

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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## **SPECIAL FEATURE on KENNETH ('KEN') WOODS**

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Born in 1968, in the U.S.A., Kenneth Woods is hailed by Gramophone as a “symphonic conductor of stature”; he is a conductor, cellist, composer, author and even rock guitarist. However, he is best known today as a conductor - he has worked with numerous orchestras of which a mention might be made of the National Symphony Orchestra (USA), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and English Chamber Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals such as Aspen, Scotia and Lucerne.

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In 2013, he took up a new position as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra, succeeding Vernon Handley. Ken also serves as Artistic Director of the Elgar Festival, the official international celebration of the music and life of Britian’s greatest composer in the town of his birth.

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Woods' orchestrations and arrangements of music by other composers includes an orchestration of Brahms' Piano Quartet No. 2, recorded with the ESO for Nimbus. In 2012, the English Chamber Orchestra recorded his orchestration of Viktor Ullmann's Third String Quartet. Other arrangements and orchestrations include works by Mahler, Schubert, Humperdinck and Tchaikovsky. Woods' own music has been recorded on Avie Records.

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Off the podium, Woods is also much in demand as an essayist and speaker on Mahler’s life and music. He has given talks and participated in panel discussions on Mahler for the BBC and multiple festivals and orchestras, and was the official blogger of The Bridgewater Hall’s Mahler Festival in Manchester.

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As a cellist, Woods has been a recipient of the Aspen Fellowship, the Dale Gilbert Award, the Strelow Quartet Fellowship, and the National Endowment for the Arts Rural Residency Grant. He was the founding cellist of the Taliesin Trio and of the Masala Quartet. In 2006, he became a founding artist of the Clocktower Chamber Music Festival in Durango, Colorado. In 2008, he became artist-in-residence at the Ischia Chamber Music Festival.

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That same year - 2008 - he also became the founding cellist of the string trio, 'Ensemble Epomeo'. The trio's first CD comprised the world premiere recordings of the complete string trios of Hans Gál, coupled with those of Hans Krása. Their next disc included string trios by Schnittke, Penderecki, Weinberg and Kurtág. In 2014, Ensemble Epomeo released "Auricolae: The Double Album", a collection of new storytelling works for violin, cello and narrator including new works by David Yang, Jay Reise, Andrew Waggoner, Kile Smith and Woods' own setting of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling."

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In 2018, Woods made his first recording as cellist of the newly-formed 'Briggs Piano Trio', a disc including Shostakovich's Piano Trio in E minor and two piano trios by Hans Gál.



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