

Preface

David Popper (1843–1913) achieved international renown as a solo cellist, a status which brought his own compositions to a wide and appreciative audience. He became a student of Julius Goltermann (1825–1876) in Prague at the age of twelve, auditioning on the violin but switching instruments due to a shortage of cello students at the conservatory. His studies were succeeded by a number of prestigious orchestral posts, and in 1868 he was appointed principal cellist at the Vienna Hofoper and in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, remaining to this day the youngest player ever to have held that post. He eventually resigned from his orchestral position in 1873 in order to pursue an accelerating solo career throughout Europe. Popper was held in high esteem by his fellow musicians and maintained close personal and artistic associations with composers such as Bruckner, Brahms and Liszt, as well as with the leading performers of the day.

Most of Popper's compositions were for his own instrument and testify to an intimate knowledge of how to marry virtuoso technique with the rich sonorities and expressive capacities of the cello. His compositional output became highly regarded, and many of Popper's works would come to have pride of place among the concert repertoire of all cellists during his lifetime. They continue to do so to the present day.

David Popper's career went from being the principal cellist of two of the foremost orchestras of his time (Löwenberg and the Vienna Court Opera) to his status of the first "world famous" solo cellist with concerts all over Europe and America, followed by the position of a string quartet cellist (in the highly-esteemed Hubay-Popper-Quartett) and chamber musician with the most eminent musicians of his time, Brahms possibly being the first and foremost.

The last period of David Popper's life (starting in 1886) was dominated by teaching at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, where his legacy is kept alive even today. Generations of cellists derive from his studio, and even today, David Popper's three collections of a total of 65 etudes remain the most important and probably most-played cello etudes worldwide. The *Zehn mittelschwere große Etüden*, op. 76 bear the original subtitle *Als Vorschule zur Hohen Schule des Violoncellospiels* op. 73 and were first published in 1905. Being written later than Popper's greatest pedagogical work, the *Hohe Schule des Violoncellospiels*, op. 73 (paladino music pm 0025), it seems rather that Popper felt the urge to cover some more technical issues than a real "preparation" to the next level of difficulty in a conventional sense. Some of the pieces in

this edition might as well have their justified place within the *High School of Violoncello Playing* – and vice versa. Just as in op. 73, these etudes are not sorted by their technical difficulty. It should therefore be at the teacher's or the student's discretion to learn them in any order that matches the individual needs of instrumental progress.

Note on the Edition

Since the manuscript of Popper's op. 76 has to be considered lost, we had to rely on copies of the first print (Hoffmeister, 1905) and a later reprint (Hoffmeister, 1907), both of which we can only hope had some input by Popper himself. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies that might be printing errors of the source had to be kept because a doubtless solution could not be found.

The aim of paladino music is to produce practical modern editions that also provide historical insight. In this particular case, we have chosen to strictly follow Popper's suggestions of bowings and fingerings, but modernized the appearance of the music itself. Modern notational conventions have been employed, resulting in the omission of unnecessary accidentals and redundant slurs as well as adding "safety accidentals" where applicable and today's convention. Notational mistakes have been silently corrected, and consecutive dynamic markings, often the result of printing limitations, have been combined where appropriate.

In the interest of clarity, superfluous fingerings and bowings have been removed. Popper's use of letters (e.g. 'sul A') to designate strings have been replaced with the modern convention of Roman numerals. Inaccuracies in pitch and rhythm have been tacitly amended on the basis of analogous passages and/or modern notational conventions, yet most inconsistencies of articulation, dynamics or accents in parallel passages have been kept as in the source unless they could clearly be classified as printing errors. As far as the title of the collection and all its tempo and character markings, we chose to keep the original German instructions in order to be as close to Popper's original as possible.