

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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ENRICO MAINARDI

by Celloheaven

Enrico Mainardi, great Italian cellist and composer, was born in Milan (May 19th, 1897) and died in Munich (April 10th, 1976). His father, himself an amateur cellist, gave him a small cello when he was only three years old. At the age of eight he was giving public performances of Beethoven sonatas, and toured Italy as a child prodigy. In Bologna he was accompanied on the piano by the great composer Respighi. He graduated in 1910 from the "Giuseppe Verdi Milan Conservatory," at the age of thirteen. In 1917 he graduated from the Milan Conservatory with a diploma in composition.

World War I happened shortly afterward, and Mainardi cut back on touring and performing. When he took his cello up again after the war, he found that he had lost the ability to play well. He entered the Academy of St. Cecilia in Rome to study composition and piano, and in 1924 finally decided to seriously study the cello again. Mainardi would often say later that this experience of forgetting how to play, and then relearning everything, enable him to be a good teacher. He was the author of numerous cello works, both concert and pedagogic. Mainardi was one of the first concert cellists to make much of the Bach Suites, and to give over an entire concert evening to their performance.

In 1933 he became professor of cello at the Academy of St. Cecilia, and in 1941 he replaced Becker (who had passed away) at the Berlin Hochschule. After World War II, Mainardi became well known as a performer in Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Scandanavia, but more well-known as a cello pedagogue in England and France.

Many fine cellists studied with Mainardi, including Joan Dickson, A. Baldovino, M. Dorner, Aldo D'Amico, Siegfried Palm and Miklos Perenyi. Mainardi was fond of flamboyant clothing, but his performances were serious. He wrote: "My principle and aim is to be at the service of music and not to use it for the sake of showing myself."

Mainardi wrote four concertos for cello and orchestra, and many other works, including cadenzas for some of the major cello concertos. For more information, the student of cello history is directed to Lev Ginsburg's History of the Violoncello.



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