

Pierre Fournier (1906-1986) was born in Paris on June 24, and known in his lifetime as "the aristocrat of cellists," because of his lyrical playing, and for his impeccable artistic sensitivity.

Fournier was the son of a French army general, and as a child was taught piano by his mother. At the age of nine he suffered a mild case of polio, and lost some of the dexterity in his legs and feet. No longer able to master the use of the piano pedals, he searched for another musical instrument, and turned to the cello.

He quickly made good progress on his new instrument, and was able to win entrance to the Paris Conservatoire, where he became a pupil of Paul Bazelaire, and later Anton Hekking. He graduated at the age of seventeen, in the year 1923. Maurice Marechal called him "the cellist of the future." Even at such a young age, Fournier had tremendous virtuosity, and was famous for his bowing facility. Fournier was a friend of another great French cellist, Tortelier. Once, meeting backstage after a recital by Tortelier, Pierre said to him, "Paul, I wish I had your left hand." Tortelier replied, "Pierre, I wish I had your right arm!"

Fournier became well known in 1925 after a successful performance with the Edouard Colonne Orchestra in Paris, and began to give concerts all over Europe. Fournier played with all the great musicians of his time, including Cortot, Thibaud, Furtwangler, Karajan and Kubelik. Together with Artur Schnabel, Szigeti and Primrose he recorded nearly all of the chamber music of Brahms and Schubert.

Unfortunately the acetates on which the BBC recorded the series deteriorated before they could be copied to a more durable medium. In the years 1937-1939 Fournier directed the cello class at the Ecole Normale, and from 1941-1949 also at the Paris Conservatoire.

Fournier made his first tour of the USA in 1948 to great acclaim in New York and Boston. Virgil Thomson wrote in the New York Herald Tribune, "I do not know his superior among living cellists, nor any...who give one more profoundly the feeling of having been present at music-making." His performing career occupied more and more of his time, and he had to resign from his teaching post in Paris. In 1959 he appeared for the first time in Moscow, where he played most of the standard concertos of the cello repertoire.

He enjoyed modern music, as well as classical. Many modern composers wrote works for him, including Martinu, Martinon and Poulenc. As a teacher Fournier insisted that his students develop a smooth tone, and a high elbow for the right arm. He believed that the Sevcik violin exercises were valuable for cellists who wanted to perfect bowing technique.

In 1956 he made his home with his family in Switzerland, but retained his French citizenship. His son, Jean Pierre Fournier was a fine pianist, and often performed cello/piano sonatas together with his father. In 1963 he was made a member, and a year later an officer, of the French Legion of Honor.

Fournier was still performing and playing well at the age of 78, when he gave a recital at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. He died in January 1986, at the age of 80. In 1988 the Royal Northern College of Music began an International Cello Festival to honour his memory.

Classical and jazz pianist and composer, Friedrich Gulda was one of Austria's premiere pianists. Born in Vienna in 1930, Gulda started piano lessons at the age of seven. When he was 12, he enrolled in the Vienna Music Academy, and four years later received first place in the Geneva International Music Festival. In 1949, Gulda toured Europe and South America, earning international acclaim for his treatments of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, and the following year he successfully debuted at Carnegie Hall. Gulda became more involved in jazz from 1951 on, when he improvised with Dizzy Gillespie following a performance with the Chicago Symphony. Five years later, Gulda played his first American jazz concert at Birdland (N.Y.C.), followed by a performance at the Newport Jazz Festival. After this, Gulda formed the Eurojazz Orchestra, a jazz combo and big band which drew from both jazz and classical compositions. In 1966, ten years after his Birdland appearance, Gulda organized a modern jazz competition in his native city. He was awarded the Vienna Academy's Beethoven Ring in 1970, but later returned it to protest what he regarded as a constricting educational system. This only reinforced the public's perception of Gulda as an eccentric. This reputation was not helped when he abruptly called off major performances more than once. A 1988 incident occurred in reaction to objections to his program for a Salzburg music festival that included jazz musician Joe Zawinul; he made another last minute cancellation by faking his own death with a phony obituary only days before a scheduled performance of Mozart. On January 27, 2000, Friedrich Gulda died of an apparent heart attack in Vienna, the city of his birth.



Beethoven Sonata For Cello And Piano



No.4 In C, Op.102 No. 1

No.5 In D, Op.102 No. 2

Cello – Pierre Fournier

Piano – Friedrich Gulda

The Sonatas for cello and piano No. 4 in C major, Op. 102, No. 1, and No. 5 in D major, Op. 102, No. 2, by Ludwig van Beethoven were composed simultaneously in 1815 and published in 1817 with a dedication to the Countess Marie von Erdődy (de), a close friend and confidante of Beethoven's.

The sonatas were composed between the end of 1812 and 1817, during which time Beethoven, ailing and overcome by all sorts of difficulties, experienced a period of literal and figurative silence as his deafness became overwhelmingly profound and his productivity diminished. Following seven years after the A Major Sonata No. 3, the complexity of their composition and their visionary character marks (with the immediately preceding piano sonata Op 101) the start of Beethoven's 'third period'.

The critics of the time, often perplexed by Beethoven's last compositions, described the sonatas in terms such as the following from the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*:

They elicit the most unexpected and unusual reactions, not only by their form but by the use of the piano as well...We have never been able to warm up to the two sonatas; but these compositions are perhaps a necessary link in the chain of Beethoven's works in order to lead us there where the steady hand of the maestro wanted to lead us.

Although played less often than Sonata No. 3, Sonatas Nos. 4 and 5 are now essential elements in the basic repertory of works for cello and piano.

This short, almost enigmatic work demonstrates in concentrated form how Beethoven was becoming ready to challenge and even subvert the sonata

structures he inherited from composers such as Haydn and Mozart.

Its overall structure is possibly unique in Beethoven's works, comprising just a pair of fast sonata-form movements, each with a slow introduction.

Both movements recall the long-established convention of a slow introduction to a brisk main section in sonata form, but with significant modifications.

In the first movement the introductory portion entirely lacks the portentousness of a conventional slow introduction, consisting of a brief elegiac theme repeated several times without change of key and largely unvaried; it concludes with an elaborate cadence in C major that is then contradicted by the sonata portion being in the relative minor, largely avoiding the key of C major except at the opening of the development.

The second movement opens more in the manner of a traditional slow introduction, and eventually leads to a sonata-form portion in the 'correct' key of C. However, before this point is reached, the opening material of the sonata reappears for a final, almost ecstatic variation; a procedure paralleled elsewhere in Beethoven's work only in the drama of the fifth and ninth symphonies.

While this sonata is more accessible and conventionally structured, the concluding fugue prefigures the fugal finales of the Hammerklavier Sonata and the late string quartets.

Beethoven Sonata For Cello And Piano

No.4 In C, Op.102 No. 1 & No.5 In D, Op.102 No. 2

Cello - Pierre Fournier Piano - Friedrich Gulda

- 1 No.4 In C, Op.102 No.1 - 1. Andante - Allegro vivace 8:30
 - 2 No.4 In C, Op.102 No.1 - 2. Adagio - Tempo d'andante - Allegro vivace 6:58
 - 3 No.5 In D, Op.102 No.2 - 1. Allegro con brio 6:29
 - 4 No.5 In D, Op.102 No.2 - 2. Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto 9:14
 - 5 No.5 In D, Op.102 No.2 - 3. Allegro - Allegro fugato 4:24
- Total Time: 35:35

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