

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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FEATURE on TRULS MØRK

Mørk was born in Bergen, to a cellist father, and a pianist mother.

Norwegian cellist Truls Mørk is particularly noted for his romantic, emotional approach. His parents were professional musicians; his father John Fritjof Mørk was a cellist, and his mother, Turid Otterbech, a pianist. His parents taught him first, trying him on the piano and violin before John Mørk decided to teach Truls his own instrument, the cello. Truls liked the instrument because of its larger size, and insisted on starting his studies with the Bach Cello Suite No. 1 and the Brahms E minor Cello Sonata. *"This turned out to be much more difficult than I thought it would be,"* he says, but he kept working at it. He says his father did not push him for fear that he would practice too much and become a musician!

At the age of 17, Mørk began studying with Frans Helmerson. Later he studied with Austrian cellist Heinrich Schiff, then in Moscow with Natalia Shakhovskaya, a pupil of Mstislav Rostropovich, whom Mørk had admired for his broad range of color and his flexible, melodic use of vibrato. Mørk disliked the style of an even vibrato, which, he says, drains the music of its vitality.

In 1982 at the age of 21, Mørk became the first Scandinavian to win a prize at the the International Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition. He also won the Naumberg Competition in New York in 1986, the Cassado Cello Competition in Florence in 1983, and the UNESCO Prize at the European Radio-Union Competition in Bratislava.

His international touring career commenced in 1989 when he was selected to travel with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra under Mariss Jansons on their 1994 North American tour. Since then he has appeared with many of the world's best-known orchestras and conductors. A celebrated artist, Truls Mørk performs with the most distinguished orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris, Berliner Philharmoniker, Wiener Philharmoniker, Concertgebouworkest, Münchner Philharmoniker, Philharmonia and London Philharmonic orchestras and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. In North America he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Conductor collaborations include Mariss Jansons, David Zinman, Manfred Honeck, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Simon Rattle, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Christoph Eschenbach, amongst others.

A great champion of contemporary music, Truls Mørk has given in excess of 30 premieres. In 2019/20 season he premiered Victoria Borisova-Ollas' cello concerto Oh Giselle, Remember Me, commissioned by the Swedish Radio Symphony, with whom he was Artist in Residence, Bergen Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Gothenburg Symphony orchestras. He has also given highly successful performances of Esa-Pekka Salonen's cello concerto, conducted by the composer at the Royal Festival Hall, Lincoln Center and the Festival d'Aix en Provence. In collaboration with Klaus Mäkelä, he performed the Salonen cello concerto with the Philharmonique de Radio France and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. Other commissions include Rautavaara's Towards the Horizon with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and John Storgårds, Pavel Haas' Cello Concerto with Wiener Philharmoniker and Jonathan Nott, Krzysztof Penderecki's Concerto for Three Cellos with the NHK Symphony Orchestra and Charles Dutoit, Hafliði Hallgrímsson's Cello Concerto, co-commissioned by the Oslo Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony and Scottish Chamber orchestras.

Truls Mørk's compelling performances, combining fierce intensity, integrity and grace, have established him as one of the pre-eminent cellists of our time. Mørk plays a rare 1723 Domenico Montagnana cello purchased for him by the SR Bank.

Certainly one of my favourite living cellists!!



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