

Cellists' Corner
Brief Career Details of Important
Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

SPECIAL FEATURE on LUDMIL VASSILEV

Bulgarian cellist, composer and educator.

Birth: 28th December, 1956

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He began studying music in his native land, where he earned his Master's Degree with honours. In 1980 he was awarded the First Prize and Gold Medal at the Bulgarian National Competition "Svetoslav Obretenov". From 1981 to 1992 he served as principal cello of the Plovdiv Symphony Orchestra, Bulgaria. Likewise, he was been a member of the Chamber Orchestra and the String Quartet of the same city with which he has made many presentations, recordings and tours in his country and in European countries: France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia, among others.

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During the years 1991 and 1992 he worked in Vienna dedicated to chamber music groups. Amongst these were the "Johann Strauss" Quartet, the "Mozart Vienna Ensemble" and "The Vienna Mozart Quintet."

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He then became based in Colombia. Among his numerous important positions I could cite his performances as first cello soloist of the Antioquia Symphony Orchestra, the Medellín Philharmonic Orchestra, the Antioquia Chamber Orchestra (under the direction of Maestro Harold Martina) and the EAFIT Symphony Orchestra. He immediately became recognized as an esteemed cellist there; invited to the Jury of the First National Cello Competition sponsored by Banco de la República, 1995, Bogotá, Colombia and also in the formation panel of the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, between 2003 - 2005.

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This likeable Bulgarian cellist is currently Professor at the University of Antioquia Medellín, Colombia. However, he had already gained high level teaching experience in Bulgaria previously, where he had be contracted as a teacher of Cello and Chamber Music at the Musical Institute - Plovdiv (1987 - 1990), and as a Cello Professor at the Higher Academy of Musical and Choreographic Arts - Plovdiv, 1988 - 1989.

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From 1993 to 2004, now in his Colombian period, he taught Cello and Chamber Music classes at the “Diego Echavarría” Musical Institute. During the period 1999-2009 he taught Cello classes at the School of Music of the University of EAFIT. Since 1996 he has also taught at the Music Department of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Antioquia. Under his mentorship, many important Colombian cellists have graduated and are now part of the national orchestras and teach at institutions such as the Diego Echavarría Musical Institute and the Medellín Band and School Network. Other students have gone on to carry out higher musical studies for Masters and Doctorates in countries including Venezuela; Spain, Austria, Sweden and the United States (specifically Chicago, Texas, Kansas and Virginia). Some of his students have been selected as principal cellists of the main Symphony Orchestras of Colombia; again I make mention of the National Symphony of Colombia, the Valley Symphony, the Bogota Philharmonic, and the Medellin Philharmonic.

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He is the author of the methods for Cello published on the educational platform of the University of Antioquia UdeA (titles given as in the original Spanish publications):

** “Escalas, arpeggios y dobles cuerdas con digitación unificada”
<https://udearroba.udea.edu.co/internos/course/view.php?id=2574> [see note just below]

** “Las Seis Suites para Violonchelo Solo de J. S. Bach. Una aproximación.”
<https://udearroba.udea.edu.co/internos/course/view.php?id=2575>

** “El Violonchelo y la Música Colombiana”
<https://udearroba.udea.edu.co/internos/course/view.php?id=2968>

For his online courses and especially for his method "The Cello and Colombian Music", the University of Antioquia awarded him the Material Recognition Award in 2015.

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[Special note on the first publication just above]

This method is aimed at Cello students of the University career. It is a basic and fundamental tool for studying scales, arpeggios and double string intervals: thirds, sixths and octaves with a systematized and unified fingering. The method is a novel academic proposal due to its way of studying scales without written notes, something that is very different compared to conventional methods. Therefore, the possibility of doing it in a virtual way is also presented, which consequently is even more novel in the practice of teaching the Cello. The virtual form is the one that allows easy access.....

"Studying scales, arpeggios and double strings in a state of mind free of artistic purposes, becomes the main tool for mastering the left-hand technique of the Cello."
Anatoli Krastev

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With such an all-compassing activity it should not be a surprise to learn that he also composes in his free time! As a composer his main purpose is to share his work with all interested colleagues. Special mention should be made of his award-winning double bass concerto, dedicated to his wife's sister, at the time of the composition a double bass player in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.



with the Plovdiv Quartet in 1984



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