

PRELUDE

NOVEMBER 2024 • MASTERWORKS #3



HARTFORD
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Brahms' First – November 15-17, 2024

You Had Me At Cello! For hundreds of years, the cello has been entrancing audiences with warm, emotional tones and rich sounds that resemble the range of the human voice. It has often been said that the cello is an instrument that speaks to the soul.

The origins of the cello date to before the first century AD, and its ancient string ancestors, the lyre and harp, were frequently used as accompaniment to poetry. The violin evolved from the “viol,” a fretted string and a close cousin of the Renaissance lute, which had 6 strings. Unlike the lute, the viol was held vertically and played with a bow. The viol was made in three sizes: treble, tenor and bass, and the violone, an instrument of a lower register, was eventually added.



Fretted Viol

The cello began as a “peasant rival” to the more sophisticated viola da gamba. The fretted “viol” was derived from the lute, and the “violoncello” (a small

bass violin) was essentially a large medieval fiddle, often with a hole in the back to affix a strap, so it could be lugged through the streets in marches or parades.

The evolution of the violin began during the Renaissance, and the violin can trace its beginnings from the earlier bowed string instruments. According to the renowned Vienna Symphony Library, it wasn't until the second half of the 16th century (between 1520 and 1550) that violin makers began to construct a larger version of the violin, or what would eventually become the modern cello.



Viola de Gamba

This short video explains the key differences between a viola da gamba and the modern cello: [Viola da Gamba vs Cello: what are the differences? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

With the start of the 17th century, famed luthiers Andrea Amati (1581-1632), Gasparo da Salo (1549-1609), and Paolo Maggini (1581-1632) were credited

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Modern Cello



Rostropovich



YoYo Ma



Sheku Kanneh-Mason

with the first designs of a bass violin, known as the “violone.” It was much larger than the cello we know today, mostly because the lower pitches were hard to achieve unless the instrument was larger. The invention of metal wound strings in 1659 made it possible to achieve a lower sound with a somewhat smaller instrument. As the drive to reduce the size of the instrument increased, luthiers continued to experiment.

It was famed violinmaker Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) who developed the cello size we know today. As he began making the smaller versions, luthiers throughout Europe followed his example, and 63 of his original celli are greatly prized and still being played today. The most famous cello works produced during the 1700s were the Bach Cello Suites, likely composed between 1717 and 1723. The Suites were lost to history for over a century, until they were unearthed in Barcelona in 1890 by a 13-year-old Pablo Casals. Casals was not merely a brilliant musician but is credited as the artist who brought the Bach Cello Suites back to well-deserved prominence.

During the mid to late 18th century, more changes were made to improve the cello’s volume, clarity and responsiveness. Some alterations included raising the bridge to increase string pressure and volume, but the neck and fingerboard were also extended, and setting the neck back at an angle resulted in improved clarity and response. One of the most noticeable alterations made during the late 19th century was the addition of the end pin rod (spike), which improved the ease of use for the player, allowing for a better angle.

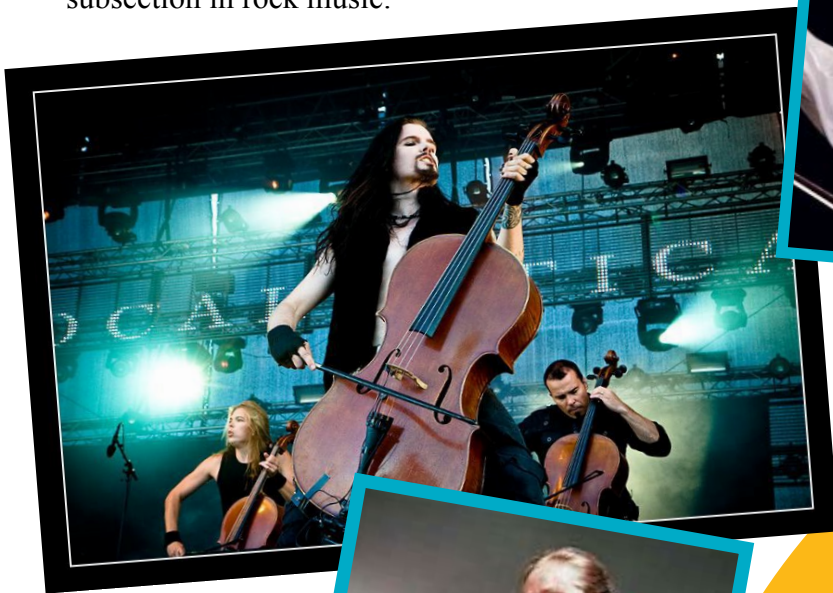
It was the standardization of the size of the cello that facilitated the emergence of

virtuoso musicians, such as the composer and cellist Luigi Boccherini. A musical pioneer, Boccherini began to use the cello for more than just a bass line and incorporated more harmonics and advanced melodies for the instrument, proving that the cello had an equal place with other solo instruments. Enjoy this link to listen to Boccherini's cello concertos: [Boccherini: Complete Cello Concertos \(youtube.com\)](#)

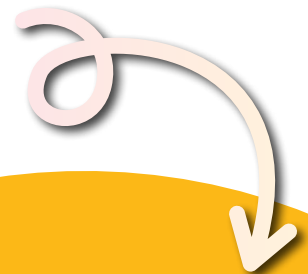
In the centuries since its original design, the cello has grown in popularity. In the 20th century, the development of steel strings created a significant difference in the instrument's sound, opening more possibilities for the instrument beyond its classical music origins. It is hardly a surprise that the cello is now featured in pop songs and has garnered its own subsection in rock music.

For those who are curious, it is the cello, not the double bass, that serves as the lowest voice of the violin group. Violin, viola and cello all have four strings, pitched in fifths, and the cello, with the lowest register, is pitched C-D-G-A, moving upwards from two octaves below middle C. The double bass, with the lowest register in the string family, is pitched differently from the violin family, with strings that are tuned in fourths (E-A-D-G), instead of fifths.

Finally, no discussion of cello would be complete without an acknowledgement of some of the most well-known cellists of the last century, and we are sure you will recognize their photos included in this article.



Mischa Maisky



Jacqueline du Pré

JOIN US!

Please join the HSO on November 15-17, 2024, to hear guest artist Inbal Segev perform the emotional *Concerto for Cello in E minor* by Edward Elgar, along with the powerful and triumphant *Symphony No. 1 in C minor* by Johannes Brahms, under the baton of our music director, Carolyn Kuan.

Did you borrow this *Prelude*? Get your own free copy! Whether you're a ticket buyer, donor, curious about the music, or know someone who is, just send an email to dshulansky@hartfordsymphony.org. We'll make sure you receive *Prelude* by email, in advance of each HSO Masterworks concert!

Are you interested in hearing some interesting – and different - cello music?

Perhaps the most exciting and influential cellist of his generation is Yo-Yo Ma, and we hope you will enjoy this recording of the Bach Cello Suite No 3, which is as close to perfection as one can get.

[Yo-Yo Ma - Bach: Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major, Bourrée I and II \(youtube.com\)](#)

Curious to learn more about the story behind the Bach Cello Suites? Enjoy this article curated by CPR Classical:

[The Story Behind the Bach Cello Suites, And Why We Still Love Them Today \(cpr.org\)](#)

Curious to hear how the cello is used in rock music? Enjoy this performance by Apocalyptica, featuring four celli:

[Apocalyptica - One \(Plays Metallica By Four Cellos - A Live Performance\) - YouTube](#)

For something complete different, try this performance by the group, 2Cellos, in a live performance at Arena di Verona:

[2CELLOS - Welcome To The Jungle \[Live at Arena di Verona\] \(youtube.com\)](#)

The wonderful cellist Cremaine Booker (whose youtube channel is ThatCelloGuy) has created many different videos on social media, and one favorite is the Vivaldi Double Cello Concerto, in partnership with cellist Tina Guo:

[Tina Guo & Cremaine Booker - Vivaldi Double Cello Concerto Mvt 1 \(2016\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

And finally, here is Cremaine Booker's arrangement of Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings, for four celli:

[Samuel Barber - Adagio for Strings \(youtube.com\)](#)



WONDERING HOW THE MUSIC OF OUR FEATURED CONCERT WILL SOUND? Try HSO'S LISTENING GUIDE, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage – and more!

Please enjoy the emotional and melancholy Elgar cello concerto performed by Jacqueline du Pré, conducted by her husband, Daniel Barenboim:

[Jacqueline du Pre & Daniel Barenboim - Elgar Cello Concerto \(youtube.com\)](#)

Delight in watching the one and only Leonard Bernstein conduct Brahms' Symphony No. 1 without a score: Brahms:

[Symphony No.1 Leonard Bernstein_ブラームス : 交響曲_第1番_レナード・バーンスタイン - YouTube](#)

CASEY'S CLASSICS

Want the best recordings of the pieces you'll experience on the concert program? Coleman Casey, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, offers his recording recommendations of selections featured in our upcoming Masterworks Concert.

The reference recording of Sir Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto comes from Jacqueline du Pré with Sir John Barbirolli conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (WARNER).

Otto Klemperer presents a toweringly majestic reading of Brahms' Symphony No. 1 with the Philharmonia Orchestra. (WARNER).



Pablo Casals



Steven Isserlis



Viols Not Cello

SOURCE MATERIAL

[A Brief History of the Cello \(connollymusic.com\)](http://connollymusic.com)

[Cello | Definition, Music, & Facts | Britannica](#)

[Vast, deep and awash with feeling: the story of the cello | Classical music | The Guardian](#)

[The cello: Exploring its history, sound, and how it works - Blog | Splice](#)

[History of the Cello | The Instrument Place](#)

[History of the Cello – Evergreen Workshop \(evergreenworkshop.com\)](http://evergreenworkshop.com)

[The Story Behind the Bach Cello Suites, And Why We Still Love Them Today \(cpr.org\)](http://cpr.org)

[Cello Vs Bass – What Are Their Differences? - Musical Instrument Pro](#)