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## AN EASTERN TRIP

Sabine Weyer piano  
Dimitri Maslennikov cello

RÓZSA | KÓDALY | PROKOFIEV | SHCHEDRIN



# AN EASTERN TRIP

	<b>M. RÓZSA DUO Op.8 FOR CELLO AND PIANO</b>	(18'08)
1	Allegro risoluto ed energico	6'33
2	Tema con variazioni	12'47
	<b>Z. KÓDÁLY SONATA Op.4 FOR CELLO AND PIANO</b>	(20'06)
3	Fantasia	10'05
4	Allegro con spirito	10'01
	<b>S. PROKOFIEV SONATA Op.119 FOR CELLO AND PIANO</b>	(24'06)
5	Andante grave	11'08
6	Moderato	5'11
7	Allegro ma non troppo	8'41
8	<b>R. SHCHEDRIN IN THE STYLE OF ALBÉNIZ</b>	3'42

*Total playing time: 65'62*

Producer: Marc Berdugo  
Engineer: Marc Berdugo (mixing engineer Denis Caribaux)  
Venue: Marc Berdugo Studio  
Recording Dates: 11–14 April 2024  
Photographer: Marc Berdugo  
Piano: Bösendorfer 3/4  
Violoncello: Nicolò Gagliano, Naples 1770  
Executive producer: Gunnar Strømsholm

Dimitri Maslennikov and Sabine Weyer are managed by Gunnar Management Ltd.  
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This unique programme of four works for cello and piano by significant twentieth-century composers is a reflection of the greater interest in writing for the cello that the inspiration of two highly gifted instrumentalists was to have during that period. For many music-lovers, the major cello virtuosos of the century were Pablo Casals and Mstislav Rostropovich, each of whom dominated the instrument in their respective halves of the century. However, one ought not to assume that all the music in our collection was invariably written with those artists in mind. With one exception, it was not – but there is no doubt that the international careers of both of these great masters of the cello were such that they consistently and equally inspired composers of all kinds, as well as students and professionals of the instrument – thereby raising the importance of the instrument to a higher level in public appreciation than was previously the case, and bringing to attention music that would otherwise have remained largely unknown.

Of course, great music for the cello had appeared throughout the nineteenth-century, led by the magnificent chamber-music repertoire of Beethoven, whose matchless series of Sonatas for cello and piano were soon to be followed, somewhat surprisingly, by Chopin, with Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák and Tchaikovsky adding significantly to the burgeoning repertoire which, by the end of the century, was to contain a clutch of great chamber-music and orchestral masterpieces upon which the inspirational international careers of both Casals and Rostropovich would be founded.

Our collection of twentieth-century music for cello and piano begins with a relatively early work by the Hungarian-born Miklos Rózsa, his *Duo Op.8 for Cello and Piano*, which was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig in 1932. Born in Budapest twenty-five years earlier, Rózsa's considerable musical gifts were soon apparent to his wealthy family, who encouraged his natural instincts as a burgeoning composer; but instead of following the folk-music inspiration to which his older compatriots Bartók and Kodály had been drawn (which music his wealthy father admired), the young Rózsa first began scientific studies in Leipzig, before not long after transferring to music at the great city's Conservatoire, in which compositional discipline he soon excelled.

Among Miklos Rózsa's earliest completed works is a Rhapsody for cello and orchestra, his Opus 3, which was composed in 1929 – the year of his graduation *cum laude*. His name soon became familiar across the artistic life of the greatly significant musically-historical city, as well as in other German cities; among the works he composed in Leipzig his initial chamber music is distinguished by the *Duo Op.8 for Cello and Piano*, which was written for – and dedicated ('with adoration') to – Julius Kengel, who was at that time the leading cellist in Leipzig (Kengel had been principal cellist of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and was also professor of the instrument at the city's Conservatoire).

Rózsa's Duo is in two movements. It is laid out as a sturdy sonata-style *Allegro risoluto ed energico*, followed by a set of theme and variations. This 'semi-classical' layout of the work is in marked contrast to the rhapsodic (in every

sense) conception of the composer's Opus 3, and reveals mastery of more tightly-composed structuralisation which is impressive.

The first movement opens with a somewhat lengthy four-bar theme whose tonal ambiguity affords fluid modulations to various keys – a sturdily energetic idea which is contrasted by a theme first heard on the piano, accompanied by pizzicato cello phrases. This 'classical' exposition is followed by a quasi-rhapsodic development in which Rózsa's rich individuality is given full rein. The development of both themes is intensely compelling, the texture throughout being richly varied, before a basically 'classical' recapitulation ends the discussion. This 'classical' movement is followed by a longer set of ten variations on a quasi-Hungarian theme of folk-like character, not unlike the character of the first movement's second subject. The theme, first heard unaccompanied, is subtly of Hungarian folk character – tonally oscillating between C major and the Dorian mode – which variously propels this remarkably original music on its path. The continuous variations flow freely, each displaying individual character, drawing the listener in, until the final statement of the theme at last reveals the underlying tonal base of C – and Rózsa's subtle and masterly score is over.

Music for cello appeared in the early published music of fellow-Hungarian Zoltán Kodály, twenty-five years Rózsa's senior. The older man's devotion to the collection and influence of Hungarian folk-music, along with that of his friend and contemporary, Béla Bartók, was profound and lifelong. Kodály's early cello music includes three works – the Sonata with piano (in this collection) a Duo for violin

and cello, and the magnificent Sonata for solo cello, composed between 1910–15.

Kodály's *Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op.4*, dates from 1910 (when it was premiered by Jenő Kerpely and Béla Bartók), and, as Rózsa's Sonata was later to emulate, is in two movements, although the work was originally intended to be in three. The nature of the final version is essentially rhapsodic, reflecting what has been termed as 'old Hungarian' in respect of thematic and harmonic characteristics. The cello's melodic line is consistently fully flowing with a wealth of folk-inspired lyrical and varied expression.

Although the melodic and harmonic material throughout is original, the influence of what has been termed as 'old Hungarian' musical language can be discerned. The first movement, *Fantasia*, is a subtle amalgamation of folk-based thematicism and relatively modern (for the time) harmony – here is free expression, at all times subtly underpinned by a subtly organic structure. Kodály claimed that Beethoven inspired the stamping main theme of the second movement, but to most ears it retains a strong feel of Hungarian folk dances and melodies. In the closing paragraphs, the return of the opening *Fantasia* brings a wholly organic conclusion to a remarkably original and consistently appealing early masterwork.

We have mentioned the two greatest cellists of the twentieth-century – Casals and Rostropovich – and their dual artistry in raising the public acceptance of the instrument: in Prokofiev's *Sonata in C major for Cello and Piano* of 1949

we encounter one of the first masterpieces to have been directly inspired by, and dedicated to, the younger Russian master, who, at that time, was just 22 years old.

The years 1948–50 proved to be a troubled period for all Soviet composers. Early in February, 1948, the notorious Zhdanov Decree had been issued on Stalin's orders, accusing almost all Soviet artists (including composers) of following Western ideals. Hardly anyone was spared – including Prokofiev, who, despite the popular success of *Peter and the Wolf* and the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, suffered thereafter by being almost totally ignored, his music unofficially withdrawn from concerts and radio programmes. He also became quite ill.

However, it so happened that early in 1949 he had attended a recital in which played a new Cello Sonata by Miaskovsky, partnered by Sviatoslav Richter. Prokofiev was so moved by Rostropovich's playing that he at once determined to write a new work for him. The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* – undoubtedly one of the composer's very finest chamber works – was the result. The Sonata was first performed in March 1950 by Rostropovich and Richter to the composer's profound satisfaction; indeed, so successful was this premiere that Prokofiev went on to compose for Rostropovich his Symphony-Concerto for cello and orchestra (Opus 125 – the premiere was conducted by Richter in 1952) and *Concertino for Cello and Orchestra* (Opus 132). The finale of this last work was unfinished at Prokofiev's death in March 1953 (the same day that Stalin died) and was brought to completion by Aram Khachaturian and Dmitri Kabalevsky.

Also left incomplete at Prokofiev's death was a Sonata for Solo Cello, only the first movement being virtually complete. It is quite clear, therefore, that from this late flowering of music for the instrument Prokofiev responded wholeheartedly to Rostropovich's inspired playing – and continued to be so inspired for the rest of his life. Whilst we will never know if outside circumstances infused the composition of the *Cello Sonata*, it is not difficult to sense the sombre mood in which the work opens as being reflective of Prokofiev's feelings at the time, in the wake of the notorious Zhdanov decree whereby much of the composer's music (as well as that of other contemporaries) was removed from concert programmes and broadcasts – the result of Zhdanov's preposterous condemnation of 'formalism'.

However, and aside from the contemporaneous public criticism almost all post-World War II Soviet art music, we can hear that the first movement of Prokofiev's *Cello Sonata* springs from a virtually consistent and deeply contemplative frame of mind, albeit one that is not without underlying strength and unreleased energy, with much of the deeply expressive writing set in the cello's lower, darker, register.

The second movement, although marked *Moderato*, is in the nature of a *scherzo*, a welcome change of tone after the first. Emotional relief finally arrives in the finale, which seems to breathe the truly clean fresh air of a Russian late Spring: in this uplifting movement, the inherent creative strength

of Prokofiev remains true to the positive nature of his character, the clarity of his art speaking to all listeners – whether from the east or west.

A younger contemporary of Prokofiev was Rodion Schedrin, who was born in Moscow in 1932 into a professional musical family. He studied composition with Nikolai Myaskovsky and later became a long-serving Chairman (1973–1990) of the Union of Russian Composers. Schedrin's music is notable for its immediacy and directness of expression, his most famous works being the *Carmen* ballet, based on Bizet's opera, five Concertos for Orchestra, as well as several works written for and dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich.

Schedrin often took existing music and refashioned it, as it were, in his own stylisations for later audiences and performing musicians. In 1973, Schedrin made a contemporaneous 'restyling' for violin and piano of the famous *Tango* No.2 from the Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz's Op.165 – which was originally composed in 1890, and soon become his most famous work: this 'new' version by Schedrin also became so well-known that it was additionally arranged for cello and piano by Walter Despalj some years later – in whichever form it is heard, this brilliantly evocative music fully reflects the soul of Spain, concluding our unique collection of twentieth-century music.

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## **Sabine Weyer** *piano*

Praised as 'one of the most important young pianists of today' by International Piano, Sabine Weyer showed an exceptional musical talent since her earliest childhood. Following her initial training at the Conservatoire of Esch-Alzette in Luxembourg, she studied at pianistic schools in France, Belgium, United Kingdom under the guidance of, amongst others, Bernard Lerouge (CRR Metz, France), Vassil Guenov (Belgium), Aleksandar Madzar (Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel, Belgium), Rustem Hayroudinoff (Royal Academy of Music, London, UK). Studying further under distinguished artists Paul Badura-Skoda, Oxana Yablonskaya, Aquiles delle Vigne to quote just a few, Sabine Weyer became a pianist showing 'a questing intellect in tandem with fearless technique' (Colin Clarke, International Piano March 2021).

Having developed a strong musical personality, characterised by a tremendous sensitivity and a deep curiosity for less-known jewels of the repertoire, Weyer regularly amazes her audiences with surprisingly interesting programs, featuring composers that are not so often played and yet deserve a much larger interest. As a result of this approach, her recent recording of piano works by Nikolai Miskovsky and Nicolas Bacri, gained huge media attention.

Her discography won numerous awards, such as the Pasticcio Award from ORF Austria, Supersonic Award by *Pizzicato*, Grand Frisson from *Audiophile* magazine etc and her albums have been nominated several times for the ICMA and Opus Klassik Prize in Germany.

Appearing on the world's most prestigious concert halls, Philharmonie Berlin, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Tonhalle Zürich, Philharmonie Am Gasteig München,

Salle Cortot Paris, Shanghai Concert Hall, the big hall of Moscow Conservatory, Royal Albert Hall, Konzerthaus Wien, Sabine Weyer is also regularly invited to international festivals and performs extensively with orchestras such as the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie (with whom she recorded 'A light in the dark' ), Sofia Soloists, Ukrainian National Philharmonic, Nuove Musiche, Orchestra of the Landestheater Trier and Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester, under conductors such as Erich Polz, Plamen Djouroff, Eric Lederhandler, Wouter Padberg and Daniel Raiskin.

Among her chamber music partners, Sabine has performed with Aleksey Semenenko, Pavel Vernikov, Svetlana Makarova, Alena Baeva, Gary Hoffman, Yury Revich, Mindaugas Backus and Julien Beaudiment.

Sabine Weyer has received outstanding reviews from *BBC Music Magazine*, *Fono Forum*, *Gramophone*, *International Piano*, *Pizzicato*, BBC Radio 3 and France Musique. Sabine has featured extensively in *International Piano* magazine, celebrating the release of her fifth CD *Mysteries*. Her recordings are regularly broadcast around the world on all major radio stations.

Since 2015 Sabine Weyer has been professor for piano at the Conservatoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, fulfilling her desire to pass on musical knowledge to younger generations. As a pedagogue, she has been invited to teach at masterclasses abroad including at the Scriabine Summer Academy in Italy, the Beijing Normal University in China and the European Summer Music Academy in Djakova/Kosovo.

## **Dimitri Maslennikov** *cello*

Dimitri Maslennikov began his musical studies at the age of five. At 11 years old, he won the International Soloists Competition in Moscow and the Czech International Competition in Prague. He was a winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition and the Rostropovitch Competition. At the age of 14, he received a three-year scholarship from the French government to study at the Paris Conservatory where he attained First Prize.

Dimitri Maslennikov has been invited by renowned orchestras such as Moscow Soloists (Yuri Bashmet), Moscow Virtuosos (Vladimir Spivakov), Russian Symphony Orchestra (Marc Gorenstein), Prague Radio Orchestra (Vladimir Valek), the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Giuseppe Sinopoli), Montreal Symphony Orchestra (Kent Nagano) and Strasburg Philharmonic Orchestra (Kirill Karabits).

He has been championed by maestro Christoph Eschenbach and has performed with the NDR Hamburg Orchestra, the Bamberger Symphoniker, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra, with whom he has made a 'live' recording.

Since very early on in his career, Dimitri Maslennikov has continuously been invited to prestigious festivals including Festival of Schleswig-Holstein, Colmar, Verbier and Ravinia in Chicago. He has played in prestigious venues such as the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Salle Pleyel in Paris, Philharmonie Berlin, Rudolfinum in Prague and Grand Hall in the Philharmonic in St. Petersburg.

Dimitri Maslennikov has also performed outstanding concerts for the United Nations and for the Queen of England.

In 2006, he recorded Dimitri Shostakovich's two cello concertos with the NDR Orchestra Hamburg under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach (Phoenix Editions - Naxos), an acclaimed recording by the international press. In 2008, he gave the world premiere of Marc-André Dalbavie's Cello Concerto with the Ensemble Intercontemporain at Miller Theater, Columbia University, New York.

In 2010, following numerous global performances, Dimitri Maslennikov recorded Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations* with the Deutsche Symphonie Orchestra conducted by Christoph Eschenbach; this recording earned him his acclaimed debut at the Berlin Philharmonic as well as the concerts at the Schleswig Holstein and Rheingau festivals. He has performed many concerts and recitals in France and abroad and made his magnificent China debut in 2012 with the Orchestra of National Center of the Performing Arts under the direction of Christoph Eschenbach; the same year, Dimitri began a fruitful collaboration with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Maestro Youry Temirkanov. In 2014 Dimitri toured Asia with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was given the title of Honorary Artistic Director of Guangzhou Opera.

Dimitri performed the European premiere of Dalbavie's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra with the Mozarteum Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Eschenbach at the Salzburg Festival.



## **Sabine Weyer** *piano*

Saluée comme “l’une des jeunes pianistes les plus importantes d’aujourd’hui” par l’International Piano Magazine, Sabine Weyer fait preuve d’un talent musical exceptionnel depuis sa plus tendre enfance. Après sa formation initiale au Conservatoire d’Esch-Alzette au Luxembourg, elle a étudié en France, en Belgique et au Royaume-Uni sous la direction, entre autres, de Bernard Lerouge (diplôme de perfectionnement au CRR Metz, France), Vassil Guenov (Belgique), Aleksandar Madzar (master en piano au Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel, Belgique), Rustem Hayroudinoff (Royal Academy of Music, Londres, Royaume-Uni). Forte des conseils d’éminents artistes tels que Paul Badura-Skoda, Oxana Yablonskaya, Aquiles delle Vigne, pour n’en citer que quelques-uns, Sabine Weyer est devenue une pianiste faisant preuve “d’un esprit de recherche en harmonie avec une technique époustouflante” (Colin Clarke, International Piano Magazine, mars 2021).

Ayant développé une forte personnalité musicale, caractérisée par une énorme sensibilité et une profonde curiosité pour les œuvres moins connues du répertoire, Sabine Weyer étonne régulièrement son public avec des programmes intelligents, mettant en lumière des compositeurs peu joués méritant un intérêt plus grand. Grâce à cette approche, son récent enregistrement d’œuvres pour piano de N. Miaskovsky et N. Bacri a suscité une énorme attention médiatique et a déclenché une vague d’enthousiasme dans la presse spécialisée (BBC Music Magazine, Fono Forum, Gramophone, International Piano Magazine, Pizzicato, BBC Radio 3, France Musique, etc.)

La discographie de Sabine Weyer a remporté de nombreux prix, tels que le Prix Pasticcio de l’ORF en Autriche, le Supersonic Award de Pizzicato, le Grand Frisson du magazine Audiophile etc. et ses albums ont été nommés plusieurs fois pour le prix ICMA et Opus Klassik en Allemagne.

Se produisant sur les scènes les plus prestigieuses du monde entier (Philharmonie Berlin, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Tonhalle Zürich, Philharmonie Am Gasteig München, Salle Cortot Paris, Shanghai Concert Hall, grande salle du Conservatoire de Moscou, Royal Albert Hall London, Konzerthaus Wien, etc. ), Sabine est aussi régulièrement invitée à des festivals internationaux et se produit souvent avec des orchestres tels que la Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie (pour l’enregistrement de “A light in the dark”), les Sofia Soloists, l’Ukrainian National Philharmonic, Nuove Musiche, l’Orchestre du Landestheater Trier, Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester etc, sous la direction de chefs tels que Erich Polz, Plamen Djouroff, Eric Lederhandler, Wouter Padberg, Daniel Raikin...

Parmi ses partenaires de musique de chambre figurent des musiciens célèbres tels que Aleksey Semenenko, Pavel Vernikov, Svetlana Makarova, Alena Baeva, Gary Hoffman, Yury Revich, Mindaugas Backus et Julien Beaudiment.

Depuis 2015, Sabine Weyer est professeur de piano au Conservatoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, réalisant ainsi son désir de transmettre le savoir musical aux jeunes générations. En tant que pédagogue, elle a été invitée à enseigner lors de masterclasses à l’étranger, notamment à l’Académie d’été Scriabine en Italie, à l’Université normale de Pékin en Chine et à l’Académie européenne de musique d’été à Djakova/Kosovo.

## **Dimitri Maslennikov** *cello*

Dimitri Maslennikov a commencé ses études musicales à l'âge de cinq ans. À 11 ans, il remporte le Concours international des solistes à Moscou et le Concours international tchèque à Prague. Il est également lauréat du Concours Tchaïkovski et du Concours Rostropovitch. A l'âge de 14 ans, il reçoit une bourse de trois ans du gouvernement français pour étudier au Conservatoire de Paris d'où il sort avec un Premier Prix à l'unanimité.

Dimitri Maslennikov a été invité par des orchestres de renom tels que les Solistes de Moscou (Yuri Bashmet), les Virtuoses de Moscou (Vladimir Spivakov), l'Orchestre symphonique russe (Marc Gorenstein), l'Orchestre de la Radio de Prague (Vladimir Valek), l'Orchestre philharmonique d'Israël (Giuseppe Sinopoli), l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (Kent Nagano), l'Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg (Kirill Karabits)...

Dimitri Maslennikov bénéficie d'un soutien important du maestro Christoph Eschenbach. Dimitri s'est produit avec le NDR Hamburg Orchestra, le Bamberger Symphoniker, le Chicago Symphony Orchestra et le Philadelphia Orchestra.

Très tôt dans sa carrière et sans interruption, Dimitri Maslennikov a été invité par de prestigieux festivals: Festival du Schleswig-Holstein, Colmar, Verbier, Ravinia à Chicago. Il a joué dans des salles prestigieuses telles que le Suntory Hall de Tokyo, la Salle Pleyel de Paris, la Philharmonie de Berlin, le Rudolfinum de Prague, le Grand Hall de la Philharmonie de Saint-Petersbourg.

Dimitri Maslennikov donne également des concerts exceptionnels pour les Nations Unies et pour la Reine Elizabeth d'Angleterre.

En 2006, Dimitri Maslennikov a enregistré les deux concertos pour violoncelle de Dimitri Chostakovitch avec l'Orchestre de la NDR de Hambourg sous la direction de Christoph Eschenbach (Phoenix Editions – Naxos), un enregistrement acclamé par la presse internationale. En 2008, il a donné la première mondiale du Concerto pour violoncelle du compositeur français Marc-André Dalbavie avec l'Ensemble Intercontemporain au Miller Theater, Columbia University, New York.

En 2010, après de nombreuses représentations dans différentes parties du globe, Dimitri Maslennikov a enregistré les Variations Rococo de Tchaïkovski avec le Deutsche Symphonie Orchestra dirigé par Christoph Eschenbach; cet enregistrement lui a valu des débuts remarquables à la Philharmonie de Berlin ainsi que des concerts aux festivals du Schleswig Holstein et du Rheingau. Il a donné de nombreux concerts et récitals en France et à l'étranger; il a fait ses magnifiques débuts en Chine en 2012 avec l'orchestre du "National Center of the Performing Arts" sous la direction de Christoph Eschenbach; la même année, Dimitri a entamé une collaboration fructueuse avec l'Orchestre philharmonique de Saint-Petersbourg et le maestro Youry Temirkanov. En 2014, Dimitri a effectué une tournée en Asie avec l'Orchestre philharmonique de Saint-Petersbourg, où il a obtenu le titre de directeur artistique honoraire de l'Opéra de Guangzhou.

Dimitri a fait la première européenne du Concerto pour violoncelle et orchestre de Dalbavie avec l'Orchestre du Mozarteum sous la direction de Maestro Eschenbach lors de la dernière édition du Festival de Salzbourg.