

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 12, auditioning on the violin but switching instruments due to a short-age 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. 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 String Quartet, Op. 74 is his last large-scale work and dates from the late part of his era as the cellist of the Hubay-Popper-Quartett (1886 to 1910, also known as "Budapest Quartet"), which was the favorite string quartet of no lesser than Johannes Brahms, who performed with them frequently. The work, however, is dedicated to the Bohemian Quartet (Josef Suk, Karel Hoffmann, Oskar Nedbal and Hanuš Wihan, the dedicatee of the cello concerto by Antonín Dvořák). Brahms' influence can be heard throughout this work, which is Popper's only contribution to the genre.

Note on the Edition

The aim of **paladino editions** is to produce practical modern editions that also provide historical insight. The original Edition Peters edition of this work shows some differences in dynamics and articulation between score and parts, suggesting that one was revised without the other. In those cases that show obvious errors, corrections have been applied.

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 other instruments. Consecutive dynamic markings, often the result of printing limitations, have been combined where appropriate. Inconsistencies between the 19th century downbow sign (often mistaken for an accent) and modern notation as we know it today have been aligned.

Martin Rummel
Vienna, March 2021