

FAURÉ

CELLO SONATAS



Luca Magariello cello · Cecilia Novarino *piano*

Gabriel Fauré 1845-1924
Cello Sonatas

Sonata No.1 Op.109 in D minor
for cello and piano (1917)

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| 1. I. Allegro | 5'59 |
| 2. II. Andante | 7'22 |
| 3. III. Finale: Allegro comodo | 7'28 |

Sonata No.2 Op.117 in G minor
for cello and piano (1921)

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| 4. I. Allegro | 6'26 |
| 5. II. Andante | 7'25 |
| 6. III. Allegro vivo | 5'13 |

Luca Magariello *cello*
Cecilia Novarino *piano*

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) wrote the two sonatas for cello and piano during what his biographers refer to as his third and last period, which coincided with the last decade of his life. The pieces are a significant example of how his musical language evolved and developed in the course of time.

Fauré was a reserved, self-effacing man particularly drawn by the intimacy of chamber music. Deeply attached to the romanticism of an earlier age, he is considered the last of the romantics, in an age in which the prevailing musical idiom had abandoned the canons and categories of the 19th century. Debussy described him as a “*maître de charme*”, an epithet that still rings striking true. Averse to all posturing and affectation, Fauré’s intellectual honesty and creative coherence were recognized by all his contemporaries. In fact he was one of the few composers of his age who were not influenced by characters such as Wagner, who were shortly to change and extend the overall concept of music of the time.

Written in 1917, the first sonata opens with an energetic first movement in which the cello develops the brief initial theme, a fragmented, jerky melody that the composer originally began to develop in 1884 as a subject he ultimately discarded for the Symphony in D minor. The highly accented use of the cello and the wealth of leaps and broken octaves in the piano part make this first theme somewhat harsh and dramatic. It soon leads to the second theme, which is softer and more even, but hardly has time to develop fully before the initial idiom takes over once more.

The second movement is an *andante* that suggests a different universe. The cello is entrusted with a remarkably long theme, almost an elegy, which proceeds without interruption, as though the composer were deliberately counteracting the first movement with music that evokes a sense of continuity. The instruments caress the notes, and the two themes that make up the *andante* follow each other in various reiterations, each with different dynamics and harmonies, thereby contributing to a rich tapestry in a wide range of hues, completely free of the roughness of the first movement.



Although the third movement is the most striking example of the relationship between Fauré's music and the world of romanticism, it nevertheless comprises passages of considerable harmonic complexity. It begins with a serene and simple theme played by the cello that is distinctly reminiscent of the start of the fourth movement of Brahms's Sonata Op.99. The mood continues in a melodious, tranquil fashion, and it is not until the development that the piece transcends the principles of romanticism with a sort of dense, displaced canon in crotchets between the two instruments, intensifying as the subject returns.

In 1921, four years after completing the first sonata, Fauré again turned his hand to a sonata for cello and piano. The surrounding world of music was undergoing rapid change, and the avant-garde movements were gaining ground. *The Rite of Spring* dated back almost ten years earlier, Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, the first work heralding dodecaphony, more than twenty, and Wagner was innovating with orchestration to the extent of inventing new instruments to suit what he had in mind, such as the Wagner horns.

Even at the age of 77, however, Fauré remained true to his own intimate concept of music. Indeed, during the last decade of his creative life he seems intent on trimming away the superfluous and remaining within the confines of 19th century romanticism. With this second sonata he nevertheless experiments boldly, introducing certain passages that are harmonically challenging (the central section of the third movement, for instance), but within the sphere of tonal music and the structural divisions developed in centuries of romantic and late-romantic music. Uninterested in dismantling the constituent parts or developing a different musical language, he writes music that reflects his quietly refined tastes and his deep yearning for the age of Schumann and Brahms.

Fauré wrote the *Sonata Op.117* three years before his death in 1924, articulating it in three movements that together take up just over twenty minutes. It is music that initially comes across like a highly intense and occasionally impalpable breath,

as though the composer were trying to grasp thick, heavy clouds. On further listening, however, his handling of light and shade come through with characteristic individuality and elegance.

From the outset the first movement is restless in mood, with overall structure provided by the melody lines of the two instruments chasing after each other, and the insistent rhythm in the quaver accompaniment of the piano. Despite this dense, almost incessant rhythmical element, however, the sensation is not one of anxiety. As is often the case with Fauré, it is the musical discourse that prevails, and although it is certainly restless, it is also poised and delicate. In the second theme as well the lyricism of the cello is underpinned by the rhythmical configuration of the piano part, which spells out the beat through to the end of the movement.

While the first movement is entirely horizontal in structure, the very different second movement revolves around a pre-existing musical motif. It was the indirect fruit of a commission Fauré received from the French government to write a funeral march for wind instruments to be played at Napoleon's funeral. Following this event, the composer returned to the musical idea, reworking it for cello and piano. The cello is the protagonist, playing the doleful melody in an intensely lyrical mood accompanied by statuesque chords on the piano.

While the mood of the first subject is almost austere in its intensity, the second theme, played by the cello in chorale style, comes across as gentler and sweeter. The height of intensity corresponds to a *forte* in the development, when the austerity seems to abate enough to admit a sense of torment. Ever true to style, however, Fauré resolves this by returning to the original theme, which is repeated once more as it leads to the finale, concluding the movement in a serene C major.

The third movement is probably the most elusive and intriguing, not least on account of the composer's skill in handling thematic fragments that he never exposes fully. In this "art of elusion" he adopts numerous bold harmonic devices to achieve intermittence in the development of his chosen material. The cascades of semiquavers

in the piano create a sensation of constant movement, leading the melody lines of the cello with precision.

The second theme is more relaxed, while the development, following an intense, romantic progression, leads to a section that comes across like an improvisation, with pizzicato in the cello accompanying fast, graceful broken octaves in the piano.

This was the last of Fauré's compositions entirely dedicated to the cello, since during the remaining three years of his life he concentrated on the Trio in D minor and the Quartet in E minor. The particular appeal of these products of the composer's full maturity and relative old age lies not only in the fact they are perfectly suited to the chamber ensemble in which he excelled, but also in the surprising freshness of the creativity they embody.

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Translation by Kate Singleton



Born in 1989, **Luca Magariello** first studied the cello at the Suzuki School in Turin, then graduated at the age of 16 under Antonio Mosca at the Turin Conservatoire, where he obtained a first class diploma. From the age of 6 he toured with the Suzuki Orchestra in Italy and abroad, acquiring experience and a reputation as a soloist and orchestral cellist. Following graduation he continued his studies with cellists of the calibre of Mario Brunello, Giovanni Sollima and Philippe Muller. Essential for his artistic and musical education was also his encounter with Enrico Dindo and Enrico Bronzi.

Finalist at the 5th Antonio Janigro International Competition in Zagreb, in June 2010 he won the Khachaturian International Cello Competition in Yerevan

(Armenia), which greatly contributed to his international career as a soloist.

Luca has performed as a soloist in Slovenia, Romania, Albania, Japan, Macedonia, Armenia and Belgium under the baton of conductors such as Guy Braunstein, Sergey Sambatyan, Filip Pavisic, Mikk Uleoja, Mario Brunello. He plays as soloist with the Soloists of Zagreb, Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra, State Youth Orchestra of Armenia, Durres Chamber Orchestra. With the pianist Cecilia Novarino, he has formed a duo, studying with the Trio di Parma. They are often invited to play for important concert seasons in Italy and abroad, such as Ljubljana University, Società della musica in Mantua, Unione Musicale and MITO in Turin, Società della musica in Mantua, Hulencourt Chamber music di Brussels, Festival di Musica da Camera di Cervo. Their concerts meet with great public and critical acclaim.

Luca also performs in other chamber ensembles for musical institutions and theatres that include the Teatro la Fenice in Venice, Teatro Regio in Turin, Lingotto in Turin, Teatro Verdi in Trieste.

He has recorded the Haydn Cello Concertos (Fregoli Music – Red Dress 2010); the complete Saint-Saëns Piano Quartets (Brilliant Classics 94652, 2012) with the Avos Quartet, (winners of the Vittorio Gui and Trio di Trieste Chamber Music Competition); the Hummel Complete Piano Trios (Brilliant Classics 94898, 2014); and the Myaskovsky Cello Sonatas (Brilliant Classics 95437, 2017).

Principal Cello of the Gran Teatro la Fenice Orchestra of Venice, since 2013 has also worked as Principal Cello in the Camerata Salzburg.

From 2019 he has been the Principal Cello of Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano.

Born in Turin, **Cecilia Novarino** began studying the piano Lorena Sancin and the Suzuki method when she was five. Later she studied at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire in Turin under V. Drenkova, graduating in 2000 with a first class diploma that won her the G. Berrino Award. She then took an Advanced Diploma in concert performance with top grades, completing her studies with courses in under Giulio Castagnoli. In 2007 she achieved the certificate for teaching piano at the Ghedini Conservatoire in Cuneo. Further classes followed with pianists such as A. Lucchesini, F. Scale, R. Risaliti, P. Prever. Moreover, she also specialized in chamber music at the Academy in Pinerolo with the Altenberg Trio, at the Academy of Trio Trieste in Duino (TS), and with the Trio di Parma, where she was awarded the Diploma of Merit with the cellist Luca Magariello. Alongside her musical studies, Cecilia also took a degree in Modern Literature, with a thesis on historical approaches to W.A. Mozart.



Formed in 2005, the duo is a frequent guest at national and international music events, including Unione Musicale of Turin, MITO Settembre Musica, Associazione De Sono, the Teatro Alfieri of Turin, The University of Ljubljana, in Mantua and at the Hulencourt Chamber Music festival in Brussels.

Cecilia Novarino has also performed with various chamber ensembles for the Concerti del Quirinale in Rome (broadcast live on Radio 3), Festival Massimo Amfiteatrof in Levanto, Teatro Lirico in Assisi, Music in Piazza Navona in Rome. Moreover, she has given concerts at the University of Perugia, the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, and in Chamber Music Cervo. She has also given concerts in Spain, Armenia and Canada.

She has been involved as assistant coach and pianist with the orchestras of the Teatro Regio and Teatro Stabile in Turin, Teatro Due in Parma, Teatro Verdi in Salerno, Teatro Bellini in Naples, Piccolo in Milan, Teatro delle Indie in Rome.

She has worked as accompanist at the Conservatoire in Turin, the Advanced Musical Academy in Saluzzo, the Mozart Italy Association and the Pavia Cello Academy, collaborating with eminent musicians such V. Brodsky, E. Dindo, F. Cusano, M. Polidori, A. Farulli, R. Filippini, R. Ranfaldi and F. Elmersson.

Dedicated to Margherita, Maddalena and Domenico