

Solo in Scéna Zoltán Kodály | Benjamin Britten | Per Nørgård

Toke Møldrup *cello*

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967):

Sonata in B minor for Solo Cello, Op. 8 (1915)

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|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 01. Allegro maestoso ma appassionato | 09:08 |
| 02. Adagio (con grand' espressione) | 12:57 |
| 03. Allegro molto vivace | 11:36 |

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976):

Suite for Solo Cello No. 1, Op. 72 (1966)

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| 04. Canto primo. Sostenuto e largamente | 02:14 |
| 05. I. Fugue. Andante moderato | 03:53 |
| 06. II. Lamento. Lento rubato | 02:44 |
| 07. Canto secondo. Sostenuto | 01:19 |

08. III. Serenata. Allegretto pizzicato

01:54

09. IV. Marcia. Alla marcia moderato

03:24

10. Canto terzo. Sostenuto

02:18

11. V. Bordone. Moderato quasi recitativo

02:56

12. VI. Moto perpetuo e Canto quarto.

Presto

03:43

Per Nørgård (1937):

13. *Solo in Scéna* (1980)

08:08

Total Time: 66:14

Recordings by **Simone Sciumbata** in **Telecinesound**, Rome January 2020

Producer, musical direction and postproduction **Rosella Clementi**

Assistant producer **Viggo Mangor** | Publishing supervisor **Romano Di Bari**

Artwork **Chiara Gimmelli**

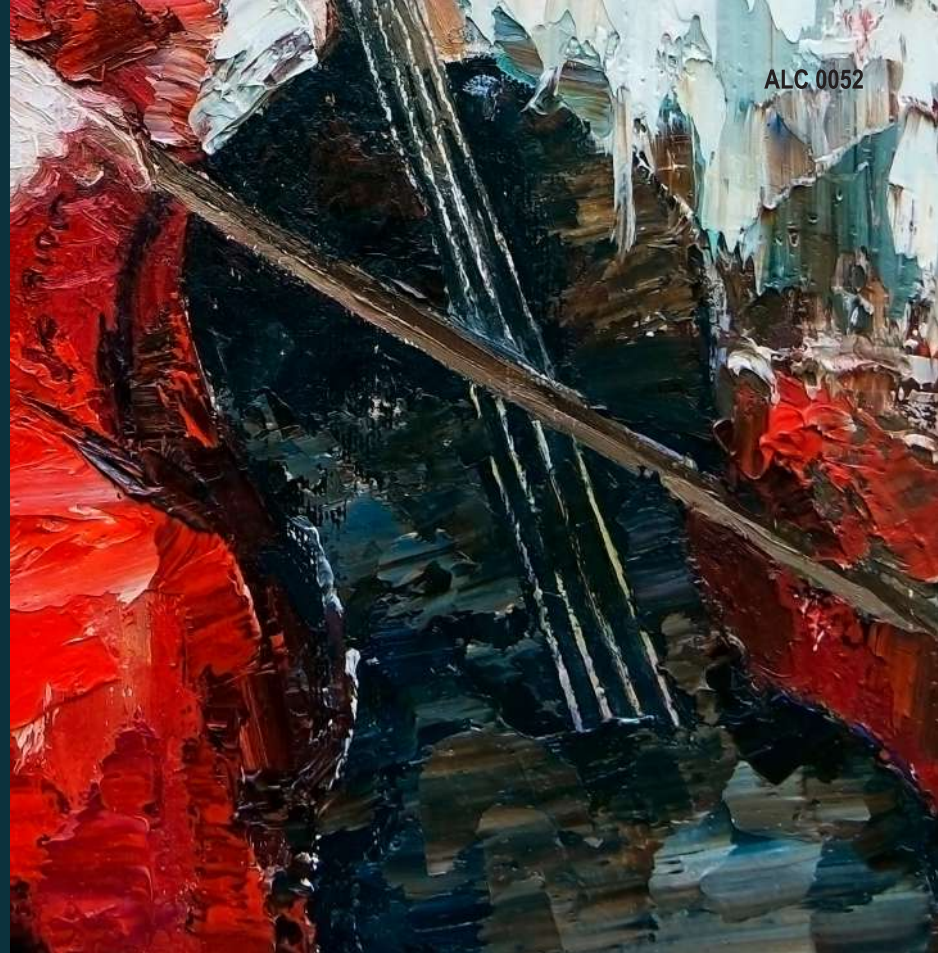


Solo in Scéna

Zoltán Kodály | Benjamin Britten | Per Nørgård

Toke Møldrup *cello*

I grew up in Aarhus, Denmark, where my parents worked as classical guitarists. My father, Erling Møldrup (1943–2016), was a professor at the local Royal Academy of Music. During the eighties and nineties Aarhus took a leading position in the development of the Danish avantgarde scene. My father collaborated with practically every composer of his generation, including **Per Nørgård** (b. 1937), who was one of Denmark's "national" composers and a frequent guest at our house. Another good friend of the house was cellist and professor Morten Zeuthen, who became my teacher and later colleague at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. He, too, collaborated closely with my father. One of my earliest and most intense musical memories is of the two of them rehearsing Nørgård's works for cello and guitar; another is listening to Zeuthen practicing Solo in Scéna for his fantastic solo album with Nørgård's music, released in 1993. Given this very early introduction to Danish avant-garde music, and that of Nørgård in particular, I have always felt very comfortable in this particular corner of music history. Per Nørgård writes: "A characteristic of Solo in Scéna is the straightforwardness, perhaps even bluntness, with which each motive is presented, like an object. As if the musician is saying to us: 'Thus it appears now and thus now' – fluctuations from instant to instant, as a juggler showing us constantly shimmering, constantly new moments and movements, without the act ever actually becoming an orientation in time." The image of the juggler stirs our imagination, but I have always felt an attraction to the title Solo in Scéna itself, freely translated by the composer as "a scenic solo": I imagine the cellist at the centre of a firework of sounds and colours, part of an unbelievable act, bending time and place. The development of music has always benefitted from the collaboration of composers and performers. This is also true regarding the two remaining works on this album. With his Sonata for Solo Cello Op. 8 (1915), **Zoltán Kodály** (1882–1967) has made the most important contribution to the cello repertoire since J.S. Bach's solo suites, and perhaps ever after. The work was written for Eugene Kerperly, a student of David Popper, who spawned the Hungarian cello school. Kodály shows us that it is actually possible to write a symphony, or at least a string quartet, for solo cello, reinventing scordatura by lowering the pitch of the G and C strings by a half step and thereby lending an even broader, richer and darker sound to the cello while opening up for new playing techniques. The Allegro maestoso ma appassionato written in sonata form, is an epic recitative. The lyrical elaborations of the theme, underpinned by brisk chords, bear distant traces of a Bach Sarabande with emphasis on the second beat, yet it is impossible to account for the meter: is it in 2, 3, 4, or a combination of these? We will never know, but Kodály ingeniously bases the entire movement on this unforgettable tune.





Benjamin Britten's (1913–1976) Suite for Solo Cello No. 1 was written for Mstislav Rostropovich, whose performance of Shostakovich's recent first cello concerto Britten had heard in September 1960. The British composer and the Russian cellist developed a rich and productive musical friendship that resulted in five enduring works. Almost immediately, Britten began work on a cello sonata, premiered by Rostropovich the next summer at the Aldeburgh Festival with Britten playing the piano part. This was followed by the Symphony for Cello and Orchestra, premiered in Moscow in 1964 by the cellist and the Moscow Philharmonic, conducted by the composer. That winter Britten set to work on the first of his three suites for unaccompanied cello, which was given its first performance by Rostropovich at the 1965 Aldeburgh Festival. This dramatic suite links past and present with a core set of six movements – the baroque suite – linked by four cantos on the one hand, and on the other establishing the cello as a highly personal voice with a rich palette of sounds and characters in the six main movements. After the first Canto, the fugue presents its theme in contrapuntal style, after which a baroque-inspired series of chordal improvisations and passagework unfolds. The second Canto sounds as if from a distance, leading into a Lamento that seems to remind us that a bit of reverie is in order, but that reality will soon return. The serenade is the suite's "balcony scene", while the Marcia gives room to soft snare drums and trumpets, escalating into battle and finally retreating. Canto III starts out in resignation and gradually develops into an emotional outburst. With its surrealistic paraphrase of a bagpipe, the Bordone movement has a Scottish flavour. The climax of Canto IV's perpetuum mobile consists of a triumphant return to the material of the Canto. Britten's music gives us a wake-up call in an abandoned world, where the cantos seem to be the last manifestation of human presence. The piece is a quest for the world as we knew it – which makes it all the more relevant in our current pandemic reality (2021). This album was recorded in a rush of inspiration at the TelecineSound studios in Rome, January 2020.

Toke Møldrup



Toke Møldrup

Referred to as "... a star" (New York Times), "tomorrow's man" and even "... rider of the holy grail" (Politiken), Danish cellist Toke Møldrup has performed in major halls across four continents during the past two decades. For his musical achievements he has received the highly prestigious Queen Ingrid's Honorary Award.

His playing is distinguished by deep musical understanding, stylistic insight and a superior cello technique. Apart from versatile solo projects and concerts in Denmark and abroad he is a sought-after professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and artistic director of Svanekegaarden International Cello Masterclass. With a strong wish to engage both existing and new audiences in his concerts, he has maintained a broad repertoire ranging from baroque to young contemporary composers. He frequently performs as a soloist with Danish and international orchestras and as a chamber musician with leading Danish ensembles. His recent discography includes the cello suites of J.S. Bach, Beethoven's works for piano and cello and music for cello by Geoffrey Gordon.

Important influences on his artistic development have been cellists Valter Despálj, Hans Jensen, Ralph Kirschbaum, Yo-Yo Ma and Morten Zeuthen, as well as the Alban Berg Quartet with whom he studied as a member of the Paizo Quartet.

Møldrup plays a David Tecchler cello (Rome, 1697) courtesy of the Augustinus Foundation.