

AMIT PELED, CELLO

CELLOBRATION

ELIZA CHING, PIANO



"Cellobration is a reflection on a journey, my journey as a cellist, who grew up in a tiny, rural Kibbutz in Israel and fell in love with music. The pieces featured on this CD are the jewels of my development, from my early start with Mendelssohn, Davidoff, and Eccles through my realization of sound concept and technique playing Bach and Ligeti. Pablo Casals's famous 'Song of the Birds' ends the collection with a spiritual message of peace and hope. Cellobration is my own celebration of love and admiration for the instrument that became my voice."

-Amit Peled

In **Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's** (1809-1847) song **Auf Flügeln des Gesanges** (On wings of song), Op. 34 No. 2 of 1833-34 (here transcribed for cello by Georg Goltermann), the cello takes up the voice of Heinrich Heine's radiant text with a simple strophic melody, accompanied by rippling arpeggios. This is one of Mendelssohn's nearly eighty Lieder on texts by Romantic poets including Goethe, Schiller, Eichendorff, Byron, and Heine.

Karl Davidoff (1838-1889) was a member of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and later the St. Petersburg Opera Orchestra before becoming director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Davidoff's compositions for cello include four concertos as well as concert pieces such as **At the Fountain, Op. 20 No. 2**. The bravura writing for his own instrument is evident in its effervescent perpetual motion, contrasting tranquil and expansive melody, and madcap dash to the finish.

We know little for certain about the career of English Baroque composer **Henry Eccles** (1675/85-1735/45). A member of a family of English musicians, he was a violinist who may have served the courts of William III and Mary II, Queen Anne, and Louis XIV. By 1720 he had moved to Paris and published his first set of violin sonatas, from which the **Sonata in g minor** is taken. Transcribed for cello, the sonata's four movements alternate between slow and fast (Largo, Corrente, Adagio, and Vivace) in the style of a *sonata da chiesa*.

Enrique Granados' (1867-1916) **Playera**, here transcribed for cello by Alfred A. Munzer, may be his most well-known melody. Originally composed for piano and included in the Op. 5 *Danzas españolas* of 1880-1890, the accompaniment's texture evokes the sound of the guitar, while the flamenco-inspired melody resembles an Andalusian seguidilla. Through works like the *Danzas españolas* Granados defined and popularized a Spanish national music, depicting local musical traditions

like "musical blossoms that sprouted suddenly from the ambience of any particular region of Spain," according to his mentor Felip Pedrell.

In June 1880, **Gabriel Fauré** (1845-1924) wrote to his publisher that "I was very sorry you could not be at Saint-Saëns' on Monday. My cello piece was excellently received, which greatly encourages me to go on and do the whole sonata." His hit "cello piece" (which never became a sonata) was the **Élégie, Op. 24**, scored for both piano and orchestral accompaniment. Dedicated to cellist Jules Loeb, a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, the impassioned lament is followed by a gossamer second melody traded between piano and cello, after which the rhapsodic first melody returns.

After surviving the horrors of internment and forced labor as a Hungarian Jew in World War II, **György Ligeti** (1923-2006) then found himself under a repressive Soviet regime, permitted only to compose folksong settings for workers' choruses. Undeterred, Ligeti continued to compose unauthorized works including the **Cello Sonata** but was forced to hide them in a drawer. It was not until 1983 that the two-movement sonata, written in 1948 and 1953, was finally performed live in its entirety. (After a one-time radio broadcast, performances of the thorny second movement were banned due to its "formalist" content.) In the

opening "Dialogo", marked "Adagio, rubato, cantabile," a haunting melody is juxtaposed with an arresting pairing of plucked and glissando chords. The experimentation with texture continues in the "Capriccio," a muscular, agitated tour-de-force punctuated by brief fragments of the "Dialogo's" mournful melody.

J.S. Bach's (1685-1750) **Pastorella in F Major, BWV 590**, composed sometime after 1720, was originally a four-movement suite for organ based on the genre of pastoral music. Its opening Pastorella was followed by an Allemande, an Aria, and a final Gigue that the composer recycled to form the finale to the third Brandenburg Concerto. The triple-meter **Aria in c minor**, at once somber and serene, was arranged for cello by Pablo Casals, whose handwritten score was passed down from Bernard Greenhouse to Amit Peled.

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), composer, teacher, and director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, was mentor to modernists Prokofiev and Shostakovich, although his own musical style was far more conservative and unabashedly Romantic. His elegiac **Chant du Ménéstrel (Troubadour's Song), Op. 71** of 1900 was scored both for piano and orchestral accompaniment and made famous in London in 1907 by the teenage British cellist Beatrice Harrison, who

also premiered works by Delius, Elgar, and Ireland.

François Couperin (1668-1733), called “le Grand” to distinguish him from the other musicians in his family, was a harpsichordist, composer, and court musician to Louis XIV. In addition to a significant body of harpsichord literature, he also composed numerous duo and trio sonatas in the Italian style of Corelli. His five **Pièces en Concert**, though, are quintessentially French *galanteries* – graceful, pleasing short pieces of contrasting character, all of which sit in the viol’s tenor range. They were transcribed and realized by Paul Bazelaire, cello professor at the Paris Conservatoire, in the early 20th century.

Pablo Casals’ (1876-1973) **Cant dell Ocells** (**Song of the Birds**) has closed many a cellist’s programs, including those of the composer himself. His simple, shimmering arrangement of a traditional Catalan folksong embodies a “spiritual communication,” to use Peled’s words. A pioneer of cello bowing and fingering techniques, Casals was still searching for new expressive possibilities at the end of his life. At age 93, when asked why he was still practicing three hours a day, he replied, “I’m beginning to notice some improvement.”

-Sarah Adams Hoover, DMA

AMIT PELED, CELLIST

From the United States to Europe to the Middle East to Asia, cellist Amit Peled, a musician of profound artistry and charismatic stage presence, is acclaimed as one of the most exciting instrumentalists on the concert stage today.

Described by the American Record Guide as “having the flair of the young Rostropovich,” Mr. Peled has performed as soloist with orchestras such as the Baltimore Symphony, Columbus Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Radio Symphony Saarbrücken, National Symphony of Taipei, and the European Philharmonic. He performs regularly in the world’s major concert halls, including Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall, New York, Salle Gaveau, Paris, Wigmore Hall, London, Konzerthaus, Berlin, and Tel Aviv’s Mann Auditorium.

Mr. Peled is a frequent guest artist, performing and giving master classes, at festivals such as the Marlboro, Seattle Chamber Music, Schleswig Holstein, Gotland, Prussia Cove festivals, the Violoncello International Congress in Spain and Israel, and the Heifetz International Institute.

Peled’s recordings have been featured on television and radio stations throughout the world, including

NPR's "Performance Today", WGBH Boston, WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, Deutschland Radio Berlin, Radio France, Swedish National Radio & TV, and Israeli National Radio & TV.

One of the most sought after teachers in the world, Mr. Peled became in 2003 a professor at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. Amit Peled plays a rare Andrea Guarneri cello ca. 1689.

ELIZA CHING, PIANIST

Originally from Northern California, Eliza Ching is an active pianist throughout the US. In great demand as a collaborator, she has performed in venues including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Millennium Stage and Terrace Theatre at The Kennedy Center.

Ms. Ching has studied at prestigious musical institutions such as the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Manhattan School of Music and University of Maryland, College Park. Her teachers have included Jacqueline Divenyi, Robert Roux, Sara Davis Buechner and Rita Sloan.

She has served as staff pianist for the Heifetz International Music Institute, Aspen Music Festival, North Carolina School of the Arts, and the Manhattan School of Music Preparatory Division. In addition to performing, she is currently coach and vocal accompanist at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington D.C.

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| 1 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy:
<i>Auf Flügeln des Gesanges</i> 3:09
<i>Arranged for cello and piano by Georg Goltermann</i> | György Ligeti: Sonata for cello solo (8:21)
9 Dialogo – Adagio, rubato, cantabile 4:01
10 Capriccio – Presto con slancio 4:19 |
| 2 Carl Davidoff: <i>At the Fountain</i> 4:07
<i>for cello and piano in D Major, op. 20, No.2</i> | 11 Johann Sebastian Bach:
<i>Aria from Pastorella in F Major, BWV 590</i> 4:01
<i>Arranged for cello and piano by Pablo Casals</i> |
| Henry Eccles:
Sonata for cello and piano in g minor (9:27)
3 Largo 4:03
4 Allegro con spirito 1:32
5 Adagio 2:26
6 Vivace 1:25 | 12 Alexander Glazunov:
<i>Chant du Ménestrel op. 71 for cello and piano</i> 4:29 |
| 7 Enrique Granados:
<i>Playera for cello and piano</i> 3:52
<i>Arranged for cello and piano by Alfred A. Munzer</i> | François Couperin:
<i>Pièces en Concert for cello and piano</i> (11:37)
13 Prélude 1:38
14 Sicilienne 2:15
15 La Tromba 1:33
16 Plainte 4:23
17 Air de Diable 1:46 |
| 8 Gabriel Fauré:
<i>Élégie for cello and piano, op. 24</i> 7:00 | 18 Pablo Casals:
<i>Song of the Birds for cello and piano</i> 3:22 |

Total Duration: 59:30



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