

# Andrei Ioniță Plays Lalo with the Ploiești Philharmonic Orchestra

*A radiant program with Andrei Ioniță, Matthias Manasi and the Ploiești Philharmonic Orchestra*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, March 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Emerging conductor Matthias Manasi makes his Ploiești Philharmonic Orchestra debut in a program that burns with radiance. Thematic beauty, warmth, rhythmical impulsivity, superb energy and the sense of sheer beauty emanate from Elgar's Symphony No. 1, a statement of geniality premiered shortly after the turn of the 20th century in 1908.

Noblesse and longing for the Spanish flair and the Mediterranean temperament sing through the unforgettable melodies of Lalo's Cello Concerto, performed by rising star Andrei Ioniță, who won among others first prize at the Aram Khatchaturian International Competition and first prize at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition.

The concert with the Ploiești Philharmonic Orchestra will take place on 18 April 2024, 7.00pm  
Edouard Lalo: Cello Concerto in D minor  
Edward Elgar: Symphony No. 1 in A flat major

- This concert takes place at Filarmonica Paul Constantinescu
- 1 hour, 40 min (including intermission)



Andrei Ioniță (Photo: Nikolaj Lund)



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Program notes:

Edouard Lalo: Cello Concerto in D minor

Edouard Lalo's Cello Concerto in D minor was an immediate success after it was premiered on 9 December 1877 by the Orchestre des Concerts Padeloup under conductor Jules Padeloup with the renowned Belgian cello virtuoso Adolphe Fischer as soloist and is appreciated and performed today by cellists around the world.



Matthias Manasi (Photo: Julia Baier)

The concerto is written in three movements: 1. Prelude, *lento* – *Allegro maestoso*, 2. Intermezzo, *Andantino con moto* – *Allegro presto* – *Andantino* – *Allegro presto*, 3. Introduction, *Andante* – *Allegro vivace*. The cello concerto attests to Lalo's complete mastery over its unorthodox form and structure and the elegant interweaving of its contrasting parts and the central Intermezzo has a tuneful *Andante* and a sparkling *Scherzo*, providing a short, light and brisk contrast within the same movement.

After just a few bars of the orchestra's opening, the cello enters with its own lyrical declaration of the first theme of the *Allegro maestoso*, not unlike the search for the "joy" theme at the beginning of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth. The slow introduction of the first movement reappears in the *Allegro maestoso*, which ranges widely in its impassioned lyricism and is soon decorated with cadenza-like flourishes. The movement's structure is playing these declamatory and lyrical elements off each other and featuring a limpid orchestration with generous solo spotlights for the cello.

The second movement is changing between G minor and major and presents itself as a dreamy slow interlude in which fast parts are nested and has the air of a *Scherzo*. Lalo's Spanish stylings are especially apparent two times, occurring first in the dancing mirth of the fast "dream-within-a-dream", when happening the second time, it brings the movement to a sprightly close.

The finale is prefaced with a slow introduction as well, this time Lalo writes it with an engrossingly eloquent soliloquy for the cello. Its Spanish tinge provides a perfect entrée into the fiery rhythms and Latin accents of the following lively rondo marked *allegro vivace*, the cello solo returning with a forceful entry into the rondo theme. The main theme is based on the D major scale and a quick fall down. The rest of the movement continues at *allegro vivace* tempo. The solo cello ends with a very fast scale that lands on a C sharp trill that resolves to the tonic. Taken as a whole, the Cello Concerto is a fiery, elegant and momentous work and a sparkling

masterpiece in the family of cello concertos.

Edward Elgar: Symphony No. 1 in A flat major

The beginning of Elgar's first symphony introduces a memorable main theme that runs through the entire symphony in variations. This main theme rarely appears complete, but it nevertheless shapes the form of the entire symphony, as Elgar allows it to recur several times during the four movements of the first symphony, thus spanning large arcs within the four movements and leading to an apotheosis of dazzling radiance at the end of the symphony. Elgar's only public statement about the meaning of his 1st Symphony was that "There is no program beyond a wide experience of human life with a great charity and a massive hope in the future," although he occasionally privately dropped further hints to musicians and friends.

A feverish quality characterizes the second movement Scherzo (in F sharp minor) and runs through the main theme of this movement. Elgar refuses to use the term "Scherzo" and writes instead an urgent and restless "Allegro molto", interrupted by a quiet B major middle section, which Elgar asked the orchestra musicians to play "like something you hear down by the river". In addition, Elgar makes the movement exciting by weaving an elegiac, lyrical and wistful timbre into the movement that ultimately leads straight to the elegant allusion of the main theme. The main theme appears here less a quote than just an impressive allusion to it with the slow march-melody over the thoughtful pizzicati in the basses.

In the third movement Elgar writes an incredibly expressive, solemn Adagio ("Molto espressivo e sostenuto"). This Adagio is a reminiscence of the mood of the "Nimrod" variation from the famous Enigma Variations and yet its main theme is, note for note a taking over of the impulsive main theme of the second, fast movement, which sounds now in the third movement completely different and gains with its thoughtfulness new nuances.

Ever since Beethoven, the finales of symphonies have often had the theme of a certain kind of transformation. Elgar also deals with this main theme of the first movement in the finale of his first symphony and uses this main theme from the beginning of the fourth movement in such a way that you can bet that Elgar wants to triumph with this main theme at the end. Elgar does not disappoint his listeners. The movement initially begins cautiously with an opening equivalent of the main theme. First of all, it is not immediately obvious that this is a variant of the main theme of the first movement. As in the first movement, the theme tries to break through, but is shouted down by another, a little bit angry theme, the construction of which is similar to the main idea of the first movement. Since almost every important idea in the fourth movement has a more or less strong connection to this theme, the overall mood of the final movement from the start is still more heroic than restless and angry. When the main theme finally breaks through the struggle victoriously, it seems more like a necessary outcome than something accidental. In its way of construction and its structural development it is one of the most modern, convincing and magnificent finales.

During the first rehearsals with the London Symphony Orchestra, the conductor Hans Richter, as witnessed by credible earwitnesses, made the remark: "Gentlemen, let us now rehearse the greatest symphony of our time, which was written by the most important composer alive today."

The symphony had an enormous success at the premiere and this success continued and Elgar's 1st Symphony began a triumphal procession through the concert halls of the world. In 1909 alone there were over a hundred performances in the USA, Leipzig, Bonn, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Sydney, among others. "I receive a stream of letters from people, both known and unknown, telling me how much the symphony lifts their spirits," Elgar wrote. "I wish it would lift my spirits too, I just paid the rent, property tax, income tax and a bunch of other things that were due today and there are still kids at the door with their mouths wanting to be fed."

Andrei Ioniță

The Gold Medal-winner at the 2015 XV International Tchaikovsky Competition, Andrei Ioniță is one of the most admired cellists of his generation, called "one of the most exciting cellists to have emerged for a decade," by The Times of London. A versatile musician focused on giving gripping, deeply felt performances, Andrei has been recognized for his passionate musicianship and technical finesse. His debut album on Orchid Classics combined a Brett Dean world-premiere with Bach and Kodály, prompting Gramophone to declare him "a cellist of superb skill, musical imagination and a commitment to music of our time."

Andrei made his U.S. debut in 2017 with recitals in Chicago and Washington, D.C., and gave his New York debut recital in Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. Previous season highlights include performances with the Münchner Philharmoniker, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, BBC Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. He has worked with famous conductors including Herbert Blomstedt, Cristian Macelaru, Sylvain Cambreling, Kent Nagano, Omer Meir Wellber, John Storgårds, Joanna Mallwitz, and Ruth Reinhardt. He has given recitals at Konzerthaus Berlin, Elbphilharmonie, Zürich Tonhalle, LAC Lugano, and L'Auditori in Barcelona, as well as at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein, Verbier, and Martha Argerich Festivals. Andrei Ioniță's exceptional talent makes him a versatile and sought-after performer of chamber music. In his concerts, he joins forces with Martha Argerich, Christian Tetzlaff, Sergei Babayan, and Steven Isserlis, among others.

Highlights of Andrei's 2023-24 season include performances with the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich under the baton of Paavo Järvi, the Mexico Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ludwig Carrasco, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Ruth Reinhardt, the Opéra national de Lorraine conducted by Marta Gardolińska, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Newbury Festival conducted by Jonathan Bloxham. Also in the 2023-24 season, Andrei will serve as Artist-in-residence of the George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra in Bucharest in Timișoara, Europe's 2023 cultural capital.

Prior to winning the Tchaikovsky Competition, Andrei won First Prize at the Khachaturian International Competition in June 2013, and Second Prize and the Special Prize for his interpretation of a commissioned composition at the International ARD Music Competition. In 2014, he received Second Prize at the Grand Prix Emanuel Feuermann in Berlin. He was a BBC New Generation Artist from 2016-18 and was the Symphoniker Hamburg's artist-in-residence for the 2019-20 season.

Born in Bucharest, Romania in 1994, Andrei Ioniță first became a student of Ani-Marie Paladi and later of Prof. Jens Peter Maintz at the University of the Arts (UdK) in Berlin. A scholarship recipient of the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, Andrei performs on a cello made by Giovanni Battista Rogeri from Brescia in 1671, generously on loan from the foundation.

## Matthias Manasi

Since his acclaimed debuts at several opera houses and with several international orchestras Matthias has been one of the outstanding conductors of his generation. The German conductor Matthias Manasi was celebrated early on as a child prodigy and entered early an international career as conductor. He began to study piano at age 3 and violin at age 8 and decided to become an orchestra conductor at age 10. As a child prodigy on the piano, he started to perform as a pianist in public at age 10 and performed with various orchestras. He started to study early, at age 14 he started to study in Stuttgart with Wolfgang Bloser, at age 16 he became a student in Stuttgart in the piano class of Eta Tanay. Also in Stuttgart he then studied conducting with Thomas Ungar and piano with Andrzej Ratusiński at the Stuttgart University of Music and Performing Arts and piano with Carmen Piazzini at the Karlsruhe University of Music. From the age of 19 he started to work as a repetitor and assistant conductor at the Staatsoper Stuttgart and made his conducting debut at the age of 19 with Stravinsky's 'L'Histoire du soldat'. He began his conducting career as a Kapellmeister at the Oper Kiel. There he conducted, among others, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Wozzeck, Die tote Stadt, Hänsel und Gretel, La Cenerentola and Turandot. He then worked as a Kapellmeister at the Oldenburgisches Staatstheater, where he conducted Götterdämmerung, Pelléas et Mélisande, Glückliche Reise and Der Wildschütz. He was, in 2000 as chief conductor of the Orchestra Camerata Italiana the youngest chief conductor in Europe, a position he left in 2013. From 2013 to 2015 he was conductor of the Opera Wroclawska in Wrocław, in the season 2016/17 he was conductor of the Opera Poznań. Matthias Manasi was appointed music director and chief conductor of the Nickel City Opera in Buffalo, NY in 2017.

Concert engagements have taken him to the Münchner Rundfunkorchester, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Vantaa Symphony Orchestra Helsinki, SWR Symphonieorchester, Kazakh State Philharmonic Orchestra, Staatsorchester Braunschweig, Staatsorchester Kassel, Niedersächsisches Staatsorchester Hannover, Oldenburgisches Staatsorchester, Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin, Slovak Sinfonietta, Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma, Sanremo Symphony Orchestra, Romanian National Radio Orchestra Bucharest, Prague Philharmonia, Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Selangor

Symphony Orchestra, Győr Philharmonic Orchestra, Brasov Philharmonic Orchestra, Montevideo Philharmonic Orchestra, Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra, Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen, Astana Opera Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of the Brazilian National Opera, Orquestra Sinfônica do Rio Grande do Norte, the Milan orchestra 'I Solisti di Milano', the Nürnberger Symphoniker, Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, and with the Wiener Mozart Orchester to the Vienna Musikverein.

In recent years, he has appeared at the Polish National Opera in Warsaw, the Opera Wrocławska, the Leipzig Opera, the Opéra de Marseille, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Astana Opera, the Staatsoper Stuttgart, the Staatstheater Braunschweig, the Staatstheater Kassel, the Theater Bremen, the Opernhaus Halle, the Opera Constanta, the State Opera Rouse, the Stadttheater Klagenfurt, at the 'Rossini in Wildbad' festival and at the Eutin festival.

Matthias Manasi's recently conducted at the Poznań Opera (Anna Karenina, Figaro Gets a Divorce, Eugen Onegin, Boris Godunow, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Die Fledermaus, Carmen), at the Opera Wrocławska (Angels in America, Samson et Dalila, I Pagliacci, Cavalleria rusticana, Madama Butterfly, Paradise lost, Król Roger, Hagith, Der Rosenkavalier, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Parsifal, Der fliegende Holländer, Macbeth, Falstaff, La Traviata, Rigoletto, Giovanna d'Arco, Lucia di Lammermoor, L'elisir d'amore, Così fan tutte, Straszny dwór, Halka, Les pêcheurs de perles, Carmen, Chopin), at the Theater Bremen (Der fliegende Holländer), at the Oper Halle (Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny) and at the Oper Leipzig (Das Liebesverbot).

He has also conducted numerous world premieres. In April 2022 Arthur Orenburgsky's 'Concertino for Violin and Orchestra' score received a critically acclaimed world premiere performed by Matthias Manasi, the Kazakh State Philharmonic Orchestra and violinist Aida Ayupova in the Kazakh State Philharmonic in Almaty. Most recently, his new CD with Mozart's Symphonies nos. 34, 35 & 36 with the Slovak Sinfonietta was released on the label Hänssler Classic.

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