



# Édouard LALO

## *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*

**Édouard-Victoire-Antoine Lalo** (27 January 1823 – 22 April 1892) was a French composer. His most celebrated piece is the *Symphonie espagnole*, a five-movement concerto for violin and orchestra, which remains a popular work in the standard repertoire. Lalo was born in Lille, in the northernmost part of France. He attended that city's conservatoire in his youth. Beginning at age 16, he studied at the Paris Conservatoire under François Antoine Habeneck. Habeneck conducted student concerts at the Conservatoire from 1806 and became the founding conductor of the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire in 1828. For several years, Lalo worked as a string player and teacher in Paris. In 1848, he joined with friends to found the Armingaud Quartet, in which he played the viola and later, second violin. His earliest surviving compositions are songs and chamber works. In 1865, Lalo married Julie Besnier de Maligny, a contralto from Brittany. She encouraged Lalo's early interest in opera and led him to compose works for the stage, most notably the opera *Le Roi d'Ys*. These works were never really popular, despite their originality, and incurred criticism for being too progressive and Wagnerian. This led Lalo to dedicate most of his career to the composition of chamber music, which was gradually coming into vogue in France, as well as works for orchestra. Lalo's distinctive style has earned him a degree of popularity. The *Symphonie espagnole* for violin and orchestra still enjoys a prominent place in the repertoire of violinists, while the Cello Concerto in D minor is occasionally revived. His Symphony in G minor was a favourite of Sir Thomas Beecham and has occasionally been championed by later conductors. His music is notable for its strong melodies and colourful orchestration, with a Germanic solidity that distinguishes him from other French composers of his era. Such works as the *Scherzo in D minor*, one of his most colourful pieces, embody his distinctive style and strong expressive bent. *Le Roi d'Ys*, an opera based on the Breton legend of Ys, is Lalo's most complex and ambitious creation. (This same legend inspired Claude Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie*.) Lalo became a member of the Legion of Honour in 1873. *Le Roi d'Ys* was not initially considered performable and was not staged until 1888, when Lalo was 65 years old. He died in Paris in 1892, leaving several unfinished works, including his opera *La Jacquerie*, completed by Arthur Coquard. He was interred at the Père Lachaise Cemetery. Lalo's son Pierre (6 September 1866 – 9 June 1943) was a music critic who wrote for *Le Temps* and other French periodicals from 1898 until his death.

Lalo's ***Cello Concerto in D minor***, was written in 1876, in collaboration with the Belgian cellist Adolphe Fischer (1847-1891). The work was premièred the following year at the Cirque d'Hiver with Fischer as soloist. The concerto is written in three movements: 1. Prelude, *lento* – *Allegro maestoso* 2. Intermezzo, *andantino con moto* – *Allegro presto* – *Andantino* – *Tempo* | 3. Introduction, *andante* – *Allegro vivace*. The first movement opens *lento*, then moves into an *allegro maestoso*, which continues throughout the rest of the movement. The opening has several measures of orchestral music before the solo cello enters with an *ad lib* theme that is played three times. This leads into the fast section, which features many fast and aggressive arpeggios, and quick and relentless sixteenth notes. The second movement starts with a slow *andantino* section, then progresses into a lively *allegro presto*. The music returns to the *andantino* tempo. Before the end of the second movement, the *allegro presto* returns. The solo cello ends on *pizzicato* chords with the orchestra. The solo cello opens with a slow *andante* in the third movement; the orchestra joins in and then takes over. The music becomes a 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.