

Preface

Like so much of David Popper's music, the *Suite for Two Violoncellos*, op. 16, very effectively showcases his own instrument, and his arrangement of this piece for cello and piano, op. 16bis, preserves many of the cellistic qualities of the original. By the time the two-cello version first appeared in print in 1876, Popper (1843–1913) had 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 12, 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 his 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. The *Suite*, op. 16bis, follows the publication of several dances and character pieces for cello and piano and, in 1871, the first of his four cello concertos. Popper's compositional output became highly regarded, and many of his 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.

Popper's *Suite for Violoncello and Piano*, op. 16bis, comprises five movements that progress through popular dance types and character pieces, culminating in a technically challenging march. The demands made on the performer are less strenuous in Popper's own alternative finale, the *Tempo di Marcia*, originally published separately, but included in this edition for the first time alongside the suite it was written to conclude.

Note on the Edition

The aim of **paladino music** is to produce practical modern editions that also provide historical insight. Two versions of the cello part are presented: one based on Popper's own, as printed in the edition by Hofmeister, Leipzig, identical to the first cello part in their 1876 edition of op. 16; the other brings the performance directions in line with modern practice.

In the interests 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. Modern notational conventions have been employed, resulting in the omission of unnecessary accidentals and redundant slurs. Some dynamics and articulation markings have been rendered consistent with parallel readings or with the other instrument. Consecutive dynamic markings, often the result of printing limitations, have been combined where appropriate. A small number of performance directions originally given in German have been translated into Italian to bring them into line with the majority.

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