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SUITE FOR CELLO AND PIANO (Op.16) or CELLO AND ORCHESTRA (Op.16B) of CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

The Suite for Cello and Piano, Op. 16, was written by Camille Saint-Saëns in 1866. This work is considered the launching point of the composer's career.

The piece is written in the form of a suite with five movements:

The work is based on the composer's study of tradition, especially of the form of the Baroque suite, integrated in a Romantic tonal language. The “Finale” allows the composer to showcase his skill with counterpoint, and the end of the finale contains a recapitulation of the prelude, typical of a serenade. Perhaps the work bears a resemblance to Antonín Dvořák's String Serenade?

Saint-Saëns' interest in this piece was revived in 1919. Cellist Joseph Hollmann, for whom the Second Cello Concerto was written, encouraged Saint-Saëns to orchestrate this suite of five pieces. However, the composer felt that the Scherzo and Finale were too pianistic to be orchestrated, and eventually came to a decision to replace the two movements with a Gavotte and a Tarantelle, respectively. The Gavotte, originally written in G minor, was transposed into D minor upon orchestration. The Romance already existed in orchestrated form because the composer once took the movement from the original suite and transcribed it for horn, for Henri Chaussier, though he modified it once again with different orchestration for the suite, and changing the ending.

The orchestrated version was published by J. Hamelle in 1920. The enthusiastic, melodic 'Suite' is a valuable addition to the cello repertoire, suitable for both tuition and concert purposes.
Some Recordings available:

Cello and PIANO -
Roger Drinkall (cello) and Dian Baker (piano)
Christoph Henkel (cello) and Hüseyin Sermet (piano)
Maria Kliegel (cello) and François-Joël Thiollière (piano)
Lucia Swarts (cello) and Leo van Doeselaar (piano)

.. Cello and ORCHESTRA -
Steven Isserlis (cello) and Christoph Eschenbach conducting the NDR Symphony Orchestra
Maria Kliegel (cello) and Jean-François Monnard conducting the Bournemouth Sinfonietta
Mischa Maisky (cello) and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
Christine Walevska (cello) and Eliahu Inbal conducting the Orchestra National de Monte-Carlo
Johannes Moser (cello) and Fabrice Bollon conducting the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra

Anecdote:
Unfortunately, Saint-Saëns wasn’t helped by his publisher who continued to publish the individual movements as separate pieces, much to Saint-Saëns fury (who angrily argued with them that they were to be kept together). For the whole suite they initially published all SEVEN movements (from the two versions Op. 16 and Op. 16b). They then messed things up even more by publishing the suite without the Romance (“that is like scrambled eggs without the yolk – a mass of egg whites” wrote Saint-Saëns). In short, Saint-Saëns described the publisher as ‘very disagreeable’!

‘documenting the cello’ www.johnstone-music.com
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