

ISTVÁN VÁRDAI – BIOGRAPHY



István Várdai, the 29 year old Hungarian cellist was honoured with several prestigious international prizes: in 2008 he won the 63th Geneva International Music Competition, and additional special prizes as well: Audience Prize, “Pierre Fournier” Prize, “Coup de Coeur Breguet” Prize. He took the third prize of the International Tchaikovsky Music Competition, Moscow in 2007. In 2006 he was awarded with the special prize of the Emanuel Feuermann Cello Competition at the Kronberg Academy and received first prize at the 13th International Brahms Competition in Austria. He was winner of the David Popper International Music Competition three times, (2000, 2003, 2004) In 2014 he won the ARD Cello Competition in Munich.

Since his debut concert in 1997 in The Hague, he has performed in New York, London, Paris, Prague, Vienna, Frankfurt, Munich, Geneva, Dublin, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Florence, Tokyo, Kobe, Beijing with great success. Along his starting career, he played with world-famous musicians and orchestras: Mikhail Pletnov, Ádám Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis, Howard Griffiths, Gilbert Varga, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Geneva Chamber Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Suisse Romande Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has been invited to Santander Festival, the Gergiev Festival in St. Petersburg, the Pablo Casals Festival (Spain), Festival of Radio France (Montpellier), Bellerive Festival (Switzerland), Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Verbier Festival, West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Schwetzingen Festival and the Budapest Spring Festival. In 2010 he made his debut, among others, in Carnegie Hall and the Wiener Konzerthaus and performed with Gidon Kremer, András Schiff and Yuri Bashmet in the frame of „Chamber Music Connects the World” at Kronberg Academy.

From 2004 István studied in the Class of Special Talents at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, from 2005 at the Music Academy of Vienna. Between 2010 and 2013 he continued his studies at Kronberg Academy. From 2013 he is on the staff of the Academy. He attended masterclasses of Natalia Gutman, Natalia Shakhovskaya, András Schiff and János Starker. In 2009 he was awarded the Junior Prima Prize as best young artist of the year, in 2012 he received the prestigious Prix Montblanc awarded to the world's most promising young musician. His first CD containing pieces of Janáček, Prokofiev and the Elgar cello concerto was released in October 2009 by Ysaye Records. In 2010 he recorded the cello concerto of Johann Baptist Vanhal. On his CD released by the Hänssler label in 2013 he plays works by Mendelssohn, Martinu, Paganini, Beethoven and Popper. His recent CD with both versions of Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations was released in November 2014.

Mr. Várdai is, together with Kristóf Baráti, artistic director of „Kaposfest”, Hungary's leading chamber music festival. He plays a Montagnana cello from 1720.