

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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## SPECIAL FEATURE on Hanus (Hanuš) Wihan

Hans Wihan

1855 — 1920

Czech

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### Positions/Posts:

Professor Mozarteum in Salzburg (age 18). At the Prague Conservatory he was a pupil of František Hegenbarth whom he succeeded in 1888 as professor of cello and chamber music. He finished his training under Karl Davíďov, whose methods formed the basis of his own future teaching.

A member of orchestras of a Russian patron in Nice and Lugano, then went to Benjamin Bilse's orchestra in Berlin (which was the forerunner of the Berlin Philharmonic), and Prince Schwarzenburg's orchestra in Sondershausen. He also played in the Court orchestra in Munich.

Bohemian String Quartet (with violinists Karel Hoffmann and Josef Suk, and violist Oskar Nedbal). Many recitals with cello and piano.

As Chamber music and Cello professor at Prague Conservatory he retired in 1914, but he returned to the conservatory in 1919, passing away the following year. His pupils included Artur Krása, Otakar Berger, Jan Burian, Julius Junek, Rudolf Pavlata, Maximilian Škvor, and Bedřich Vaska.

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### Premieres given by Wihan:

R. Strauss – Cello Sonata (also dedicated to him),

R. Strauss – Romance for Cello and Orchestra (no dedication, but officially it was written for him. The dedication in fact went to Strauss's uncle!).

Dvořák - Quartet in G major

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### Dedications to Wihan:

Richard Strauss - String Quartet in A, Op. 2,

Dvořák – Cello Concerto in B minor.

Dvorak – Rondo, Op.94.

Dvorak – Silent Woods (cello version),

Dvorak – 2 Slavonic Dances (cello versions).

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### Friendships:

Liszt, Dvorak, Hans von Bülow, Richard Wagner (who hired him to play at

the Bayreuth Festival), Richard Strauss, Davidov, Tchaikovsky.

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### Anecdotes:

\* Dvorak became rather angry at Wihan's attempt to insert a possible cadenza or even two in his cello concerto. However, the first performance by Leo Stern was as a result of Wihan's professional diary not allowing him freedom to play (because of quartet commitments), and not because of worsening relations with the Composer (as sometimes suggested).

\* It was also specifically about Wihan whom Dvorak was thinking of when he wrote the melodious violoncello part in the piano trio Op. 90 ('Dumky' 1891).

\*\* Hanuš Wihan was married to Dora (née Weis), a pianist from Dresden. However, Dora fell in love with Richard Strauss, who was five years younger than her. There is no evidence that the affair was consummated or was ever going to be, but Wihan was very jealous by nature and it led to Dora's and Hanuš's marriage breaking up.

\*\* He died aged 64 on 1 May 1920, the exact anniversary of Dvořák's death in 1904

\*\* In 1985 the Wihan Quartet was established in memory of Hanuš Wihan by members of the Prague Academy

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#### FURTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY

Z. Nejedlý: Obituary, Smetana, x (1920), 50

B. Urie: Čeští violoncellisté (Prague, 1946), 109ff, 139ff, 307

B. Heran: Kdo je Hanuš Wihan? [Who is Hanuš Wihan?] (Prague, 1947)

L.S. Ginzburg: Ganush Vigan i Cheshskiy kvartet [Hanuš Wihan and the Czech Quartet] (Moscow, 1955)

J. Vratislavský: České kvarteto [The Czech Quartet] (Prague, 1984), 27-37

(I do not have any of these books...)

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