucky as his cello. Between 1942 and 1944, 79 trains, long snakes of cattle-trucks, packed with hundreds of Jewish children and adults, left Bobigny station, near Drancy. On 15 May 1944, it was Hermann's turn. He was to be part of the train that was to become known as the notorious 'Transport 73', one of 878 men who were crowded into the trucks for five days without food and water. They were heading not for Auschwitz but for Kaunas in Lithuania, and finally for Estonia, intended as slave labour. Most were sent to the *Devintas Fortas* ('Ninth Fort'), a prison outside Kaunas, a site of mass murder, and they perished there. Between 200 and 300 of the convoy went on to Patarei Prison in Tallinn, Estonia, but there is no record of their fate. Of the 878 who left Drancy, only 22 survived. Hermann was not among them.

If the facts of his life had been different, Hermann's works would be well known, programmed in chamber-music festivals and recitals perhaps as frequently as those of Bartók or Kodály. Seventy years later than it should have been, as his works are recorded for the first time, Hermann emerges as a strangely powerful presence. His music is fiendishly difficult, full of rhythm and vivacity, with the earthy vigour and driving motor rhythms of Bartók, it, too, with the melodic contours of Hungarian folk-music, and all its haunting simplicity and nostalgia. Hermann was a composer who thought in multiple parts – even his writing for solo instruments is often chordal, with *pizzicati* and multiple strings played simultaneously. His was a mind that was full of colour, expansive and generous. One instrument simply isn't enough for him.

Every work speaks of a man whose own technique was formidable. His instrument was an opportunity, not a barrier. He had mastered the cello to such a degree that he could write some of the most difficult music in the repertoire for himself and Székely. And few cellists can follow his example. The Second Duo, for instance, is simply bursting with exuberance – opening [\[1\]](#) with a flash of confident chords, cello and violin working in a spectacular partnership, sometimes in unison, other times supporting each other, but with the absolute synthesis of understanding and intention, energy and brilliance, that characterised Hermann and Székely themselves.

In the early 1990s, decades after her father's death, Pál's daughter, Corrie Hermann, visited Székely. He was 90 years old, and quite deaf, but had forgotten nothing of his time as Hermann's dearest friend, and musical partner. He took a while to realise that the lady in front of him had been the little girl he had known in the 1930s and 1940s. She asked him about what he remembered of her father. He smiled, and thought for a moment – then: 'He always took life *lightly*'. He used the Dutch word 'vlot', carefully and deliberately chosen. Székely, just like Hermann, had married a Dutch woman and was fluent in Dutch. There's no direct equivalent in English. It is something like floating, but not aimless drifting, more an easygoing energy: talkative, relaxed but vivacious. A lightness, but an energetic lightness. The essayist Alexander Pope once wrote: 'True ease in writing comes from Art, not Chance, As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.'⁴ Hermann's playing, and his compositions, both deeply informed by technique and craftsmanship, were 'vlot'. They danced.

The more I write about 'great' figures in music and literature, the more I see how easy it is for those who are equally deserving to fall through the cracks of history. Hermann was famous in his lifetime. He is now entirely forgotten, but as I learnt more about his story, working with his daughter and grandson, who were unendingly generous with their time, I became convinced that here was a man who deserves the respect and attention of later generations. I hope that in some small way my work on him can help restore his reputation, if not ever repair the damage done to him and his family in 1944. But ultimately his music speaks for itself, and it is only through recordings like this one that one can truly understand what we've been missing for the last 70 years.

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⁴ Alexander Pope, in his 'Essay on Criticism', 1721.

PÁL HERMANN IN SOLO, DUO AND TRIO

by Martin Anderson

The earliest work on this recording, the ‘Suite’ for solo violin, written in 1919, is a staggering achievement for a seventeen-year-old composer. The inverted commas are required because the score bears no title; Hermann may have thought of it as a sonata. In all likelihood, the work was composed for his student friend Zoltán Székely – and, if so, it is a fine testament to Székely’s skills, since it is a work of fearsome difficulty. One wonders whether Bartók heard it in a student performance at the Academy in Budapest and whether he recalled it when, in 1943, Menuhin commissioned a sonata for solo violin from him. Thoughts of Hermann might have crossed Bartók’s mind a few years earlier when he followed Hermann’s example by dedicating his (Second⁵) Violin Concerto of 1937–38 to Székely.

The five movements employ *scordatura*: the strings of the opening ‘Bevezető’ (‘Introduction’), ‘Kis valcer’ (‘Little Waltz’) and central Scherzo are tuned to E, A, C sharp and G, the *Lento* to E, C, D and G and the concluding ‘Kis burleszk’ (‘Little Burlesque’) to E, C flat, D and G (violin strings are normally tuned a perfect fifth apart, to E, A, D and G, in descending order). The Introduction, marked *Adagio rubato* [4], begins deceptively with a rising and falling figure, before a sequence of quadruple- and double-stopped chords makes its virtuosic ambitions clear; a series of chromatic figures over a drone also leaves little doubt that Hermann shared Kodály’s and Bartók’s obligation to Hungarian folk-music. The lopsided ‘Little Waltz’ [5] is laid out on two staves, the upper one labelled ‘Jobbkéz’ (‘Right hand’) and the lower ‘Balkéz pizz.’ (‘Left hand pizz.’) and the piece proceeds with the pulses in the two hands seemingly pulling in different directions. It’s with the Scherzo [6]

⁵ Bartók’s First Violin Concerto was composed in 1907–8 but published only in 1956, after his death, and premiered in 1958.

that Hermann really raises the stakes. Marked *Presto (possibile)*, it sets off on a wild run of double stops, pauses for what one might consider the ghost of a trio section, which ends with a reminiscence, probably accidental, of a moment in Kodály's Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 8 – written in 1915 and first performed (in public, at least) only a year before Hermann's Suite – and then hits the road at speed once more, this time – formidably – with the double stops as *pizzicati*. The listless *Lento* [7] is again laid out on two staves, initially allowing its two lines to proceed independently, though the lower one is later confined to left-hand *pizzicato* once again; a ruffle of demisemiquavers in the middle of the movement, like a gust of wind over a lake, is the only disturbance felt in this uneasy nocturne. The 'Little Burlesque' – like the 'Little Waltz', of telegram brevity – is in the unusual time-signature of $\frac{5}{8}$.¹ It again asks for *arco* over left-hand *pizzicato*, skittering into a series of chromatic double stops before a burst of insistent *pizzicati* bring in a rising and falling figure, still *pizzicato*, that sounds like someone trying to tiptoe out of a room.

The model for Hermann's first duo for violin and cello – the manuscript of which bears an end-date of 25 May 1920 – looms large: the Duo, Op. 7, by Kodály (1914), although he and Székely are bound to have explored some of the hundreds of exemplars by earlier composers (Haydn, Hoffmeister, Reicha, Servais, Stamitz, Tartini and Viotti among them) as they built up their concert repertoire. The score bears the simple title 'Vonós kettes' – 'String Duo'.

This suite-like First Duo is far more modest than the ambitious Second, which was to follow a decade later, and is less than half its length. It begins with a death-haunted *Lento* [11] that foreshadows the music that Shostakovich was to write half a century later. A violin trill on A flat ends the first movement and is then picked up by the second movement [12], which is marked *Allegro giocoso*, but its tick-tock patterns are nervous

¹ Quintuple metre is common in folk-music around the world but before the nineteenth century was rare in western classical music – to the point where Handel employs two passages of $\frac{5}{8}$ in his opera *Orlando* to portray the madness of its eponymous hero. No. 20 of the *Trente-Six Fugues* of the Czech-born Antoine Reicha (1770–1836) is cast in $\frac{5}{8}$. These fugues were written from the mid-1790s onwards and published in 1803; some of them use polyrhythms. In a symphony of c. 1808 Reicha used $\frac{5}{8}$ to combine scherzo and finale.

rather than playful, and before long it slinks into silence. The third-movement *Andante* [13] again explores late-Shostakovich territory, the harmony static, the melodic writing strikingly oblique. The concluding *Allegretto* [14] maintains the epigrammatic obliquity, with the two instruments bouncing shapes off each other; eventually, the music gives up any attempt at melody and ticks to its close with a sequence of triplet chords.

Hermann's String Trio, written in 1921, is cast in a single movement, initially marked *Allegro moderato* [15]. It opens with the violin spinning out a folk-like melody over a rocking figure in the viola and an erratic, chromatic bass line in the cello; the upper instruments then swap roles as the music unfolds. A unison statement by viola and cello is taken up by the violin, until all three instruments rush up their register to launch an episode in which a dance from the violin is supported by multiple-stopped chords, on and off the beat, by the other two instruments. Another unison passage in violin and viola darkens the mood, but a lyrical and *echt*-Hungarian melody in the viola then enjoys a dance of its own before a passage in gambolling triplets sets up a yearning melody high in the violin, supported by rolling demisemiquavers in the viola and a stable cello bass. All the instruments then settle into a period of rhapsodical calm before the viola joins the violin in an increasingly passionate figure. A rush up the register relaunches the earlier violin dance before the writing takes on a strong chordal character in the dash into the coda.

The two *Invenzioni a tre voci* date from 1922, a year later. The first, a fugal *Andante* [9], is end-dated '1922-I-25 Berlin' and the second, *Molto allegro*, six days later: '31-I-1922 Berlin'. They are brief but elegant studies in Bachian counterpoint, perhaps composed as part of his coursework at the Hochschule für Musik. There is, to be sure, little evidence of Hermann's Hungarian origins in these two miniatures – indeed, their 'German' character may have been deliberately intended to please his professors – but they do provide evidence of the craft that underlaid his more original compositions.

As with Hermann's String Trio, his Piano Trio, composed in 1924, is cast in a single span, though one almost twice the length. It seems fair to assume that it was written for the trio he and Székely had formed with the pianist Géza Frid (1904–89) – but research

into Hermann's life and work is still in its infancy, and such assertions must remain supposition until the facts of such matters are unearthed – if they ever are.

The Piano Trio [16] sets off in a calm but uneasy *Andante tranquillo*, with held piano chords underpinning the strings as they unfold a fugal texture, which is then developed in an extensive discussion – and a highly chromatic one: it was to be two years before Schoenberg returned to Berlin, but Hermann already knew him personally, since his first performance outside Hungary had come in 1920, when he performed Kodály's Sonata for Solo Cello at a private concert in Schoenberg's Vienna home.² This discussion – almost half the entire work – crests in high string lines over wide arpeggiated chords in the piano, and it triggers the first change of pace. But the agitated passage which follows is soon cut off by two angry *ff* chords, and the slow tread of the opening resumes, this time *Andante moderato*. The higher writing for the strings occasionally calls to mind Bartók's two *Rhapsodies* for violin and piano or orchestra – except that the first of them would not be composed for another two years; in any case, in the remaining stretches of the Trio it is Hermann's restraint that is the more remarkable: the passion slowly drains from the music, and it sinks to a desolate close.

By the time, in 1929, that Herman began his second duo for violin and cello, another important model was available: the Sonata (1920–22) by Maurice Ravel; whether he knew the more recent Duo by Erwin Schulhoff (published by Universal in 1926) is not yet known (and may never be). In the period of the composition of this Second Duo, Hermann's life was that of the travelling virtuoso: in spring 1930, he returned to England for a further series of concerts, and on 15 March he and Székely gave the premiere of this Second Duo, in the Wigmore Hall. In December they performed Kodály's Duo, Op. 7, at the Concertgebouw, in its Dutch premiere, a performance praised by the *Algemeen Handelsblad*: 'Two artists with the purest approach and mastery, [...] two rhapsodists who seemed to improvise in their perfect, subtle interaction'.³

² In August 1923, Kodály's Op. 8 Sonata also provided Hermann's international breakthrough, when he performed it in Salzburg, at a concert of the International Society for Contemporary Music.

³ 'H.R.' (Herman Rutters), 'Amsterd. Kunstkring "Voor Allen". Een werk van Kodály', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 23 December 1930.

At almost twenty minutes in duration, the three movements of this later Duo are more than double the four of the First, and the work as a whole sits much more obviously downstream from the Kodály Duo than the elliptical First. The *Allegro* [1] of No. 1 is buoyant and outward-going, its material tumbling forward in vernal enthusiasm – and it is irreducibly Hungarian. The hint of a dance provides the basis of a section which leads to the first change of pace: the dynamic quieters to *pp*, but out of the hushed reflection rocking cello chords relaunch the opening material, which is then picked up by the violin. Gradually the energy runs down, and the movement gently takes its leave. The central *Andante* [2] is still infected by the spirit of dance: the underlying pulse may be slow, but the frequent decoration of the melodic line and its constant subdivision into short note-values means that the music never really comes to rest. The closing *Allegro giocoso* [3] – part rondo, part variations – launches into a whirling dance, the two instruments playing the material off against each other in a dazzling display of rapid-fire counterpoint and virtuoso string technique. A *Meno mosso* central section lowers the temperature briefly and transforms the material that opened the movement into a brief series of little dances. The ‘rondo’ returns twice, each time finding itself transformed by the kaleidoscopic variety that Hermann brings to his textures, and the excitement rises as the music sprints, *fff*, to its dervish conclusion.

Martin Anderson runs Toccata Classics and publishes books on classical music as Toccata Press; he also writes about music in various publications in Britain and abroad, not least Fanfare in the USA, Klassisk Musikk magasin in Norway and Finnish Music Quarterly. His degree (from the University of St Andrews) was in mediaeval French and German, and thereafter he worked in economics for twenty years, in London and Paris, at the free-market Institute of Economic Affairs and intergovernmental Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. His interest in Nordic and Baltic composers led to the Heino Eller Award for services to Estonian music in 2017.

Marko Komonko was born into a family of prominent musicians and is one of the most accomplished violinists in Ukraine. His career began at the age of seven, when he appeared as soloist with the Donetsk Philharmonic Orchestra; since then his performances have attracted much attention from audiences around the world. He has been invited to play as a soloist with virtually every orchestra in Ukraine. As well as his appearances in Ukraine, Lithuania, Moldavia, Poland and Russia, he has also performed throughout western Europe, South America, Korea and Japan, appearing as both soloist with orchestras and in recital.

After initial tutelage from his father, he continued his studies, during the period 1984 to 1994, with Svetlana Bezrodnaya, Zoya Mahtina and Maya Glezarova at the Central Music School and Moscow Conservatoire. While he was still a student at the Central Music School in Moscow, Russian and Ukrainian television and radio already recognised his exceptional talent and made programmes presenting his accomplishments. He was a prize-winner of various competitions, including the Young Tchaikovsky International Competition in 1992. After completing his early studies in Moscow, he continued his training in London, receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance from the Royal College of Music under the guidance of Felix Andrievsky. He won many awards throughout the United Kingdom, including the Ellerman Foundation, Croydon Symphony Soloist Award, Craxton Memorial Trust, Isolde Menge Prize and London Oratory International Competition, which supported his study in London and gave him numerous opportunities to perform as a soloist. His concert tour with the Kent Symphony Orchestra to Argentina was loudly acclaimed, and his frequent appearances with British orchestras secured his position as a leading violinist in England. In 1997 he became a member of Live Music Now in London, and his duo concerts with his pianist brother were highly regarded. In 1999 he moved to Munich to study with Olga Voitova and won the First Prize of the Musikforderpreis in the Gasteig. In October 2003 he won Second Prize in the Cologne International Violin



Photograph: Alexander Mokrytsky

Competition; and in 2005, having studied with Viktor Tretyakov at the Hochschule in Cologne, he graduated with highest marks.

In 2000 he was awarded the Title of 'Honoured Artist' of Ukraine in recognition of his contributions to the musical life of the country. A concert in Kyiv was recognised as the 'most perfect concert of the 2000 season'. The 2004–5 season had numerous successful duo collaborations with the pianist Svetlana Karpunkina. In 2005–14 he held the position of Co-Principal First Violin in the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, frequently serving as Leader, Co-Leader and as soloist on numerous occasions. In September 2014 he returned to Ukraine to resume his solo career. Soon thereafter he was awarded the position of Soloist-Concertmaster of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, Lviv. During this period, he has continued to pursue his passion for teaching, having been invited to teach at the National Music Academy and the Solomiya Krushelnyska Specialised Music School in Lviv. In addition, he has often served on the juries of international competitions in Europe.

Theodore Kuchar graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of Robert Vernon, Principal Violist of The Cleveland Orchestra. He was awarded the Paul Fromm Fellowship from the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, and was subsequently reinvited for the following summer. He continues to devote several periods annually to one of his most serious passions, the performance of chamber music and has been a participant at major international festivals, including Kuhmo, Lockenhaus, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music and the Nevada Chamber Music Festival. His colleagues have included Sergei Babayan, Noah Bendix-Balgley, James Buswell, Martin Chalifour, Sarah Chang, Lynn Harrell, Alexander Ivashkin, Robert Levin, Truls Mørk, Irina Schnittke and Thomas Zehetmair. In 1994, with Oleh Krysa and



Photograph: Alexander Mokrytskyi

Alexander Ivashkin, he took part in the world premiere of Penderecki's String Trio in New York City. He has appeared as violist on the Naxos label in works by Alfred Schnittke (with Irina Schnittke and Mark Lubotsky, a recording awarded the BBC 'CD of the Year' award for 2002), Bohuslav Martinů and Walter Piston. This last recording was selected as the Chamber Music America/WQXR 'Record of the Year' for 2001.

He is also the most frequently recorded conductor of his generation and appears on over 130 albums for the Naxos, Brilliant Classics, Ondine, Marco Polo and Toccata Classics labels. He has served as the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of two of Europe's leading orchestras, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra (formerly the Czech Radio Orchestra), while also serving as the Principal Conductor of the Slovak National Symphony Orchestra and Slovak Sinfonietta. In the 2008–9 season he began his tenure as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela and before that served as Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra in Brisbane. In addition to his conducting activities he has served as the Artistic Director of two of the world's most important chamber-music festivals, The Australian Festival of Chamber Music (1991–2007) and the Nevada Chamber Music Festival (2003–18). He presently serves as the Artistic Advisor and Principal Guest Conductor of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, Lviv. His longest titled affiliation and relationship is with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, of which he was appointed the General Director and Principal Conductor in 1994. In September 2018 he commenced a relationship with the National Opera and Ballet of Ukraine. He has a special relationship, totalling over 300 performances, with the Finnish National Opera and Ballet. The soloists with whom he has worked include Joshua Bell, Joseph Calleja, Sarah Chang, Lynn Harrell, Sir James Galway, Shlomo Mintz, Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Itzhak Perlman, Mstislav Rostropovich and Frederica von Stade.

Denys Lytvynenko – principal cellist in the Lviv Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, cellist of the Phoenix String Quartet and a composer – gives recitals as soloist and chamber musician in Ukraine and abroad. He studied at the Lviv Specialised Music School (1992–2003) under Eugene Spitzer and Nadia Kvyk before graduating in 2008 from the M. Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy, where he studied under Yuriy Lanyuk. He started his concert life while still a student; he has received many awards, among them the first prize of the Ukrainian National Cello and Viola Competition and second prize of the Ukrainian National Competition of Chamber Orchestras and Quartets. Internationally, he took part in masterclasses (with Tomas Stral) and a number of festivals.

He began playing with the Lviv National Philharmonic while still a student, soon becoming principal cellist of the K&K Philharmoniker Orchestra, which gave its first concert in Lviv, and he has since performed with orchestras in Austria, German, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and elsewhere. Since 2014 he has been principal cellist of the Lviv National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, and has worked with such conductors as Fedor Glushenko, Misha Katz, Theodore Kuchar, Georg Kugi, Shungo Moriama, Volodymyr Sirenko and Ilya Stupel.

As a member of the Phoenix String Quartet he has appeared in various multicultural projects, charity events and important international festivals, in Estonia, Germany, Japan, Poland, Switzerland, the USA and other countries. A very important part of the work of the Quartet is to popularise Ukrainian music, to bring to life and rediscover works by Ukrainian composers. He has recorded around a hundred solo and chamber pieces by contemporary composers in collaboration with KLK New Music, many of them premieres. He has also released a number of recordings with Aldebaran Editions.



Photograph: Alexander Mokrytskyi

The pianist **Myroslav Dragan** studied at the Solomiya Krushelnytska Lviv Secondary Specialised Music Boarding School and Mykola Lysenko Lviv State Conservatoire, where he was taught by Lydia Krykh. There he finished his graduate studies, in the class of Mariya Krykh. He was a laureate of the 'Golden Autumn' International Competition for Chamber-Music Performance in Khmelnytsky, Ukraine, and the Podillya 'JazzFest' in 2011. He now works in the Mykola Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy.

He often embarks on concert tours in Ukraine and abroad (Germany, Poland, Switzerland) and is a frequent participant in such music festivals as the Kyiv Music Fest, Premieres of the Season (also in Kyiv), Contrasts and Virtuosi (both in Lviv), the Stravinsky Festival (Lutsk), Colours of Music (Vinnytsya) and Two Days and Two Nights (Odessa). He has performed a range of modern Ukrainian composers, playing music by such figures as Hanna Havrylets', Oleksandr Kozarenko, Yuri Laniuk, Roman Simovych, Ihor Sonevtytsky and Yevhen Stankovych, as well as giving the local premieres of works by Crumb, Ligeti, Rihm, Takemitsu and others. The musicians with whom he has worked include the Armenian cellist Medea Abrahamian, the US-based Ukrainian cellist Nazar Dzhuryyn, the Romanian violinist Liviu Prunaru, the Ukrainian operatic bass Andriy Shkurhan and the UK-based Ukrainian violist Andriy Viytovych. He has made a number of recordings, among them Mykola Lysenko's song-cycles *Music for the Kobzar Player*, and took part in a recording of Honegger's oratorio *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* in Paris in 2005. In 2009 he was awarded the Lyudkevych Regional Prize for his piano-duo concerts with Oksana Rapita.



Photograph: Alexander Mokrytsky



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Duo (No. 2) for violin and cello (1929–30)	19:17
1 I <i>Allegro</i>	7:57
2 II <i>Andante</i>	4:12
3 III <i>Allegro giocoso</i>	7:08
'Suite' for solo violin (1919)*	11:23
4 I Introduction: <i>Adagio rubato</i>	2:06
5 II Little Waltz	1:22
6 III Scherzo: <i>Presto (possibile)</i>	2:58
7 IV <i>Lento</i>	3:06
8 V Little Burlesque: <i>Allegretto</i>	1:51
<i>Invenzioni a tre voci</i> (1922)*	2:25
9 No. 1 <i>Andante</i>	1:08
10 No. 2 <i>Molto allegro</i>	1:17
Duo (No. 1) for violin and cello (1920)*	8:53
11 I <i>Lento</i>	3:09
12 II <i>Allegro giocoso</i>	1:25
13 III <i>Andante</i>	2:41
14 IV <i>Allegretto</i>	1:38
String Trio (1921)	7:50
15 <i>Allegro moderato</i>	
Piano Trio (1924)	12:09
16 <i>Andante tranquillo</i>	
Marko Komonko, violin	TT 62:00
Theodore Kuchar, viola 9–10 15	
Denys Lytvynenko, cello 1–3 9–16	
Myroslav Drahan, piano 16	

*FIRST RECORDINGS