

## SPECIAL FEATURE on REINE FLACHOT

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Birth: 10th October 1922 (Santa Fe, Argentina)

Death: 29th October 1998

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The cellist Reine Flachot was born in Argentina, but came to be considered a French cellist. She first arrived in Paris at the age of 12 to study with Jean Dumont and Paul Bazelaire, as well as with Gerard Hekking at the Paris Conservatoire. She won the first prize there in 1938. The same year she made her official debut playing the Lalo Cello Concerto.

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We will always have the “famous four” - Fournier, Tortelier, Gendron and Navarra - but perhaps we should be speaking of a “fabulous five”, on account of her glorious career after the Second World War, which in the words of Christine Heurtefeux made her the *"ambassador of the French school of cello for sixty years"*. Certainly from the late 50s and all through the 60s we could speak of her career at a zenith as an enigmatic performer. During these years, she offered countless concerts and in particular some of the first known performances of many contemporary works, some exceedingly difficult! I might cite for you:

Darius Milhaud (Suite Cisalpine, 1954),

Charles Brown (Cello Concerto, 1956),

Pierre-Max Dubois (Cello Concerto, 1958),

Francis Miroglio (Sonate pour violoncelle et piano, 1961),

Aram Khachaturian (Concerto-Rhapsodie, 1963),

Émile Mawet (Cello Concerto, 1965),

André Jolivet (Cello Concerto, 1971),

Henri Sauguet (Sonate pour violoncelle, 1972)...

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In the 1970s her attention turned to teaching. In 1966, she had already joined the École Normale de Musique de Paris, but she left in 1970 for the Centre musical international of Annecy before the Tōhō Gakuen called her. She stayed there until 1974, when she joined the City of Basel Music Academy, while continuing her studies at the ENM in Paris and becoming the first woman cello teacher at the CNSM de Lyon. She also occasionally gave masterclasses; I remember her at the Madrid Conservatoire in about 1992, and I thought the advice she was offering the young Spanish cellists quite solid, and in a serious but gentle manner.

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However, she ceased all her teaching activity too in 1995. That same year, she also gave her last concerts in Japan, preferring to withdraw from the limelight at 73 years old. Her own words were: *"I prefer to leave a beautiful picture of me and I'm tired."* Unfortunately she only was able to enjoy a deserved retirement for three years before she passed away.

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During her career, Reine Flachot was distinguished by the Piatigorski Prize (1954) and the international Orense Prize (1965). I believe she only made four recordings which is a great shame; she considered herself a 'performing' artist, not a studio lady.

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Here are two surviving examples though:

Falla - Seven Spanish folk songs - Reine Flachot - cello Christine Heurtefeux guitar

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFg\\_2xWwS2M&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1AkxrMITNPrtduttqz70Kpd-gJWfGcOOA9R2tfqULdyoprg0lbj8tVEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFg_2xWwS2M&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1AkxrMITNPrtduttqz70Kpd-gJWfGcOOA9R2tfqULdyoprg0lbj8tVEE)

Reine Flachot plays Debussy Cello Sonate:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJv7o\\_ij4Tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJv7o_ij4Tg)

Magical interpretations, poetical! Never afraid to speak in her own soul!

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She is today sadly a largely forgotten cellist, so I am keen to remember her career with you all.

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'documenting the cello'

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