

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...

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