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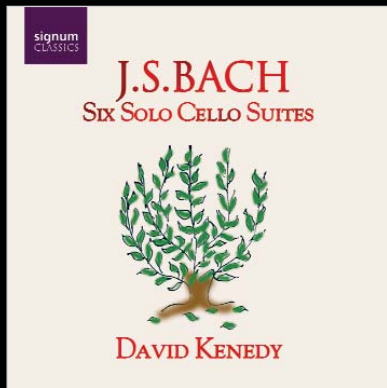
ELGAR

Cello Concerto

MYASKOVSKY

Cello Concerto

Philharmonia Orchestra  
Alexander Briger, conductor

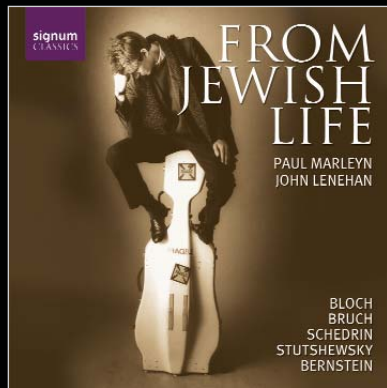


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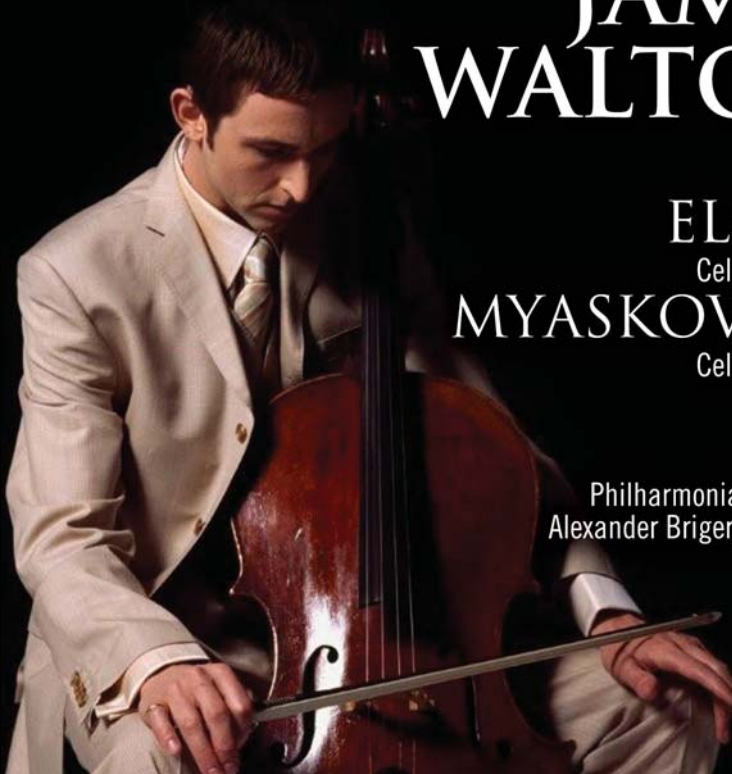


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# ELGAR & MYASKOVSKY

## CELLO CONCERTOS

### Cello Concerto in E minor, Op.85

Edward Elgar

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1. Adagio  | [7.35]  |
| 2. Lento   | [4.24]  |
| 3. Adagio  | [4.44]  |
| 4. Allegro | [11.12] |

### Cello Concerto in C minor, Op.66

Nikolai Myaskovsky

- |                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| 5. Lento          | [10.40] |
| 6. Allegro vivace | [16.18] |

Total Timings	[54.56]
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JAMIE WALTON CELLO  
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA  
ALEXANDER BRIGER CONDUCTOR

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# ELGAR & MYASKOVSKY

## CELLO CONCERTOS

Although conceived by utterly divergent characters in lands and times that engender few similarities these days, the cello concertos by Elgar and Myaskovsky make a fascinating coupling due not only to the disparate nature of the composers' lives and situations, but also, curiously, to the common ground they tread. Both men were in their early sixties when writing what was their only *concertante* work for the instrument, and the prevailing mood of both concertos is one of aristocratic wistfulness married to a mastery of form and rhetoric. They strike the listener almost as elegies, predominantly ruminant and rarely displaying the cut-and-thrust heroics that are so often an integral part of the concerto genre. Elgar was composing his last truly great work surrounded by the material comforts and fame that Edwardian England had afforded him, while Myaskovsky was penning his final thoughts for the instrument with Russia still firmly in Stalin's clunking fist. The dates of composition, 1919 and 1944, most probably provide the telling clues as to the introspective, yearning nature of these pieces. Elgar was writing his concerto as the stomach-

churning massacres of the Great War were being gradually absorbed by a horrified British public, while Myaskovsky's Moscow was experiencing the depredations and deprivations of the most desperate years of the Second World War. Little wonder, then, that the feeling of sun-kissed deck-chairs being folded-up for good permeates these works. But, amidst the yen for days gone by persists a remembrance of their many beauties reflected in music of depth and radiance.

When fiddling with very early sketches of what became his Cello Concerto in E minor Op.85 in 1918, Elgar wrote to the poet Laurence Binyon regarding setting a poem about peace: '...I do not feel drawn to write peace music somehow...the whole atmosphere is too full of complexities for me to feel music to it...I regret the appeal to the Heavenly Spirit which is cruelly obtuse to the individual sorrow and sacrifice - a cruelty I resent bitterly and disappointedly'. This adumbrates the mood of the concerto which was written largely in May and June of 1919 - far from the most contented year of Elgar's life. His stalwart wife,

Alice, was ailing, and to die the following year and the war had robbed Elgar of more than just his lively humour and calm, bucolic outlook. Practical matters surfaced, such as a house that had now become impossible to run in the grand Edwardian fashion. The war had begun to change attitudes to domestic service with new opportunities for women also brought about by the Suffragette movement. And, understandably angry young men were returning from the fronts of the war with a view of life (and death) that was at odds with recent, but now bygone days, and some of them had strong ideas on the way music and the arts must be expressed in the new age. All this while Elgar's popularity as a composer was on the wane, with publishers and public alike.

The work's premiere was the centrepiece of the London Symphony Orchestra's first concert series since the end of the war. Premiered by Felix Salmond with Elgar on the rostrum, the event was poorly attended and somewhat less than a success. The soon-to-be celebrated conductor, Albert Coates seems not to have helped matters by reducing rehearsal time for the one piece in the concert he was not conducting, moving Alice Elgar to write in her diary of a 'Wretched, hurried rehearsal - An insult to E [Elgar] from that brutal, selfish, ill-mannered bounder A. Coates'. However,

the great critic, Ernest Newman saw through the messy performance, writing of a "profound wisdom and beauty underlying its simplicity ... a fine spirit's lifelong wistful brooding upon the loveliness of earth" despite the orchestra making 'a public exhibition of its miserable self'. The concerto is scored with an emphasis on the high and low orchestral sonorities, allowing the cello a clear space to roam and soliloquise while remaining clearly audible. The piece often feels chamber music-like in its expression and the four movements are admirably concise and fluid. There is also a great deal of solo writing, prefigured by the famous mighty opening chords which the soloist plays almost unaccompanied. The movement shines with unconventional ideas such as the violas taking the main theme alone, gently, after the audacious solo opening. The *Scherzo* is a quicksilver moment, dark and fantastical and the succeeding *Adagio* a painful, passionate condolement. The final movement brings some lightness and humour prior to the cadenza, which soars in pain, the piece closing in an abrupt, almost brutal, fashion.

Just 25 years later, in a radically different Europe, Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950) produced his own concerto, premiered by its dedicatee, Sviatoslav Khushevitsky, in Moscow on 17 March 1945 - less

than two months before the end of the Soviet Union's participation in the Second World War. Much like Britain at the end of the Great War, the USSR's victory was significantly over-shadowed by the unthinkable number of casualties - gigantic even by the standards set by the earlier war. Myaskovsky was born in Tsarist Russia and brought up in Novo-Georgiyevsk, a Russian garrison town near Warsaw and attended one of the most prestigious Russian military schools in Nizhny-Novgorod. Thus, the military and its codes were simply part of his life from his earliest days. A musical bent was supplied by an aunt and in 1903 by private studies with Gliere on the recommendation of Taneyev. Despite the pull of music, it wasn't until the age of 25 that he eventually left behind his career as a military engineer and enrolled in the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1906. That two such esteemed Russian composers should be happy to help a relatively late developer merely hints at the musical milieu available to musicians and composers of the time. At the conservatory, Myaskovsky studied composition with Liadov, orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov and his younger contemporaries included Prokofiev, with whom he forged a life-long friendship. The super-talented and brash young Prokofiev was mature enough to realise that the introverted Myaskovsky

was a man of talent, great learning and insight: one of the few from whom he would bear criticism, but also one who would happily go into print to defend some of Prokofiev's controversial premieres. Among Prokofiev's many dedications to Myaskovsky are the opera *Maddalena* and his *Third Symphony*. Myaskovsky's military training came back to haunt him and he was sent to the Austrian Front where shell-shock took its toll and he was transferred to the Naval headquarters in Petrograd and eventually demobilised in 1921. Taking up a post at the Moscow Conservatory, he remained there as composition professor until his death, tutoring many brilliant pupils including Khachaturian, Kabalevsky and Shebalin. While his introverted nature led him rarely to stray from the party line, his musical thoughts often did so, and he was not spared during Stalin's infamous 1948 intervention into the Soviet musical world that terrorised many of the most famous Soviet composers - Shostakovich and Prokofiev included. Myaskovsky was himself severely rebuked for writing a 'gloomy' *Symphony No.26*.

From its opening moments, Myaskovsky's *Cello Concerto* in C minor Op.66 is an unmistakably Russian affair. The opening *Lento's* dark, portentous opening has often been compared to the brooding ending of Tchaikovsky's swansong *Symphony No.6*.

This dolefulness gradually gives way to a flowering of melodious writing for the cello, subtly balanced by the odd melancholic rumination. The second and final movement, an *Allegro vivace*, has an initial spring in its step with further hints of Tchaikovsky, now in a chattering, more playful mood. Again the joy is but momentary: a long-spun threnody, peppered with specks of sweetness and infused with folk-like melodies, builds to a troubled orchestral climax. The concerto's final

moments are remarkable; the mood softens into the major and the predominantly dark colouring of the work lightens upwards in register and to a calm close. In comparison with Elgar's disappointingly abrupt, Edwardian termination, Myaskovsky's concerto closes serenely, the long and troublesome journey eventually affording a form of tranquillity - an acceptance of what is.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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### JAMIE WALTON

Jamie Walton studied at Wells Cathedral School and the RNCM with Margaret Moncrieff before taking private tuition with William Pleeth who wrote of Jamie: "He is a cellist of outstanding performance ability. Combining warmth of tone with a technical command that reaches dazzling proportions, he leaves little doubt as the success that lies ahead of him - he is a musician of great integrity whose performance gives great pleasure."

As a rising international soloist Jamie has given concerts throughout much of Europe, the USA and UK in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls and festivals. These include radio broadcasts and appearances at the Montpellier, Regensburg, Ansbach, Schwabach, Schloss-Elmau, Lucerne, Cheltenham, Three Choirs, Brighton, Harrogate and Chichester festivals where he performed the Dvořák concerto with the Philharmonia.

He appears regularly at Wigmore Hall and Symphony Hall, Birmingham where on his debut



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he performed a recital of Chopin for the Chopin festival, sharing the evening with Krystian Zimerman. This acclaimed performance led to concertos there with the English Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera.

His debut with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra was hailed by the press and subsequent radio broadcasts and recitals followed. In 2005 Jamie and his pianist Daniel Grimwood were personally invited by Maestro Lorin Maazel to perform for his prestigious Chateauville Foundation in Virginia,

USA. On his return, he joined the Wihan Quartet for their 20th Anniversary concert at the Rudolfinum in Prague, now available on DVD.

Jamie's debut commercial CD of the Chopin and Rachmaninov sonatas (SOMM Recordings) was selected into the Telegraph Top 10 CDs of the year in 2002 and since then his recordings have accumulated unanimous praise, most notably his recent CD of the Saint-Saëns cello concertos (Quartz Music) with the Philharmonia, which was named as one of the Daily Telegraph's Top CDs of 2006 and Classic FM Magazine Orchestral CD of the month.

Jamie plays on a 1712 Guarneri cello.

[www.jamiewalton.com](http://www.jamiewalton.com)

### PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music education and the use of new technologies in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after



artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor Christoph von Dohnányi, the Philharmonia Orchestra is at the heart of British musical life.

Today, the Philharmonia has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. It is committed to presenting the same quality, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world. In 2007/08 the Orchestra is performing more than 200 concerts, as well as presenting chamber performances by the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. For more than 12 years now the Orchestra's work has been underpinned by its much admired UK and

International Residency Programme, which began in 1995 with the launch of its residencies at Bedford Corn Exchange and London's Southbank Centre. During 2007/08 the Orchestra not only returns to the refurbished Royal Festival Hall, but celebrates its 11th year as Resident Orchestra of De Montfort Hall in Leicester, its eighth year as Orchestra in Partnership at the Anvil in Basingstoke and the first year of a major new residency in Kent and the Thames Gateway, based in Canterbury. The Orchestra's extensive touring schedule this season also includes a week long residency at the Musikverein in Vienna, and appearances at more than twenty of the finest international concert halls.

Throughout its 60 year history, the Philharmonia Orchestra has been committed to finding new ways to bring its top quality live performance to audiences worldwide, and to using new technologies to achieve this. Many millions of people since 1945 have enjoyed their first experience of classical music through a Philharmonia recording, and in 2007 audiences can engage with the Orchestra through webcasts, podcasts, downloads, computer games and film scores as well as through its unique interactive music education website launched in 2005, The Sound Exchange ([www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange](http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange)), which is now visited by almost 2 million people a year. In 2005 the Philharmonia became the first ever classical music organisation to be shortlisted for a BT Digital Music Award, and in the same year the Orchestra presented both the first ever fully interactive webcast and the first podcast by a UK orchestra. In September 2005 computer games with Philharmonia scores were at No. 1 and No. 2 in the national charts, while the Orchestra's scores for the last two Harry Potter computer games have both been nominated for BAFTA Awards. Recording and live broadcasting both also continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities: since 2003 the Philharmonia has enjoyed a major partnership with Classic FM, as The Classic FM Orchestra on Tour, as well as continuing to broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

## ALEXANDER BRIGER

Born in Australia, Alexander Briger studied in Sydney and Munich and won 1st prize at the International Competition for Conductors in the Czech Republic in 1993. He later worked closely with Sir Charles Mackerras and Pierre Boulez and made his debut with Opera Australia in 1998 conducting *Jenufa*. Operatic work has since included *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *Cunning Little Vixen* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera Australia), *The Rape of Lucretia* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden), *Die Zauberflöte* (Glyndebourne Festival), *Rigoletto* and *Makropulos Case* (English National Opera), *Cunning Little Vixen* (Aix-en-Provence), *Bartered Bride* (Royal Swedish Opera), *La Bohème* (State Opera of South Australia), *Bartok ballets* (Opéra du Rhin) as well as the premiere of Simon Holt's *Who put Bella in the Wych'elm* for the Aldeburgh Festival.

He has performed regularly with the Philharmonia, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, opening their 2003 'Friday Series' in London and touring with them to China in 2003/4; and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, with whom he made his BBC Proms and Berlin Festival debuts.

He has also worked with the Orchestre de Paris for the opening of the 2004 "Musica Festival", Scottish Chamber Orchestra, with whom he conducted the final concert of the 2004 Edinburgh Festival, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Berliner Sinfonie-Orchester, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitol de Toulouse, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Salzburg Mozarteum, Salzburg Camerata, Ensemble InterContemporain, London Sinfonietta, collaborating with Peter Sellars and pianist Hélène Grimaud for the premiere of Arvo Pärt's *Lament Tate*, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Japanese Virtuoso Symphony.

Future engagements include debuts with the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, WASO, Royal Danish Opera (*Tales of Hoffmann*), Opera of Luxemburg (*Carmen*) as well as returns to the Berliner Sinfonie-Orchester and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



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