

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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SPECIAL FEATURE on GEORG FAUST

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Georg Faust was born in the village of Porz near Cologne on 8th July, 1956. As a five-year-old, and after attending a concert by Enrico Mainardi who played some Bach suites, he said: 'I'm going to be a cellist!'. He started playing the cello at age 7, with Otto Weidermann, a cellist of the Gürzenich Orchestra of Cologne. In 1977, at just 14, Faust was accepted as a student of Siegfried Palm at the Cologne Conservatory of Music, where he graduated on a Master's degree with distinction. Supported by a scholarship by the German Academic Exchange Service he then went to the Manhattan School of Music in New York to study with Bernard Greenhouse during 1978/79.

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As a guest of Rudolf Serkin he was a participant of the Marlboro Music School and Festival from 1979 through to 1981. In 1980 he became the principal cellist of the Hamburg State Opera, and moved in 1983 to become principal cellist of the NDR Symphony Orchestra. In the beginning he had found it hard to get used to stepping out of the orchestral tutti section to be playing the principal soloist lines - 'suddenly with his own little voice so alone' - it took him years to get the stage fright under control! However, simultaneously he received awards in the International Competition of the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation New York 1977, the ARD International Music Competition Munich 1977 and in the International Tchaikovsky Competition of Moscow in 1982 which must certainly have helped him enjoy the pressure!

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With such a prestigious career unfolding the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra - under Herbert von Karajan - invited him to become their new principal cellist in 1985. In fact, his ties with Berlin deepened as Faust became a teacher at the Herbert von Karajan Academy from 1986 to 2007. As a concerto soloist he has appeared with Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Bernard Haitink and Simon Rattle. He was a founding member of Ensemble Wien-Berlin Nonett, the Schönberg-Trio and the Berliner Barock Solisten. He was recognized as the artistic leader of the '12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic', where he helped create many prizewinning CDs between 1990 and 2012.

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As an independent soloist and chamber musician he has appeared in chamber music concerts and recordings with artists as Leif Ove Andsnes, Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Sarah Chang, James Levine, Alexander Lonquich, Albrecht Mayer, Emmanuel Pahud, Maurizio Pollini, Mitsuko Uchida and others. He has been invited to impart masterclasses in Germany, Australia and Japan.

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He left the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 2012. One of the more recent things so interesting him has been the exploration of a new string instrument, called a "campanula", which features up to additional 16 resonating strings. To support and promote the instrument he founded a non-profit association, 'Campanula Musica', which gives scholarships to gifted young classical musicians. Faust also encourages and promotes creative improvisation and free play for classical music students to strengthen the creative part in classical music education.

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Still a most important cellists of our times...

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