

A NOTE FROM *Johnstone-Music*

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## NOTES ON GEORGE ENESCU and the SINFONIA CONCERTANTE

George Enescu (1881-1955) was born in the village of Liveni located in the historical region of Moldavia. His hometown changed its name to Enescu in his honour in the second half of the 20th century. In France, where he spent much of his life, he is generally known by the name of Georges Enesco.

At the early age of seven he entered the Vienna Conservatory, graduating as a violinist at the tender age of 10 in 1891. This year he composed one of his first works: "Légende" for violin. He played in orchestras led by Brahms and in 1892 he entered the Paris Conservatory as a student of Massenet and Fauré - and he was also Ravel's companion. Incredibly, during his years of study he composed four symphonies, and a violin concerto that he left behind as a 'school' work. The composer received generous help from the Romanian royal house for his studies.

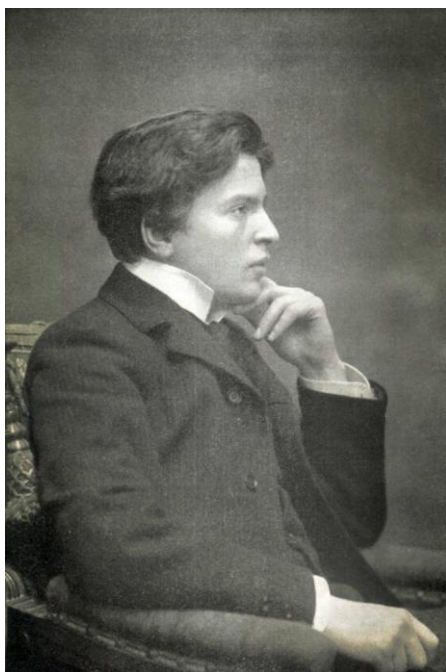
The "Symphony Concertante for Cello and Orchestra" Op.8 was composed in 1901 - he was still only 20 but maturity is in abundance here - but the work was not premiered until 1909. After that unfortunately it was very little performed until very recently. It is sometimes said that the first performance was a bit of a disaster, but then again they said the same about the Elgar Concerto and this has been successfully rebuked by our friend Tully Potter..... However this work has always had its firm admirers too; for example I studied the work with William Pleeth and certainly he held it in very high esteem.

The soloist is presented partly as a virtuoso and sonorous soloist but also acts as a 'first' cello rather in the manner of Strauss's Don Quixote, and these roles are different from a 'normal' concerto and rather more difficult to 'bring off' and convince the public! Additionally, one can speak of two large movements or sections, but these are intensely developed from the same thematic material - perhaps this is what persuaded Enescu to title it as a "symphony concerto"? Anyway, these two movements are performed without pause.

The first movement, 'assez lent', written in B minor begins with an introduction using a lyrical melody presented by the cello, followed by a loose sonata form development. The main theme is romantic in nature. The solo instrument has a powerful dramatic role.

The second movement, 'majestueux', is also written in the traditional sonata form, using a few motifs that suggest its Romanian origin, but is also thematically - as previously mentioned - somewhat similar to the previous movement. An accelerating 'finale' takes us to its main theme endowed with a certain solemnity.

In the same year 1901 he composed the "Romanian Rhapsodies N°1 and N°2" Op.11 for orchestra. The first of these, if not both, became his most popular works. Based on authentic Romanian folk melodies, they are a clear example of romantic nationalism. A wonderful composer and well worth investigating in particular his 'Sinfonia Concertante'! I would guide you to a fantastic interpretation given by Truls Mørk - I've never heard it better than this!!



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*'documenting the cello'* [www.johnstone-music.com](http://www.johnstone-music.com)

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To take advantage of this, try to write to us three weeks or more in advance with any information. Last-minute entries are certainly better than not writing at all - however, understandably, once we have past the calendar month of the event it is not usually possible to add old items to the calendar. It is very interesting for the promoters of *Johnstone-Music* to have knowledge of your activity - and so in return for your information you will be entitled to a free gift of a work/s for every diary addition you tell us about. To find out more about this, please visit the “*Cello Club*” section in the web!