

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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## CELLISTS' CORNER

# ISTVÁN VÁRDAI

Birth: 1985 - Pécs, Hungary

Award-winning Hungarian cellist ISTVÁN VÁRDAI is a present-day star, performing to great acclaim at major international venues.

He grew up in Pécs in a family of musicians; his mother, Ibolya Huszics, a piano teacher and his father István Várdai a music teacher. He attended the German elementary school in Tiborc Street. Mária Mátrai taught him to play the cello at the age of eight, and he already proved to be an extraordinary talent. He studied at the Béla Bartók Conservatory until 2004, during which time he won the international music competition named after Dávid Popper three times (2000, 2003, 2004). In 2007, the XIII. He won first prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and in 2008 at the Geneva International Music Competition, as well as the audience prize, the Coup de Cœur Breguet prize and the Pierre Fournier prize.

He obtained his diploma in 2009 at the Academy of Music in Budapest, as a student of László Mező, and then continued his studies at the Academy of Music in Vienna, where his teacher was Reinhard Latzko. Among others, he participated in the master classes of Natalja Gutman, Natalija Sahovszkaja, András Schiff and János Starker. From 2010 to 2013, he studied with Frans Helmerson at the Kronberg Academy, while in 2012 he won the Prix Montblanc. In 2014 he won the ARD International Cello Competition in Munich, and a year later captured Hungary's highest classical music honour, the Liszt Prize.

Since 2015, together with Kristóf Baráti, he has been the artistic director of the Kaposfest International Chamber Music Festival in Kaposvár, and since 2017 he has been a professor at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Mannheim. From autumn 2018, he heads the cello department of the Vienna Academy of Music (Universität für Musik und Darstellende Künste).

At the end of 2016, an unknown German patron donated the instrument to him, which is considered an "Ex du Pré-Harrell Stradivarius", referring to its previous owners, the English cellist Jacqueline du Pré, who died so young, and the American artist Lynn Harrell.

INTERESTING INTERVIEW by Oliver Pashley:

<https://interlude.hk/istvan-wardai-artist-of-the-month>

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*Dancing Cello*, 2018

*JS Bach 6 Suites for Cello Solo*, 2017

*Cello Variations*, 2014

*Kodaly: Music for Cello*, 2017 (István Várdai, Klára Würtz )

*Elgar, Janacek & Prokofiev: István Várdai*, 2009

*Singing Cello*, 2016

*Vanhal: Symphony in C major - Cello Concerto in C major - Symphony in E minor*, 2012

Finally, as a special treat, hear HIM play MY arrangement of Schumann - Abendlied!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxmhRvRezc>

The YouTube description is: "Wonderful Hungarian cellist István Várdai performing Robert Schumann's Abendlied, Op.85 with the Symphony Orchestra of the Hungarian Radio and conductor Zolt Hamar in the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall of Budapest, in April 2012"



Please do see original works for many different instruments and groupings (virtually all of the orchestral instruments, plus keyboard, accordion, txistu etc.). There are countless transcriptions of all kinds for cellists, and for cello with other instruments on the [Johnstone-Music](#) web page. General music and cello-based articles and biographies abound, plus directories of famous historical cellists, and many other historical and present-day items of interest...

**DOWNLOADS** - Many downloads on [Johnstone-Music](#) are now available, for those that are interested, free or at an almost *symbolic* payment, which is to help cover the costs of this web site. Some scores/parts are presented in musical edition programmes but generally they are found here in a most “clear” hand-written manuscript copy.

**USE OF MATERIAL** - As far as [Johnstone-Music](#) is concerned you are welcome to publicly perform or record any work or piece found in the web; you SHOULD, however, make a written mention of the name of the composer and the arranger on any printed information (hand programmes, disc covers etc.).

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