

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.

In 1883 David Popper made a repeated guest appearance in St. Petersburg, and his first wife, the pianist Sophie Menter, was appointed to the conservatory there. Popper played his *Cello Concerto No. 2*, Op. 24 (on Carl Davidoff's Stradivarius cello, owned in the 20th century by Jacqueline du Pré and Mstislav Rostropovich and currently played by Yo-Yo Ma) with the Court Opera Orchestra on March 11. According to his own accounts, the third variation of the *Fantasia on Little Russian Songs*, Op. 43 is a memory of a sleigh ride to the castle of a music-loving prince who, following the ride, gave Popper the gift of the fur coat that kept him warm.

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.

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