

World premiere recording of Schumann's original *Cello Concerto (Concertstück)* released by Josephine Knight

Knight's new edition to be published by Edition Peters



Friday 20 March
Dutton | CDLX 7371

Schumann *Cello Concerto (Concertstück)* **WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING: NEW EDITION**
Piatti *Cello Concerto No. 2* **WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**
Piatti *Concertino for cello and orchestra* **WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Josephine Knight cello
Royal Northern Sinfonia
Martin Yates conductor

In a world premiere recording, cellist **Josephine Knight** champions **Schumann's Cello Concerto** in its original form as a *Concertstück*, performed for the first time in a new edition based on the original manuscript in the composer's hand. The recording marks the culmination of a ten-year mission including Knight's discovery of the autograph score in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków. A meticulously-reconstructed new edition by Knight, to be published by **Edition Peters**, reveals the work in its original form as Schumann intended.

The world premiere recording is released on **Dutton** on **Friday 20 March** with conductor **Martin Yates** and the **Royal Northern Sinfonia**, and also includes two previously unrecorded cello works by Alfredo Piatti. Josephine Knight holds the **Alfredo Piatti Chair at the Royal Academy of Music** where she is Professor of Cello.



[Watch the video trailer here](#)

Knight's new edition strips off generations of amendments to Schumann's original conception, including its styling as a *Concertstück* rather than *Concerto*. The score was written in two weeks in 1850 following the family's move to Düsseldorf, when the composer was still of sound mind.

Schumann entrusted the score to cellist and composer Robert Emil Bockmühl for revisions in the hope he would perform it. The exchange was unsuccessful: Schumann resisted Bockmühl's tampering, and the piece was not performed. By the time Schumann presented the work to the publishers three years later, his mental state had deteriorated significantly.

"The Doctors put him [Schumann] to bed, and he gave no resistance for a few hours. Then he got up again and started making corrections in the cello concerto, feeling that this might relieve him of the interminable sound of the voices."

- Clara Schumann, 17 February 1854

Lacking an immediate advocate, the work remained unperformed at the time of Schumann's death in 1856, and until Pablo Casals took it up, it failed to achieve universal recognition. Instrumental virtuosi of the 19th century freely interpreted a composer's text and Schumann's *Cello Concerto* suffered particularly from this tradition. Generations of performers have since introduced alternative bowings and significant changes which have diluted the original conception of the work considerably. The most prominent change occurs in the final section of the third movement, where a virtuosic flourishing scale replaces a simpler triplet figure.

Josephine Knight had access to all the extant autographs, including the composer's alterations and revisions, in preparing the recording and the edition which accompanies it. Her main objective has been to strip the piece back to its original conception and respect Schumann's initial thoughts. Hundreds of differences were found and significant new material which is recorded in this world premiere disc.



Josephine Knight said:

"Following years of scrupulous research, I am delighted to present the original version of Schumann's Concertstück in the new edition published by Edition Peters. In my opinion the Concerto had become distorted beyond Schumann's intentions. My ultimate wish is to give the performer both access to and confidence that she or he is playing from an edition which is a true representation of the piece in its original form, no matter how much more difficult this might be. I found that incorporating the changes enabled the piece to take on a completely different character – one that is lighter and happier, even "jolly", as Schumann described the work to Breitkopf & Härtel."

The British premiere of the work was given in London in April 1866 by Alfredo Piatti; it is fitting that the original work's rediscovery has been pioneered by Knight, the Royal Academy of Music's Alfredo Piatti Chair.

The Schumann *Concerto* is presented alongside two previously unrecorded works by **Alfredo Piatti**. The Italian-born virtuoso began his career as a child prodigy, championed by Liszt after poverty had forced him to sell his cello to survive. He began an extended residence in England, appearing prolifically at Philharmonic Society concerts. Piatti's *Concertino* of 1862 presents a series of lyrical melodies and complex passagework over its three movements, dedicated to King George V of Hanover. His *Cello Concerto No. 2* of 1873 is more conventional work but retains its virtuosic solo part.

Josephine Knight



Since her sell-out solo recital debut at London's Wigmore Hall, British cellist Josephine Knight has gone on to a highly acclaimed international career spanning over 25 years, performing in the world's most renowned concert halls. She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras in the UK and abroad, working with distinguished conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Edward Gardner, Richard Hickox and Vasily Petrenko. In 2005 she gave her BBC Proms concerto debut, with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Josephine has recorded for the EMI Classics, Deutsche Grammophon and Chandos labels. Following the success of her recording of John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil*, which reached the Top Ten of the Classical Music Charts, she subsequently made the world premiere recording of Tavener's *Requiem*, for EMI Classics, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Other, more diverse collaborations have included recordings with Nigel Kennedy, Paul McCartney and Madonna.

A sought-after chamber musician, Josephine has performed with many leading international artists including Daniel Hope, Maxim Vengerov, Lisa Batiashvili, Wu Han, Menahem Pressler, Michael Tree, and the Emerson and Takács Quartets. She makes regular appearances at festivals such as Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham, Casa da Música in Porto, Gstaad, Mecklenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Salzburg, Schloss Elmau, Savannah and Stavanger, and performs regularly at the Wigmore Hall and the Southbank Centre.

Josephine has received many honours including being unanimously elected a Fellow of both the Royal Academy of Music and Wells Cathedral School. She holds the Alfredo Piatti Chair at the Royal Academy of Music where she is Professor of Cello.

Josephine plays on a 1728 Johannes Guidantus cello, purchased from Florian Leonhard to whom she is tremendously grateful for acquiring this magnificent instrument.

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