THE BRIDGEWATER HALL
INTERNATIONAL
CONCERT SERIES 15|16

Dresden Philharmonic

Michael Sanderling conductor
Sol Gabetta cello
Wednesday 14 October 7.30pm

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INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES 15|16

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

Joshua Bell violin/music director
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The Bridgewater Hall

Dresden Philharmonic

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Sol Gabetta cello

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 7.30pm

Wagner Overture, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Elgar Cello Concerto in E minor, Op.85

Interval

Beethoven Symphony No.3 in E-flat, 'Eroica'

Post-concert Divertimento

Romantic music remains popular with audiences today. Its emotive melodies, vivid colours and heroic aspirations provide thrilling experiences. Tonight, we hear three such works - from the beginning, middle and end of the Romantic period. Beethoven was the first composer to believe that music could change the world. He was forward-looking and optimistic. Wagner was his natural successor, but already pessimism and nostalgia for the past question Beethoven's idealism. By the early part of the 20th century, optimism had all but vanished. The slaughter of the First World War had robbed people of hope and, in Elgar's Cello Concerto, hope hangs by the slenderest thread.

Peter Davison
Artistic Director
International Concert Series

Members of the audience are politely requested to try to refrain from coughing during the performance, other than between pieces and movements; the resonant acoustic of The Bridgewater Hall means that the noise of an uncovered cough can be very disturbing for audience and performer alike. Patrons are also requested to turn off all electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

About the Music

Richard Wagner (1813-83)

Overture, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

The German composer, Richard Wagner, was one of the most influential figures of the 19th century. Renowned not only for his music, but also his revolutionary ideas, he transformed European culture. His operas are notoriously ambitious in scale and include the monumental cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1852-1874). As a Romantic, steeped in Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, Wagner wrote mainly tragic works exploring the dark side of human nature and experience. The notable exception of his mature years was his comic opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* or *The Mastersingers of Nuremburg*, completed in 1867 and first performed in Munich, a year later.

The work was a deliberate flight from the suicidal intensity of the composer's ground-breaking opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1859). Gone are the tortured lovers and wild chromatic harmonies, instead light-heartedness and white-note stability predominate. The plot of *Die Meistersinger* revolves around a genuine historical figure; the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs (1494-1576). In the opera, Sachs is a one of the Guild of Mastersingers; a group formed to uphold the standards of song composition. Another member of the Guild, Pogner, offers his daughter Eva in marriage to the winner of a song competition. A young knight, Walther, who is in love with Eva, enters the contest unaware of its complex rules. Despite the opposition of the pedantic and odious Beckmesser (who also aspires to marry Eva), Walther, aided by Sachs, wins the contest with his Prize Song. Wagner's message, aimed at his many hostile critics, especially the arch-conservative Hanslick, was that good music springs from spontaneous vitality and should not be constrained by rigid tradition and pettiness.

While *Die Meistersinger* is sometimes criticised for its German nationalist sentiments, it includes some of Wagner's most lyrical and accessible music. Its Overture (or Prelude) begins with the stalwart C major melody associated with the Mastersingers, and it is followed by several of the opera's principal themes, including the Prize Song. After a passage of dazzling counterpoint, combining many of the main motifs, a jubilant march strides in, uniting everyone through the visionary power of music. Thus we are permitted a glimpse of the opera's final rousing scene which, in a complete performance, reaches its conclusion almost six hours later.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op.85

Adagio – Moderato
Lento – Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro

Elgar was very much influenced by German Romantic composers. These include Wagner, but also Schumann, Brahms and Richard Strauss, although he undoubtedly added something uniquely personal and specifically English to their musical language. His Cello Concerto belongs to his mature years, being composed at the end of the First World War, during 1918 and 1919; a period when the old imperial culture was fast crumbling, stirring a pervasive autumnal melancholy fuelled by the carnage in the trenches. The work is perhaps also prophetic of the personal tragedy which would befall Elgar in 1920, when his wife, Lady Alice, died after a short illness, leaving him bereft of a loyal and sympathetic companion.

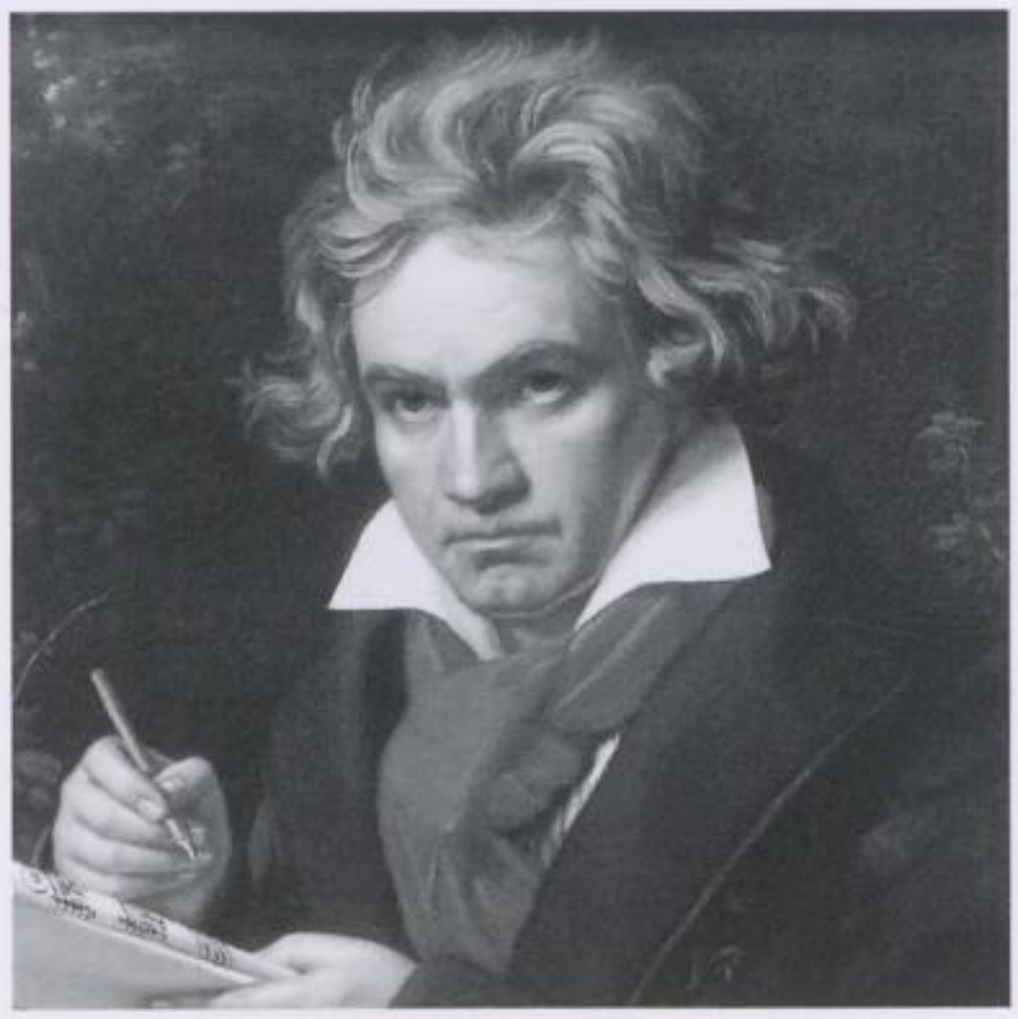
By comparison with Elgar's Violin Concerto, which had stretched the genre to its limits, the Cello Concerto, written a decade later, is a less ambitious work. Elgar was nonetheless delighted with it, and the first performance took place at the Queen's Hall, London on 26 October 1919, played by Felix Salmond. It was the opening concert of the London Symphony Orchestra's first post-war season, and the work was conducted by the composer himself. There was insufficient rehearsal time, resulting in a disappointing premiere. Despite that, the concerto's merits were soon recognised, and it remains one of the most popular works in the genre. It is interesting to note that a young John Barbirolli was playing the cello in the orchestra at the premiere. He would have had no inkling that, almost fifty years later, conducting this same orchestra, he would direct perhaps the most iconic recording of the Concerto, performed by the incomparable Jacqueline du Pré.

The concerto opens with a pensive cello recitative; a sorrowful 'once upon a time' which recurs throughout the work, articulating its unfolding narrative. The violas begin the story - a wistful undulating melody which rises to a passionate climax. On his deathbed, Elgar tried to whistle the tune to his friend, the violinist William Reed. 'Billy,' he said, 'if ever you're walking on the Malvern Hills and hear that, don't be frightened. It's only me!' A more animated second subject grows into a tenderly expressive passage in E major. But after the return of the main theme, the music dissolves into despair. The cello recitative re-appears, this time played *pizzicato*, acting as a bridge to the second movement. It is a puckish scherzo, carried along by a fiendishly athletic *moto perpetuo*, requiring 'richochet' bowing and high harmonics from the soloist.

The emotional heart of the concerto is its brief slow movement; a melancholy song-without-words, reminiscent of Schumann, although it has a poignancy that belongs very much to the soul of Elgar. The brass section falls silent, as the cello petitions with profound expression. The movement's final unresolved cadence seems to whisper a question, which is answered by the

finale without a break. Intimacy is swept aside, and a sardonic orchestral march ensues. The cello's first entry calls a temporary halt, but soon the soloist is leading the way. The passage-work is fast and furious, yet the momentum falters time after time, until the movement reaches an extended accompanied cadenza. All pretence stops here, and the music burgeons into a moving elegy full of sighs and tears. There are reminiscences of preceding movements, culminating in a yearning reference to the *adagio*, which emerges like a blissful memory of lost joy. The dream-like atmosphere is disturbed by the return of the work's sombre cello recitative. But the sardonic march, played by full orchestra, silences this brooding introspection, slamming the door firmly shut.

Interval



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No.3 in E-flat, 'Eroica'

Allegro con brio
Marcia Funebre; Adagio assai
Scherzo; Allegro vivace
Finale; Allegro molto

The French Revolution of 1789 brought with it a tide of optimism among radical thinkers in Europe. It was hoped that a spirit of renewal and justice might sweep aside the stagnation and corruption of the monarchic and aristocratic hierarchies which had kept many European states bound to antiquated feudal ways. The French general, Napoleon Bonaparte, emerged as the chief evangelist of the new order, waging revolutionary wars of liberation across the continent. He epitomised the energy and heroism of the new meritocratic age. The common man could now claim his rights, settle old scores and embrace a new era that would bring social and political progress. The German composer, Ludwig van Beethoven was captivated by these new ideas. He had himself sprung from the serving classes. As the son of a court musician, he had broken

the rules of his class by 'achieving greatness'; the consequence of his extraordinary musical gifts and towering ambition. Yet he found himself living in a snobbish and conservative City, Vienna where, for all the respect afforded him as musician, the authorities considered his revolutionary sympathies profoundly suspicious.

In 1803-4, Beethoven composed his Third Symphony. It was intended as a musical portrait of a great hero, and he decided to dedicate the work to Napoleon. The story is often told that Beethoven tore up the dedication on hearing that Napoleon had declared himself Emperor of France in May 1804. But evidence suggests that he remained an ambivalent admirer thereafter. Beethoven's disillusion may have been the result of his own futile and hypocritical attempts to become a noble. Perhaps Napoleon reminded him of the uncomfortable truth that the revolutionary ultimately assumes the mantle of his former oppressor. Of course, Beethoven's idolisation of Napoleon was largely based on fantasy, requiring him to turn a blind eye to the dictator's ruthless brutality. But what had truly impressed him was that a humble Corsican had been able to rise from obscurity to lead his country and conquer great swathes of Europe. It was an achievement which paralleled Beethoven's own meteoric ascent to become the greatest composer of his day. After all, the Eroica is as much about Beethoven as any other hero, and he believed that it was the role of the artist to elevate and transform human society by his superhuman example.

In this light, we can more easily understand the symphony's bold ambition and visionary qualities. It is on a massive scale, unprecedented in its day. The first movement alone is almost 20 minutes long, opening with a confident E-flat major theme marked by a characteristic chromatic inflection which hints at the hero's restlessness. The second subject is more longing in tone, but this mood does not prevail. The development section grows increasingly stormy and defiant, although the hero's victory is never really in doubt, with the exception of the dissonant climax which piles up at the movement's heart. In one of Beethoven's most unconventional gestures, the movement's recapitulation is pre-empted by the horns which enter seemingly two bars early, emphasising the hero's transgressive eagerness. Indeed, the horns are prominent throughout the work, and their heroic credentials are firmly established for the first time in a symphony, inspiring a whole century of composers to follow suit. The movement closes with exhilarating confidence, as the hero reaches the height of his powers.

Heroism demands risk and sacrifice, and heroes may even die in action. The Eroica's slow movement is a funeral march recalling memories of brave deeds and the pain of loss. But it is also a passage to immortality and a place in the pantheon. The music is by turns grief-stricken, serene, noble and exultant, sometimes altogether. The movement closes tragically, as the march-theme fragments into murky stillness. By contrast, the scherzo captures the hero's titanic dynamism, which bursts out of the gloom in a ceaseless bustle. The Trio section is less busy, but no less extrovert, and the horns are compelled to leap skywards in an acrobatic display.

The finale is based on a theme from Beethoven's ballet of 1801, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (The Creatures of Prometheus), which first appears as a repeated skeletal bass line, upon which melodies and harmonies are superimposed. The legend which inspired the ballet concerns the creation of human kind, who are animated with the fire stolen by Prometheus from the gods; an act for which (in the ballet at least) he is first put to death, then mercifully revived. The ballet also shows how humanity is awoken from its indolent slumber by the lessons of the muses, so that the movement is, in effect, a celebration of creativity as the boundless source of heroic endeavour and the development of human potential. The music grows in momentum through several variations, full of good humour. The textures become increasingly contrapuntal and muscular, before reaching a

serene and expansive episode with a prominent oboe solo. The music rises to a forceful statement of the main theme played by resplendent horns. But from this great height, the mood unexpectedly falls into crisis. Just as the symphony seems to be stuttering into silence, victory is snatched in an 'air-punching' coda which races breathlessly to the work's finishing line.

About the Performers

Dresden Philharmonic

The Dresden Philharmonic is the orchestra of Dresden, the State Capital of Saxony. Since 2011, Michael Sanderling has been its Principal Conductor, following Kurt Masur, Marek Janowski, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and others in this position. The Dresden Philharmonic continues the tradition of the Ratsmusik, the city council's musicians who were first mentioned in the 15th century and had grown into an orchestra by the early nineteenth century. Since 1870, the year when Dresden got its first great concert hall, the Philharmonic's symphony concerts have been an established part of the city's concert life. The Dresden Philharmonic has ever since been a concert orchestra with regular ventures into the fields of opera concertante and oratorios. It is housed in the Palace of Culture in the middle of the Old Town. The listed shell of the building will be built-in with a new, ultra-modern concert hall by 2017. Until then, the Philharmonic performs concerts for large orchestra mainly in the Albertinum and the Schauspielhaus.

The Dresden Philharmonic offers great musical and stylistic variety. On the one hand, the orchestra has been able to retain its very own 'German' sound in the Romantic repertoire. On the other hand, it has developed flexibility of sound and style for Baroque and Viennese Classic music as well as for modern works. Renowned conductors and composers headed the orchestra early on, from Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvorák and Richard Strauss to Erich Kleiber and Knappertsbusch, Previn and Marriner, to Andris Nelsons and Kristjan Järvi. Premieres remain an important part of the orchestra's programme today.

The Dresden Philharmonic joins the Dresden Kreuzchor for the Christmas and Easter Bach performances at the Kreuzkirche. For the great choral symphonies the orchestra can rely on the Dresden Philharmonic Choir as an excellent partner. Another important tradition is chamber music and chamber symphonies performed by the Dresden Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, all of whose musicians come from the Dresden Philharmonic.

Not only does the Dresden Philharmonic enjoy an extraordinarily large number of regular subscribers; with its family programmes, film music concerts etc. it does a great job in introducing classical music to new groups of listeners. Guest performances all over the world are testimony to the high renown the Dresden Philharmonic enjoys in the world of classical music. Another remarkable aspect is the Philharmonic's impressive discography which started to develop in 1937. Currently, a new cycle is being recorded for the Sony Classical label, with Principal Conductor Michael Sanderling pairing a selection of Dmitri Shostakovich's symphonies with Beethoven's symphonies.

Player List

Principal Conductor
Michael Sanderling
Principal Guest Conductor
Bertrand de Billy
Conductor Laureate
Kurt Masur
General Director
Frauke Roth

1st Violin
Heike Janicke*
Wolfgang Hentrich*
Dalia Schmalenberg
Jeanine Thorpe
Heide Schwarzbach
Christoph Lindemann
Marcus Gottwald
Ute Kelemen
Antje Becker
Johannes Groth
Alexander Teichmann
Annegret Teichmann
Juliane Kettschau
Thomas Otto
Eunyoung Lee
Deborah Jungnickel

2nd Violin
Markus Gundermann
Michael Dinnebier* **
Adela Bratu
Denise Nittel
Reinhard Lohmann
Steffen Gaitzsch
Matthias Bettin
Andreas Hoene
Andrea Dittrich
Constanze Sandmann
Jörn Hettfleisch
Susanne Herberg
Christiane Liskowsky
Angelika Feckl

Viola
Christina Biwank*
Hanno Felthaus*
Matan Gilitchensky
Beate Müller
Steffen Seifert
Steffen Neumann
Heiko Mürbe
Hans-Burkart Henschke
Andreas Kuhlmann
Harald Hufnagel
Eva Maria Knauer
Jie Zhou**

Violoncello
Matthias Bräutigam*
Ulf Prelle*
Victor Meister
Rainer Promnitz
Karl Bernhard von Stumpff
Clemens Krieger
Daniel Thiele
Alexander Will
Bruno Borralhinho
Hans-Ludwig Raatz

Double Bass
Benedikt Hübner*
Tobias Glöckler
Olaf Kindel
Bringfried Seifert
Thilo Ermold
Donatus Bergemann
Matthias Bohrig
Ilie Cozmatchi

Flute
Karin Hofmann*
Mareike Thrun*
Götz Bammes
Berit Schmutzler**

Oboe
Johannes Pfeiffer*
Undine Röhner-Stolle*
Guido Titze
Jens Prasse

Clarinet
Hans-Detlef Löchner*
Fabian Dirr*
Dittmar Trebeljahr
Klaus Jopp

Bassoon
Daniel Bäz*
Ulrich Hermann* **
Michael Lang
Mario Hendel

Horn
Michael Schneider*
Hanno Westphal*
Torsten Gottschalk
Johannes Max
Dietrich Schlät
Carsten Gießmann

Trumpet
Christian Höcherl*
Csaba Kelemen
Nikolaus von Tippelskirch

Trombone
Stefan Langbein*
Joachim Franke
Dietmar Pester

Tuba
Jörg Wachsmuth*

Timpani
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* Principal
** Substitute

Michael Sanderling conductor

Michael Sanderling has been Principal Conductor at the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011. As his contract was prolonged, this extremely successful example of co-operation between the conductor and the orchestra will continue until at least 2019.

At the same time, he is a sought-after guest conductor in the world's greatest music centres and directs renowned orchestras such as the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, the Berlin Konzerthausorchester, the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokio, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Germany's great radio orchestras.

Born in Berlin, Michael Sanderling is one of the few who made their way from being orchestra musicians into the top league of conductors. In 1987, aged 20, he became a cello soloist at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Kurt Masur, then from 1994 to 2006 he filled the same position at the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist, he gave guest performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestre de Paris, to name but a few, and as a passionate chamber musician he was a member of the Ex Aequo trio for eight years.

It was at a rehearsal of the Berlin Chamber Orchestra in 2000 that he stood at the conductor's desk for the first time – and was on fire. Familiar with a conductor's work from his childhood as the son of legendary Kurt Sanderling, Michael assumed more and more conducting jobs and was appointed principal conductor and art director of the renowned Kammerakademie Potsdam in 2006. He was successful as an opera conductor with Philip Glas' *The Fall of the House of Usher* in Potsdam and with a new production of Sergei Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at Cologne Opera. As a cellist and conductor he has made CD recordings of important works from the repertoire of Dvorák, Schumann, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and others. However, it has been a long time since he last performed as a cellist.

What is close to Michael Sanderling's heart is work with young musicians. He teaches as a professor at Frankfurt University for Music and Performing Arts and co-operates regularly with the Bundesjugendorchester, the Jerusalem Weimar Youth Orchestra, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and with the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra. From 2003 to 2013 he was associated with the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie as its principal conductor.

Speaking the language of the orchestra musicians, Michael Sanderling is considered to be efficient at rehearsals and yet able to bring out the fire in the musicians during concerts. His musical horizon encompasses Bach and Handel as well as premieres, of which he has conducted many by now, and it is a major aim for him to develop the Dresden Philharmonic's flexibility of sound and style even further.

Sol Gabetta cello

Sol Gabetta achieved international acclaim upon winning the Crédit Suisse Young Artist Award in 2004 and making her debut with the Wiener Philharmoniker and Valery Gergiev. Born in Argentina, Gabetta won her first competition at the age of ten, soon followed by the Natalia Gutman Award as well as commendations at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Competition and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich. A Grammy Award nominee, Sol Gabetta received the Gramophone Young Artist of the Year Award in 2010 and the Würth-Preis of the Jeunesses Musicales in 2012.

Following her highly acclaimed debut with Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle at the Baden-Baden Easter Festival in 2014, Gabetta will offer her Staatskapelle Berlin in December 2014. Other highlights for the 2014/15 season include her debut with Toronto Symphony Orchestra, a European tour with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski as well as recitals across Europe with Bertrand Chamayou, with whom she will release a recital CD in 2015.

Gabetta's performances today include appearances with leading orchestras and conductors worldwide including the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Orchestre National de France, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bolshoi and Finnish Radio Symphony orchestras and The Philadelphia, London Philharmonic and Philharmonia orchestras. Gabetta collaborates very extensively with conductors Giovanni Antonini, Mario Venzago, Pablo Heras-Casado and Thomas Hengelbrock.

She was artist in residence at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in summer 2014, with past residencies at the Philharmonie and Konzerthaus Berlin. Sol is a regular guest at festivals such as Verbier, Gstaad, Schwetzingen, Rheingau, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and Beethovenfest Bonn.

Sol Gabetta maintains an intensive chamber music activity, performing worldwide in halls such as Wigmore Hall in London, Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, with distinguished partners including Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Baiba Skride and especially Bertrand Chamayou. Her passion for chamber music is evident in the Festival 'Solsberg' which she founded in Switzerland.

Sol Gabetta was named Instrumentalist of the Year at the 2013 Echo Klassik Awards, for her interpretation of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic and Lorin Maazel. She also received the award in 2007, 2009 and 2011 for her recordings of Haydn, Mozart and Elgar Cello concerti as well as works by Tchaikovsky and Ginastera. Sol Gabetta holds an extensive discography with SONY and has released a duo recital with Hélène Grimaud for Deutsche Grammophon.

Thanks to a generous private stipend by the Rahn Kulturfonds, Sol Gabetta performs on one of the very rare and precious cellos by G.B. Guadagnini dating from 1759. Gabetta has taught at the Basel Music Academy since 2005.

Acknowledgments

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