

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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SPECIAL FEATURE on ARTO NORAS

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Birth: 12th May 1942 - Turku, Finland

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Arto Noras is a Finnish cellist who is one of Finland's most celebrated instrumentalists and amongst the most outstanding internationally acknowledged cellists of his generation. The music critics praise his impeccable, natural, seemingly effortless virtuosity, and the powerful expressiveness of Noras' playing, together with his immense enthusiasm and consummate musicianship. For example, the New York Daily News wrote after one concert: "This cellist is truly awesome. His records didn't prepare us for his tone, which seems surely the biggest heard since the days of Pablo Casals and Emmanuel Feuermann..."

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I first remember him when I was a small boy, when he took part in television masterclasses with Paul Tortelier, but seemed to me then the already 'finished article'!

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Arto Noras started his studies aged 8 years old at the prestigious Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. After completing his studies with Professor Yrjö Selin at the Sibelius Academy, Arto Noras studied with Paul Tortelier at the Paris Conservatoire where he gained the prestigious 'Premier Prix' diploma in 1964. This influence from Tortelier showed its fruits; two years later, in 1966, he was awarded second prize in the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, and about which I have read in 'Conciertos Vitoria': "there was a 'furore' when he was 'only' awarded second prize in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow" ! Anyway, this success opened his way to the most important concert halls and orchestra invitations in Europe and both North and South America, where he has performed regularly ever since. He was even more quickly accepted as a cello 'master' within Scandinavia; Arto Noras won the Danish 'Sonning Prize' in 1967 and Finnish State music prize in 1972.

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Arto Noras' repertoire covers all the principal works that have been written for his instrument, including those by contemporary composers, and he has recorded almost extensively for the Finlandia recording label. Amongst these distinguished contemporary composers are the cello concertos by Einojuhani Rautavaara, Henri Dutilleux, Leif Segerstam (his 6th cello concerto!), Erik Bergman, Aulis Sallinen and Arthus Bliss.

He is a regular soloist at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico as well as the Pablo Casals Music Festival in Prades. He can also be heard as a most distinguished chamber musician as a member of the Helsinki Trio and as a founder member of the Sibelius Academy Quartet as well as with several other groups of similarly distinguished musicians.

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In 1970 Arto Noras was appointed Professor of Cello at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Noras has served in the jury for some of the most important music competitions in the world, including the Tchaikovsky, Casals and Cassadó cello competitions.

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In 1980, Prof. Noras founded the Naantali Music Festival in Naantali, Finland, and has been the Artistic Manager of the festival for various decades. He also founded the V Paulo International Cello Competition in 1991.



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