



MIKLÓS RÓZSA

Sinfonia concertante, Op. 29

Rhapsody, Op. 3 Notturmo ungherese, Op. 28



HARRIET KRIJGH NIKITA BORISOV-GLEBSKY

Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz

GREGOR BÜHL



MIKLÓS RÓZSA (1907–1995)

**Sinfonia concertante for violin, cello
and orchestra, Op. 29** (1958)

- [1] I. Adagio non troppo lento [10:49]
- [2] II. Tema and Andante con variazioni [12:34]
- [3] III. Allegro con brio [8:20]

- [4] **Notturmo ungherese, Op. 28** (1972) [8:59]

- [5] **Rhapsody for cello and orchestra, Op. 3** (1929) [15:52]

HARRIET KRIJGH cello (1–3; 5)

NIKITA BORISO-GLEBSKY violin (1–3)

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Miklós Rózsa: Concert Music for Cello

Miklós Rózsa (míkloːʃ ˈrɔːʃɔ) was born in Budapest on 18 April 1907, the son of Gyula Rózsa, a minor landed industrialist from Tamási in central Hungary. His mother Regina had been a piano student at the Budapest Academy and her brother, violinist Lajos Berkovits, started the five-year-old Miklós out on the violin and the viola. Watching Erich Kleiber rehearse and conduct Mahler's Third Symphony with the Budapest Philharmonic was an early revelation for young Miklós. During the family summer holidays in the countryside, Miklós Rózsa discovered the Magyar folk music of northern Hungary and started transcribing and notating indigenous songs. He fell in love with the music of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály and decried what he perceived as a "pseudo-Hungarian musical tradition" in the music popular at the time.

Despite his musical promise, Miklós was to study something "sensible", namely chemistry. He went to Leipzig where he also read music at the university but was soon encouraged to switch to the Conservatory. He played in the conservatory orchestra and sang in the amateur choir of his mentor Thomaskantor Karl Straube, learning music from the inside out. Before long, Breitkopf & Härtel published his earliest compositions, a string trio, a piano quintet, and his **Rhapsody for cello and orchestra, Op. 3**, all while graduating "cum laude".

The Rhapsody is an early piece, but an important one for Rózsa: "My style actually starts with Opus 3", he said in an interview, "which is the Rhapsody for cello (1929). Opus 1 is a string trio [1927, revised 1974]. It is a good piece; I was twenty years old, and Opus 2 is a piano quintet from 1928. It still was trying to find a style. In Opus 3, I think I more or less found it, then in Opus 4 I already have a style." Indeed, there are several passages that are "obvious Rózsa" in this substantial concertino – especially in the treatment of the orchestral parts. Years later, Rózsa said: "Now I am not a cellist, and the cello is a very popular instrument, not at all easy to write for... Again and again, we see composers who aren't string players consulting prominent players for advice. Mendelssohn worked with Ferdinand David, Brahms with Joachim, and I worked with Starker, as I had with Heifetz." By the time he wrote the Rhapsody, he didn't yet have Starker around, but the principal cellist of the Gewandhausorchester, Klaus Münch-Holland, for whom he wrote it, will have given advice. In any case, the extensive solo passages of the cello – arguably the most interesting aspect of the whole work – betray considerable craftsmanship and confidence. In Leipzig he had also started on a symphony that he showed to Bruno Walter, Ernő Dohnányi and Pierre Monteux. The former two deemed it too long but promised to conduct a shorter work if he brought them one, which ended up being the *Hungarian Serenade*. Monteux wanted to conduct just the Scherzo on its own but ended up giving the premiere of the *Rhapsody* with the short-lived Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, instead.

Marcel Dupré enticed Rózsa to exchange relatively dull and conservative Leipzig for Paris. When his debut as a composer – chamber music with his friend Clara Haskil on piano and the *Rhapsody* – went well, he did permanently,

in 1933. With his reputation on the rise but no coins in his pocket, he turned to Arthur Honegger who introduced him to writing for Pathé cinema intermission reels and film music. To protect his name as a serious composer, Rózsa assumed the pseudonym Nic Tomay and thus his "Double Life" between film and the concert hall was under way. His *Theme, Variations and Finale, Op. 13*, became the composer's first orchestral hit, conducted by the likes of Hans Swarowsky, Karl Böhm, and Bruno Walter in New York. It became part of Leonard Bernstein's celebrated debut with the Philharmonic when Walter was indisposed for the last of the four concerts and, as per Rózsa in his biography, *Double Life*, Lennie gave it "youthful drive that even Walter could not have equalled, and a bravura that I have hardly heard since." As Rózsa barely made ends meet in Paris, it did not take much convincing from fellow Hungarian screenwriter Ákos Tolnay to lure the struggling composer to London. With ten Berlitz-School lessons worth of English under his belt, he went off to England.

On arrival in London, he stumbled into the commission of a ballet score, *Hungaria*, which was right up his alley and handsomely remunerated. With the finances settled, for the time being, he had ample time to look for opportunities, which he filled studying choral and orchestral conducting. The Belgian film director Jacques Feyder was impressed with *Hungaria* and hired Rózsa to score his next film, *Knight Without Armour* with Marlene Dietrich and Robert Donat. Thus, Rózsa found himself working for his compatriot Alexander Korda of London Films and still before, he also scored Ákos Tolnay's *Thunder in the City*. In 1939 Rózsa worked on *The Thief of Baghdad*. To finish the movie after war with Germany had been declared, the whole production team was ordered to Hollywood – and Miklós with them. The arduous journey took 13 days in all and Rózsa figured it would be a stay of maybe six weeks. It turned out to be permanent for him. As a welcome present, Rózsa was rewarded with his first of 17 Academy Award nominations for the score!

Work continued at a good clip and Rózsa's reputation among directors and even the finicky executives in LA increased by writing for films like *Jungle Book*, *Five Graves to Cairo*, *Double Indemnity*, *The Lost Weekend*, *Spellbound*, and films noir like *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* and *A Double Life*. His writing for the concert hall took a while to pick up steam again. But in his second contract with MGM, Rózsa managed to include twelve weeks of (unpaid) vacation in the summer to compose, and non-interference with his teaching duties at the newly founded course in film music at USC. While working on *Quo Vadis* and being ferried to Rome for the purpose, he discovered the town of Rapallo on the Riviera, which he selected as his summer getaway for composing. The first major work written there was his *Violin Concerto* for Jascha Heifetz in 1952/53.

In 1961 came the film music for *El Cid*, by his own reckoning the last important film for which he composed the music. But he returned to Rome the next year for the "tacky" *Sodom and Gomorrah* and while in Rome he composed the **Notturmo ungherese, Op. 28**. The short work begins with a solemn, lulling clarinet line, an "attempt to recapture the rare beauty of nights on our estate in rural Hungary...", it being "a nostalgic night piece, harking back to the

memories of my childhood in Hungary." It also served to fulfil the commissions requirement which, having been made by the Edward B. Benjamin Tranquil Music Project, stipulated it be "charming and soothing". But since one "cannot remain *pianissimo* for eight minutes", reminisces Rózsa about the premiere with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in April of 1964, "the music builds gradually until... it reaches a passionate climax; then fades away again. As the music grew, so did Mr Benjamin's unease, until the climax stirred him to a glare. Then, as the music subsided, the angelic smile returned."

The *Notturmo* is emblematic for Rózsa's way of writing slow movements and it had already shown up in his violin-cello double concerto, the **Sinfonia concertante for violin, cello and orchestra, Op. 29**. Rózsa's friend, the great cellist Gregor Piatigorsky had approached him about writing a concerto for him and his buddy Jascha Heifetz, and, in 1958, after finishing work on *Ben Hur* in Rome, Rózsa went to Rapallo and knocked it out in three months. At home, the two superstar soloists haggled over who got how much of a solo or whether one

was more virtuosic and another merely lyrical. As a result, the movement ballooned to over twenty minutes length. The second movement was discarded because Heifetz didn't want to just stand there as the cello introduces the main theme. The replacement wasn't to anyone's liking, so back in the variation movement went. Heifetz asked Rózsa to re-score the slow movement for a smaller orchestra so that he and Piatigorsky could perform after a Mozart violin concerto, resulting in the *Theme and Variations, Op. 29a*. Heifetz also conducted the concert (and recording thereof) which was "not a happy experience for anyone, least of all the absent composer." The considerable musical distance to *Ben Hur*, given its proximity in every other way, is a happy surprise, as Rózsa turns to the language he was familiarly with from Kodály and Bartók. At the eventual premiere in Chicago under Jean Martinon, the work was, unsurprisingly, deemed too long and Rózsa tightened it considerably before publishing the score. Despite the birth pangs of the concerto, it turned out to be one of Rózsa's finest, least film-music-like concert works – and one of his most underrated.

Jens F. Laurson

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Renowned Dutch cellist **Harriet Krijgh** has performed in major venues across Europe, North America and Asia with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Wiener Symphoniker, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Münchner Philharmoniker, Bamberger Symphoniker, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and Sydney Symphony Orchestra, among others. Krijgh is also a regular guest at international festivals such as Heidelberger Frühling, Grafenegg Festival and the Schubertiade, Hohenems. As Prizewinner in Residence of the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, she appeared in around 20 concerts during the 2019 festival, and has since returned annually. An enthusiastic chamber musician, the annual summer festival Harriet & Friends at Burg Feistritz (Austria) is one of her most personal projects, and enjoyed its 13th year in 2024. Krijgh's discography comprises eight albums, six of which have been released on Capriccio and feature music by Kabalevsky, Haydn, Brahms and Rachmaninov as well as several French composers. She also recorded two albums for Deutsche Grammophon, with the first featuring works by Vivaldi, recorded with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta and its leader Candida Thompson, and the second, *Silent Dreams*, featuring songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Chausson, Strauss and Glinka, which was released in September 2021. From 2025–26 she will release two albums per season on Capriccio as part of the project *Harriet, Bach and Friends*. Krijgh performs on a Domenico Montagnana cello (Venice, 1723) with a scroll made by Stradivarius. This rare instrument is on loan to her from the Angelika Prokopp Foundation.

www.harrietskrijgh.com



Nikita Boriso-Glebsky's career was launched in 2007 when he won Second Prize and five special prizes in the XIII International Tchaikovsky Competition. His victory at the International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition in 2010 was also significant, and he has since become a welcome guest in Finland, regularly performing with all the major orchestras. In 2010, Boriso-Glebsky won the Fritz Kreisler International Violin Competition. He recently gave a highly acclaimed performance at the Wiener Konzerthaus with Nikolai Lugansky, Narek Hakhnazaryan and Maxim Rysanov, and since the 2022/23 season has been a resident artist of the same venue, presenting a chamber music series in a trio with Narek Hakhnazaryan and Georgy Tchaidze. He also regularly performs in Graz and Linz. Victories at international competitions in Monaco, Brussels and Montreal have resulted in prestigious opportunities, including invitations to the best concert halls in the world, and performances with leading orchestras. He also collaborates with Sakari Oramo, Vassily Sinaisky, Dima Slobodeniouk, Stanislav Kochanovsky, Klaus Mäkelä and Mao Fujita, among others. Boriso-Glebsky's 2023/24 season was rich in debuts, with appearances at Carnegie Hall and The Fisher Center, and performances with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Wiener Kammerorchester, Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra and Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife. In September 2023, Boriso-Glebsky and Georgy Tchaidze embarked on a tour of China, which included a final recital at the Shanghai Oriental Art Center. In 2019, alongside the Orchestre philharmonique royal de Liège and Jean-Jacques Kantorow, he was the first to record Eugène Ysaÿe's previously unknown *Violin Concerto in D minor*. His album, *A Tribute to Ysaÿe*, was awarded a Diapason d'Or. Boriso-Glebsky's repertoire includes music by contemporary composers, and he has given the first performances of several compositions by Rodion Shchedrin, Alexander Tchaikovsky and Kuzma Bodrov. Born in 1985 in Volgodonsk, Boriso-Glebsky was awarded a doctoral degree from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory where he studied with Eduard Grach and Tatiana Berkul, and received further mentorship from Augustin Dumay in Brussels and Ana Chumachenko in Kronberg. He plays a violin created by Martin Schwalb in 2024.

www.boriso-glebsky.info



Formed in the shadow of the First World War, the **Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz** set out on an inaugural concert tour through the Palatinate and Saarland in the spring of 1920. This was the start of the history of the orchestra, which looks back on over 100 years of tradition. Even in its initial years the orchestra attracted transregional attention under the baton of Richard Strauss and Hermann Abendroth. More recently, principal conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach and Leif Segerstam, who also served as honorary conductor, have helped the orchestra to achieve international recognition. Michael Francis, who has been chief conductor since the 2019/20 season, has further developed the orchestra's tradition. As an orchestra without a permanent domicile, providing the federal state with symphonic music is the most important task of the State Philharmonic Orchestra, and it brings music to the public through over 150 concerts per season. Guest performances at home and abroad as well as collaborations with internationally renowned conductors and soloists bear witness to the excellent reputation that the orchestra enjoys. The orchestra also gives family concerts. Regular concert recordings by SWR and Deutschlandfunk Kultur as well as numerous recording productions round off the orchestra's diverse range of activities. More than 100 years after its formation, the orchestra continues to be an integral part of the region's cultural life, and more than ever a cultural beacon for the State of Rhineland-Palatinate and beyond.

www.staatsphilharmonie.de

Gregor Bühl gained international attention when he launched the highly acclaimed *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm, with his interpretation being enthusiastically received by audience and press alike. The entire production was recorded and broadcast on television, and has been made available on DVD. In Stockholm he has also conducted *Tristan und Isolde*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Werther* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, and returned to the Royal Opera for new productions of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Trouble in Tahiti* by Leonard Bernstein. In recent seasons, Bühl has regularly appeared at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, the Staatsoper Hamburg and the Staatsoper Stuttgart in *Fidelio*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il trovatore*, *La Cenerentola*, *Rigoletto*, *Pique Dame*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Tosca*. He also regularly collaborates with the Staatstheater Hannover, where he has directed several new productions. Bühl made his North American debut at the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto with *Fidelio*, and his South American debut at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires with a production of Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. Guest conducting engagements have taken him to the Opéra national de Montpellier, Semperoper Dresden, Deutsche Oper Berlin and Oper Leipzig, among others. Extensive concert engagements have taken him to Germany, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Israel, and he has worked with the radio symphony orchestras of Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Saarbrücken, Hilversum and Hannover, as well as the Finnish and Danish radio orchestras, among others. Other conducting engagements have taken him to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Staatskapelle Weimar, Trondheim Symfoniorkester, Düsseldorfer Symphoniker and Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. Bühl was born in 1964 and began his conducting studies at the Düsseldorf Musikhochschule with Wolfgang Trommer. His first conducting engagement was as assistant to Gerd Albrecht at the Staatsoper Hamburg, before moving to the Staatstheater Hannover as principal conductor in 1995. He participated in masterclasses with Ferdinand Leitner, Gary Bertini and Gerd Albrecht. In 1995 he was awarded Second Prize at the Nicolai Malko Conducting Competition in Copenhagen, and the Culture Prize of Berenberg Bank in Hamburg in 1993. He has received scholarships from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben and DAAD. In recent years, he has recorded Walter Braunfels' orchestral works with the ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien and the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz for *Capriccio*. The fourth and last album in the series was awarded the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik.



MIKLÓS RÓZSA (1907–1995)

Sinfonia concertante for violin, cello and orchestra, Op. 29 (1958)

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NIKITA BORISO–GLEBSKY violin (1–3)

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