



DIMITRY SITKOVETSKY, VIOLIN

A renaissance man and a magnetic creative force, Dmitry Sitkovetsky is recognized throughout the world for the considerable impact he makes on every aspect of musical life. A prolific recording artist, with a career spanning more than four decades, he is celebrated globally as a violinist, conductor, creator, transcriber and facilitator – holding an undisputed and venerable position in musical society as a giant personality and educator.

His celebrated career is documented in an extensive discography of more than 40 recordings, reflecting the impressive breadth of his repertoire. His recording collaborators to date include such orchestras as the London Symphony, Philharmonia, and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, under the batons of such legendary maestros as Sir Colin Davis, Mariss Jansons, Sir Neville Marriner and Lord Yehudi Menuhin. As a soloist, Sitkovetsky has performed with the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, among others.

In a flourishing career as a conductor, Sitkovetsky has worked with such orchestras as Academy of St-Martin-In-The-Fields, Dallas Symphony, London Philharmonic, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra della Toscana, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Shanghai Symphony, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and Japan Century Symphony, amongst others. In 1990 he founded the New European Strings Chamber Orchestra (NES) – bringing together the most distinguished string players from the top European ensembles. From 2003-2023 Sitkovetsky was also the Music Director of the Greensboro Symphony, where he attracted such soloists as Emmanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Branford Marsalis and Pinchas Zukerman.

With his unmatched ability to turn any project into a highly anticipated artistic event, Sitkovetsky has been invited to create, develop and lead festivals including the Seattle International Music Festival in the United States, the Festival del Sole in Tuscany, the Silk Route of Music in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the Korsholm Music Festival in Finland. During his tenure at the Korsholm Festival, he hosted Alfred Schnittke, Krzysztof Penderecki and Rodion Shchedrin as composers-in-residence, performing with such luminaries as Martha Argerich, Bella Davidovich, Evgeny Kissin and Mischa Maisky, to name just a few.

He is also in high demand as a jury member, having served at such competitions as Queen Elisabeth in Brussels, Tchaikovsky in Moscow, Montreal in Canada, Indianapolis in the United States, and the George Enescu in Bucharest, where Sitkovetsky returns as the President of the Jury for the fourth time in September 2024.

His new role as patron of The Purcell School for Young Musicians was celebrated with an Opening Concert at the Malta Spring Festival 2024, where he performed alongside The Purcell School Chamber Soloists, marking a significant milestone in his enduring mission to inspire and elevate young talents. In November 2024, Purcell School ensembles perform a program featuring works arranged by Sitkovetsky at St. John Smith Square Hall.

Sitkovetsky's name has also become synonymous with the art of transcription. His iconic orchestral and string trio versions of J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations have taken on a life of their own – enjoying regular performances and acclaimed recordings by many of today's leading performers.



MING-EN ZHOU, VIOLIN

Ming-En Zhou is an Associate Professor of Violin at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the current Head of the String Department at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Middle School, Chair of the Violin Professional Committee of the Shanghai Musicians Association, and a Council Member of the String Society of the Chinese Musicians Association.

She has received numerous honors, including the 2009 Shanghai Arts Talent Fund Award, the 2009 Shanghai Gardener Award, and the Wenhua Academy Gardener Award in both 2012 and 2015.

Her students have won major prizes in national and international violin competitions, including: Gold Medal at the 2008 CCTV National Piano and Violin Competition, First Prize (Group C) at the 2009 Bucharest International Youth Violin Competition in Romania, Second Prize (Group B) at the 2015 Zhuhai Mozart International Youth Violin Competition, Second Prize (Youth Category) and First Prize (Junior

Category) at the 10th and 11th National Youth Violin Competitions (Wenhua Academy Awards) in 2012 and 2015,

First Prizes in the Professional Junior, Youth, and Children's Categories at the 4th, 5th, 8th, and 10th Hong Kong International Violin Competitions (2014, 2015, 2018, 2020), First and Third Prizes at the 2019 Xiamen International Violin Competition, Several top prizes at the 2019 SCC International Youth Violin Competition in Seoul, Korea, Third and Fifth Prizes in the Professional Children's Category at the 2020 Qingdao National Violin Concerto Competition.

She has published educational DVDs such as Violin for Beginners and 36 Violin Studies by Kayser (as lecturer and performer), and co-authored violin method books including Playing on Four Strings with Your Fingers and Hohmann's Basic Violin Course. She has also published several academic papers. Prof. Zhou is frequently invited as a jury member and masterclass lecturer at major violin competitions worldwide, including:

the 21st and 24th Andrea Postacchini International Violin Competitions in Italy (2014, 2017),

the 1st Shlomo Mintz International Violin Competition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing (2017),

the 2019 SCC International Youth Violin Competition in Seoul, the 2019 International e-Piano Musikfest at the University of Minnesota, the 2020 National Youth Violin Concerto Competition, and the 2020 Asia-Pacific Online String Competition Tour.

She has given solo and chamber music concerts at major venues such as the Shanghai Concert Hall, He Luting Concert Hall, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Hall, and Suzhou Jinji Lake Concert Hall.

From 2017 to 2021, she was repeatedly invited to perform as a soloist in the violin concerto "The Butterfly Lovers" with renowned conductors Fan Tao, Xu Zhong, and Hou Runyu, collaborating with the Shanghai Festival Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Oriental Symphony Orchestra, and East China Normal University Symphony Orchestra at venues such as the Shanghai Oriental Art Center, Nine Trees Future Art Center, and ECNU Concert Hall, all to great acclaim.



MASSIMO QUARTA, VIOLIN

Winner of First Prize at the “Città di Vittorio Veneto” National Violin Competition (1986) and First Prize at the “Opera Prima Philips” Violin Competition (1989), in 1991 Massimo Quarta won First Prize at the prestigious “N. Chung” International Violin Competition in Genoa. Chung, Christian Thielemann, Daniele Gatti, Daniel Harding, Vladimir Yurowsky, John Axelrod, Janjo Mena, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Aldo Ceccato, Vladimir Spivakov, Isaac Karabtschevsky, Daniel Oren. Considered one of the most important violinists of his generation, he has been a guest at some of the major festivals such as Stresa, Naples, Città di Castello, Kuhmo, Bodensee, Kfar Blum, Berliner Festwochen, Sarasota, Ravenna, Lyon, Potsdam, Spoleto, Ljubljana and, invited by Gidon Kremer, the Lockenhaus “Kammermusikfest”.

Born in 1965, Quarta began studying violin at the age of eleven at the T. Schipa Conservatory in Lecce, continuing his studies with Beatrice Antonioni at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. He subsequently perfected his skills with Salvatore Accardo at the Stauffer Academy in Cremona, Ruggero Ricci, Pavel Vernikov, and Abram Shtern.

Alongside his intense solo career, he has also been active as a conductor for over twenty-five years, conducting orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra, the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana (OSI), the Sønderborg Symphony Orchestra (Denmark), the Buenos Aires National Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra del Teatro “Carlo Felice” in Genoa, I Pomeriggi Musicali in Milan, the Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, the Filarmonica and Symphony “A. Toscanini,” and the Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano.

He made his debut at the Vienna Musikverein as soloist and conductor with the Philharmonia Wien, at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam conducting the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, and has recorded Mozart's concertos for two and three pianos as a conductor with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

He held the position of Soloist and Principal Conductor of the Orchestra dell'Istituzione Sinfonica Abruzzese and was Artistic Director of the Orchestra della Fondazione I.C.O. “Tito Schipa” in Lecce. From 2017 to 2020, he was Music Director of the UNAM Philharmonic Orchestra (OFUNAM) in Mexico City.

Massimo Quarta has been awarded the “Foyer Des Artistes” International Prize and the “Gino Tani International Prize for the Performing Arts.” He has recorded A. Vivaldi's “Four Seasons” with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra for Philips and Delos, Paganini's 24 Capriccios for the English label Chandos, a CD with music by N. Paganini for Dynamic, and, also by Paganini, the complete 6 Concertos for violin and orchestra in the autograph version as violinist and conductor, considered “a true milestone for all violin enthusiasts” (Il Giornale della Musica). Also for Dynamic, as soloist and conductor with the Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano, he has released Concertos Nos. 4 and 5 by H. Vieuxtemps.



DANUSHA WASKIEWICZ, VIOLA

Danusha Waskiewicz learned her art from great musicians. She studied with Prof. Tabea Zimmermann, won the ARD International Music competition and the first position in the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra. She played under Claudio Abbado's direction in the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, as a member in the Berliner Philharmoniker and as first viola in the Orchestra Mozart.

Under Claudio Abbados' direction, she also recorded W.A. Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with violinist Giuliano Carmignola and the Mozart Orchestra (via Deutsche Grammophon). In 2008, she published her performance of the Brandenburgischen Konzerte via Euro Arts. Her last recording as a soloist is the Concerto for Viola and Orchestra by Bela Bartók. Via Harmonia Mundi, she published several performances with violinist Isabelle Faust.

Danusha Waskiewicz' artistic career has been enriched by the numerous talented musicians she has collaborated with.

Danusha Waskiewicz loves sharing her experience and her new horizons with young musicians holding masterclasses and perfection courses at the most prestigious music schools and at Rome's Avos Project, where she teaches regularly.

Chamber music has become the gravitational center of Danusha Waskiewicz' art.

Danusha Waskiewicz has been playing in duo with Andrea Rebaudengo for a long time. They met in Italy and they have given numerous concerts together over the years, performing wonderful programmes that move flawlessly between romances, classical music and folklore, chansons and their own compositions as well (Duo Waskiewicz Rebaudengo – Songs for Viola and Piano published via Decca).

As a member of the renowned Quartetto Prometeo, Danusha is challenged with the astonishing compositions of past centuries: playing the viola in a string quartet is a special endeavour. Contemporary music is also part of Quartetto Prometeo's day-to-day, pushing their limits and providing Danusha with ever-evolving motivation.

Danusha Waskiewicz' latest duo project, DragonFly, allows her to explore to a completely new world with Irish cellist Naomi Berrill. The sound of their string instruments is accompanied by their voices, redefining the meaning of concentration and of making music together. The two re-elaborate anything from the most classical of programmes to J.S. Bach's Goldbergvariationen, bringing new light to these incredible compositions and creating a new experience for themselves and the audience.



GIUSEPPE RUSSO ROSSI, Viola

Born in Bari in 1983, he graduated at the age of seventeen with top marks, cum laude, and honorable mention in violin and viola under the guidance of Scarpati and Lomartire at the Piccinni Conservatory in Bari. He also graduated with top marks and honors in ensemble music at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome under the guidance of Rocco Filippini. He received the scholarship reserved for the Academy's top graduates and won the Sinopoli Prize sponsored by the President of the Republic. On that occasion, he received the award from

the President of the Republic; the committee included Perticaroli, Pappano, Balash, and Cagli. He attended the Faculty of Modern Literature and taught classes for the Chair of Latin Literature on the parallels between Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus* and Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. He attended the Academies of Portogruaro and Fiesole (Vernikov and Vinnitski for the violin, Mendelssohn for the viola), the "Perosi" of Biella, the Music School of Milan (Braconi), the Chigiana of Siena, the "Walter Stauffer" of Cremona (Giuranna, Bashmet), the International Academy "Trio di Trieste" (De Rosa, Zanettovich and Bronzi), the International Academy of Imola (Masi, Altenberg Trio and Tchaikovsky Trio) and the Russian Conservatory "Sergei Rachmaninoff" in Paris.

He has won numerous international competitions, including: Vittorio Veneto, National Arts Award (jury member Uto Ughi: "For refinement, beauty of sound, and musicality"), Società Umanitaria di Milano, Castrocara Classica - Best Graduates of Italy, EUYO Competition (European Community Orchestra) as the only Italian violist, "Franco Gulli" Award for "interpretative maturity, instrumental charming communicative talent," 'Geminiani' Award in Verona, Diploma of "Distinguished Artist" at the International Ibla Grand Prize and Palmi Competition. He collaborates with the Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala in Milan and recently made his debut as a soloist with the ORT under the baton of Gabriele Ferro, performing Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* alongside Marco Rizzi on violin. He has given an important recital broadcast live on Rai Radio 3 Suite and has taken part in chamber music concerts with renowned artists such as Salvatore Accardo, Bruno Giuranna, Antonio Meneses, Laura De Fusco, Mariana Sirbu, the Quartetto di Cremona, and the first chairs of the Berliner Philharmoniker. He has also performed Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* alongside Salvatore Accardo with the Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, Paul Hindemith's *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* "Der Schwanendreher" with the Orchestra Filarmonica di Roma, and recitals broadcast live on Prague National Radio and Irish National Radio. He is a member of the Mirus string quartet.



ROBERT COHEN, Cello

Robert Cohen made his concerto debut at the age of twelve at the Royal Festival Hall, London. During forty years of his distinguished international career, Cohen has been hailed as one of the foremost cellists of our time. "It is easy to hear what the fuss is about, he plays like a God" (New York Stereo Review), "A virtuoso of genius" (Nurnberg Nachrichten), "Robert Cohen is a divinely gifted cellist. Cohen is one of the few musicians, whose every tone speaks to people" (Keskisuomalainen, Finland).

Invited to perform concertos world-wide by conductors Claudio Abbado, Antal Dorati, Sir Mark Elder, Mariss Jansons, Sir Charles Mackerras, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Kurt Masur, Riccardo Muti, Sir Roger Norrington, Tadaaki Otaka, Sir Simon Rattle, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Osmo Vanska. Notable collaborations in chamber music including Yehudi Menuhin, the Amadeus String Quartet (including their CD of Schubert Quintet on DGG), Menahem Pressler, Leonidas Kavakos, Massimo Quarta and Krystian Zimerman and with his regular duo partner pianist Heini Karkkainen.

His musical education was also exceptional; early studies with William Pleeth, followed by Jacqueline du Pré, André Navarra and Mstislav Rostropovich. Robert Cohen won the Suggia Prize, Young Concert Artists (New York), Piatigorsky and Unesco International competitions and the English Speaking Union Scholarship to Tanglewood (USA).

Cohen is an inspirational conductor. Among the many chamber orchestras Cohen has conducted and directed are the Ruse Festival Orchestra, I Musici de Montréal, European Union Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, London Virtuosi, Bournemouth Sinfonietta and Youth Orchestras in Bulgaria, Italy, France, Finland, Switzerland and the UK.

His symphonic conducting includes performances with the Izmir State Symphony Orchestra, Slovak Philharmonic, Sofia Philharmonic, Murcia Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana, Orchestra Filarmonica di Torino and the Cambridge University Orchestra

Cohen is in great demand as a teacher. He has given masterclasses at Conservatoires throughout the world. His passionate views on the art of learning, performing and communicating music have been widely published. From 2000-2012 Cohen was Professor of Advanced Solo Studies at the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano, and in 2010 became Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London. The Cohen Music Lectures were launched at the Royal Academy of Music in 2014. Each year Cohen teaches at summer courses in Europe and North America, where he also presents his lecture series.

Robert Cohen made his recording debut at age 19 with the Elgar Cello Concerto and London Philharmonic (EMI) which earned a silver disc. He has recorded extensively for BIS, EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, Sony and Decca. The most recent composition written and dedicated to Cohen was Sally Beamish Cello Concerto No.2 'The Song Gatherer'. The US premiere was with co-commissioner Minnesota Orchestra / Osmo Vanska. The English premiere by co-commissioner Hallé Orchestra / Sir Mark Elder. The Scottish premiere was with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins.

Cohen has been the subject of many TV documentaries and has created special projects: 'Les Six' - poetry, literature and film for City of London Festival, 'Collaborations' for the Royal Ballet School, 'Robert Cohen's Cello Clinic' www.celloclinic.com and 'Cohen Pod Talks' iTunes.com. From 1989-2011 he was Artistic Director of Charleston Manor Festival, a chamber music Festival set in the heart of the Sussex countryside in southern England. At the invitation of film producer Don Boyd, Cohen became the curator of a classical music channel for HiBrow.TV. In the USA, National Public Radio created a monthly series for Cohen entitled 'On That Note', wuwm.com.

From October 2011 to January 2018, Cohen was Cellist of the legendary Fine Arts Quartet. The essence of Cohen as communicator is summed up by 'The Guardian' who observed "Cohen can hold any audience in the palm of his hand".



ASIER POLO, Cello

Considered by the specialist music press as one of the most important cellists of his generation, Asier Polo has worked with many of the major international orchestras, such as the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Dresdner Philharmonie, Orchestre de Paris, BBC Philharmonic, Bergen Filharmoniske Orkester, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Berliner Symphoniker, Orquesta Nacional de México, Orquesta Sinfônica de São Paulo, Louisiana Philharmonic, Orquesta Nacional de España and Basel Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of distinguished conductors such as John Axelrod, Pinchas Steinberg, Christian Badea, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Claus Peter Flor, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Günther Herbig, Juanjo Mena, Antoni Wit and Anne Manson.

He is a regular guest at prestigious festivals, such as those held in Schleswig-Holstein, Nantes, Ohrid, Biennale di Venezia, Rome, Lisbon, Gstaad Menuhin Festival, Morelia, Granada and the Quincena Musical in San Sebastián.

He has appeared with great artists such as Silvia Marcovici, Nicolás Chumachencho, Sol Gabetta, Maxim Rysanov, Isabelle van Keulen, Josep Colom, Eldar Nebolsin, Gerard Caussé, Cuarteto Janáček, Cuarteto Casals and Alfredo Kraus, who in the last years of his career invited him to perform as soloist at his concerts, with engagements at the Maggio

Musicale Fiorentino, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London, Tonhalle in Zurich and the prestigious Musikverein in Vienna, as well as a successful tour in the major concerts halls in Japan.

He is devoted to contemporary music, especially from his native country. Composers such as Gabriel Erkoreka, Jesús Torres, Luis de Pablo, Jesús Villa-Rojo, Fernando Velázquez and Antón García Abril have all dedicated their cello concertos to Asier Polo. He enjoys combining modern music with the great classical repertoire, covering everything from Bach's Suites, classical and romantic concertos, to contemporary music such as Henri Dutilleux, Cristóbal Halffter and Sofia Gubaidulina.

He has recorded **19 albums** for major record labels such as Naxos, Claves, RTVE, IBS Classical and Marco Polo, playing some of the major Spanish repertoire for cello, such as the concertos by José María Usandizaga, Joaquín Rodrigo, Francisco Escudero, Tomás Marco, Carmelo Bernaola and Jesús Rueda. Highlights include the nominated for the Gramophone Editor's Choice Award CD dedicated to the work of the composer Sofia Gubaidulina (Et'cetera Records) and the recording of the Ecos y Sombras [Echoes and Shades] DVD dedicated to Cristóbal Halffter, performing his Cello Concerto no. 2 with the Spanish National Orchestra (KP Music).

His latest CD releases -all them for IBS Classical- include Rachmaninov and César Frank's sonatas for cello and piano with Marta Zabaleta and Brahms' cello sonatas with the pianist Eldar Nebolsin, as well as Vivaldi, Boccherini and Haydn's cello concertos together with the Orquesta Barroca de Sevilla and Andrés Gabetta, and the whole set of Cello Suites by J. S. Bach, his latest album.

Two new albums will soon be released with the Spanish National Orchestra, conducted by Juanjo Mena: Joaquín Rodrigo's two cello concertos -Concierto como un Divertimento and Concierto in modo Galante-, as well as Alberto Ginastera's Cello Concerto no.2, Op.50 (1980).

Asier Polo studied in Bilbao, Madrid, Cologne and Basel with Elisa Pascu, Maria Kliegel and Ivan Monighetti, and also received guidance from János Starker, Natalia Gutman and Mstislav Rostropovich in various masterclasses. He soon stood out as a promising young musician, winning the first prizes in Cello and Chamber Music at the National Young Musicians Competition in Spain.

Asier Polo has been awarded numerous prizes, and amongst others, the Ojo Crítico by Radio Nacional de España (2002), the Fundación CEOE Prize for Musical Interpretation (2004) and the National Music Award by the Ministry for Culture and Sports of Spain (2019). In 2009 he was appointed "Ilustre de Bilbao" (Bilbao being his native city).

He is regularly invited to be on the judging panel of international cello competitions, such as the Dotzauer Wettbewerb (Germany), Carlos Prieto International Cello Competition (Mexico), Benedetto Mazzacurati Competition (Italy) and the Manhattan International Music Competition (New York). He also gives masterclasses in many countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil.

Asier Polo plays a **Francesco Ruggeri cello** (Cremona, 1689) purchased in collaboration with the Fundación Banco Santander.



JUN LYU, Cello

Cellist and educator; Vice Chairman and Secretary-General of the China Symphony Development Foundation; Distinguished Professor at Capital Normal University College of Music, Singapore; Council Member of the China Symphony Alliance; Chairman of the Performance Committee of the Jiangsu Musicians Association; Former President and Artistic Director of the Jiangsu Symphony Orchestra; Council Member of the China Cello Society; and Member of the 10th Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

In 1982, he was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he studied cello under the renowned professor Chen Dingchen

and the American cellist Olafsky. In 1988, he won the Second Prize for Excellent Performance at China's first National Cello Competition.

In 1990, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Tchaikovsky's birth, he collaborated with the renowned conductor and professor Huang Xiaotong from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to present two special concerts: Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme and Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto in A minor.

At the 2nd Jiangsu Music and Dance Festival, his performance of The Moon Reflected on the Second Spring (for cello and piano) won First Prize for Performance, and the trio Early Spring (for cello, violin, and harp) won Second Prize.

In 1996, his original composition Mountain Ballad for cello and orchestra won both First Prize for Composition and First Prize for Performance at the 3rd Jiangsu Music and Dance Festival.

In 1998, he was listed in The World Chinese Who's Who and The Great Renaissance of Arts.