

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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## SPECIAL FEATURE on KATO VAN DER HOEVEN

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Birth: 20th September, 1877 - Amsterdam

Death: 7th December, 1959 - The Hague.

Name: Kato van der **Hoeven** {also name variants: *Cato, Cateau, van den*}

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Her parents were Johanna Catharina Marx and Gerrit van der Hoeven. It is known that her sister Dina van der Hoeven (1871-1940) settled down as a pianist in Berlin after training at the Cologne Conservatory and with Willem Mengelberg in Amsterdam. She is also said to have briefly had lessons with Teresa Carreño. On September 1, 1904, she began studying again at the Stern Conservatory.

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Kato van der Hoeven first learned the piano and violin as a child before switching to the cello. She studied with Willem Kes (1856-1934) at the orchestral school in Amsterdam, with Thomas C. de Maaré (1863-1948), Isaak Mossel (1870-1923), members of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, and in Berlin with Anton Hekking (1856-1935). Hekking was temporarily a cellist with the Bilsche'schen Kapelle and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. From September 1, 1896 to September 1, 1899 he is recorded in the files of the Stern Conservatory as a teacher. Kato van der Hoeven is not listed in the student lists, so it can be assumed that she was involved in a private apprenticeship.

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On November 16, 1897, Kato van der Hoeven became a member of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra and, according to the current state of research, is perhaps only the second woman cellist after Valborg Lagervall to be accepted into a permanent professional symphony orchestra in Europe. A solo appearance with this orchestra is already recorded as taken place on December 12th, 1895; under the direction of Willem Mengelberg she played Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*, the *cantilena* from Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor by Georg Goltermann and the *Sarabande & Gavotte* Op. 10 by David Popper.

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In addition to her orchestral services, Kato van der Hoeven was mainly active in chamber music. In 1906 she founded with the violinist Nella (Petronella) Gunning and the pianist Nora Boas created the “*first Hollandsche dames trio*” (Caecilia 1906, p. 325), in which Fanny Gelbart took the place of Nora Boas by 1908 at the latest. In this line-up, the trio performed in many Dutch cities between 1908 and 1913 and in November 1908 in London with the pianist Johanna Heymann . The repertoire consisted of piano trios by Haydn (E flat major Hob XV: 29), Mozart (E major KV 542), Beethoven (E flat major op.1, E flat major op.70), Schubert (B flat major D 898 ), Robert Schumann (G minor op.110), Felix Mendelssohn (D minor op.49), Saint-Saëns (F major op.18), Anton Rubinstein (B major op.52), Brahms (C Major op. 87) and Dvořák (E minor op. 90, "*Dumky*"). The programmes were supplemented by solo literature, with the cellist works by Joh. Seb. Bach, Benedetto Marcello, Pergolesi and Bruch contributed.

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In the winter season 1901/02 Kato van der Hoeven made a guest appearance in the Berlin Holy Cross Church with a solo program.

The piano teacher: “*We are delighted to note that in Miss van der Hoeven we have met a cellist of great skill. The lady played an Adagio by Bargiel, the cantilena from the A minor Concerto by Goltermann and the Air by Bach with a full, vocal tone; there is a primal power in her bowing, a quality that many of her fellow artists lack*” (Der Klavier-Lehrer 1902, p. 14). In the spring of 1912 the “*Amsterdam Trio*” performed in Berlin with piano trios by Brahms, Saint-Saëns and Dvořák. Apart from the recommendation to the pianist, “*To be a little more cautious in the interests of interaction*” (Die Musik 1911/12 III, p. 183), the critic found that “*three women [could] confidently take on most of their male colleagues*” (ibid.).

When Elisabeth Kuyper performed her cantata for women's choir, solos, declamation and orchestra with a “*semi-professional women's orchestra*” in Amsterdam on September 30, 1913 , cellists Kato van der Hoeven and Nella Gunning were among the performers.

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Kato van der Hoeven's membership in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra ended on September 1, 1917. After that, the cellist's trace is lost. "Zonder beroep" (no occupation) is noted in The Hague's death register.

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*Fully crediting Freia Hoffmann and the Sophie Drinker Onstitut for this information*

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This is so sad - how can such an extraordinary cellist totally fall off the map for nearly forty years? Does anyone know anything else about her?

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