MUSICA *Illustrata*
CLASSICAL RECORDINGS

CELLO CONCERTOS

Dvořák & Saint-Saëns

David Apellániz

Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche · Mihnea Ignat
Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra
James A. Gähres

NEW ALBUM

Musica Illustrata releases a new recording by David Apellániz bringing together Antonín Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104, and Camille Saint-Saëns's Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33. The Dvořák captures the performance given live on 18 May 2024 at the Gran Teatro de Elche, with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche and Mihnea Ignat. The Saint-Saëns, with the Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra under James Allen Gähres, was also recorded live, on Saturday 18 June 2016 at the Teatro Circo de Marte in Santa Cruz de La Palma.

Ref. MI-009 · on all platforms on 30 October

Two orchestras, a single cello

Conceived as a sound document in two parts, the album sets Dvořák —one of the summits of the repertoire for the instrument— against Saint-Saëns, whose first concerto (1872) links three sections in a single movement and is one of the most beloved pages in the cello literature. The Dvořák is a lyrical, overwhelming reading that combines the classic lyricism with which this score is usually approached with a forceful expressive power. The live take preserves the tension and the truth of the moment —the breath shared between soloist, orchestra and audience— that can hardly be recreated in the studio.

Both works belong to the path of David Apellániz, one of the leading cellists of his generation. The Dvořák concerto also bears the hallmark of a home orchestra: the Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche, founded in 1988, holds its season at the Gran Teatro de Elche, led here by Mihnea Ignat, its Music Director between 2016 and 2025.

The second part of the programme opens another perspective with the Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra and James Allen Gähres, a conductor with a long operatic and symphonic career in Germany, Generalmusikdirektor of the Ulm Theatre between 1994 and 2011, who conducted the orchestra at the Teatro Circo de Marte in Santa Cruz de La Palma.

The programme

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104
I. Allegro · II. Adagio ma non troppo · III. Finale. Allegro moderato

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)
Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33
Allegro non troppo – Allegretto con moto – Tempo primo

The performers

David Apellániz CELLO

The eclecticism of his work, his rigour and his interpretive creativity have made David Apellániz one of the leading cellists of his generation. His appearances at some of the world's finest festivals, his recordings and his work as a soloist with most Spanish orchestras and many European and American ones have earned him the best reviews in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, Scherzo and Ritmo. He is a member of the Arriaga Piano Trio.

Mihnea Ignat CONDUCTOR

Mihnea Ignat (Craiova, Romania, 1980) is one of the most prominent Romanian conductors of his generation. Principal Conductor of the Romanian National Opera in Timişoara, he was Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche between 2016 and 2025 and Principal Conductor of the Sarajevo Philharmonic. He received the Toscanini Philharmonic Special Prize at the "A. Toscanini" International Competition in Parma (2010). An assistant to Dmitri Kitajenko with ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the Munich Philharmonic, he has conducted, among many others, the Madrid Radio Symphony, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Seville Royal Symphony and the "George Enescu" Philharmonic. A respected opera conductor, he combines his career with teaching at the National University of Music in Bucharest and the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid.

James Allen Gähres CONDUCTOR

James Allen Gähres (Harrisburg, 1943) studied music, conducting, composition and piano at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and, as a Fulbright scholar, with Hans Swarowsky at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna; he also attended Bruno Maderna's masterclasses in Salzburg. His career unfolded in the German opera houses: first Kapellmeister for ten years at the Hannover Opera and later at the Braunschweig State Opera, and from 1994 to 2011 Generalmusikdirektor of the Ulm Theatre and principal conductor of the Ulm Philharmonic, with which he conducted the complete Beethoven and Brahms symphony cycles and released more than fifteen recordings. He has been a guest conductor at the Deutsche Oper Berlin —where he conducted the German premiere of Bernstein's Candide at the invitation of Götz Friedrich— the New York City Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, the Stuttgart State Opera and the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, as well as orchestras such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony, and has performed at the Salle Pleyel in Paris. He has also conducted at the La Palma International Music Festival.

Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche OSCE

The "Ciutat d'Elx" Symphony Orchestra (OSCE), founded in 1988 by conductor Alfonso Saura, is the oldest permanent orchestra in the province of Alicante. It holds its season of symphonic, chamber and educational concerts at its home, the Gran Teatro de Elche, with intense musical outreach throughout the Levante region and a notable educational activity reaching thousands of schoolchildren each season.

Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra LA PALMA

The Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra of La Palma was a symphonic ensemble created specifically within the framework of the festival, in which it took part for several consecutive editions. Conceived as the event's resident orchestra, it worked mainly on the island of La Palma, accompanying the festival's symphonic and concerto programmes. Each year it brought together a stable core of professional musicians for its concerts. It was made up mainly of musicians linked to the Eastern European orchestral tradition, with a significant presence of players from the Bolshoi Theatre of Minsk (Belarus), which gave it a homogeneous sound identity and solid experience in the symphonic, operatic and concerto repertoire. It collaborated with guest conductors and soloists and was one of the central elements of the festival's musical programming.

The details

PERFORMERS	David Apellániz, cello · Orquesta Sinfónica de Elche, Mihnea Ignat (Dvořák) · Orquesta del Festival Jerónimo Saavedra, James Allen Gähres (Saint-Saëns)
RECORDING	Dvořák: live, Gran Teatro de Elche, 18 May 2024 · Saint-Saëns: live, Teatro Circo de Marte, Santa Cruz de La Palma, Saturday 18 June 2016
SOUND ENGINEER	Jorge Fanjul (Dvořák) · Wolfgang Jung (Saint-Saëns)
INSTRUMENTS	Dvořák: Italian cello from 1740, unattributed · Saint-Saëns: modern cello (2003) by Polish luthier Bronek Cison · In both concertos, a bow by C. A. Thomassin (1890)
RELEASE	30 October · all platforms · Ref. MI-009

ABOUT MUSICA ILLUSTRATA

Musica Illustrata is a record label devoted to classical music, founded in 2013. The label prioritises live recordings, with the aim of returning to classical music the truth that can only be heard in concert: the unrepeatable emotion of a moment shared between performers and audience. Its catalogue spans the great repertoire alongside the music of contemporary composers, and treats every recording as a sound document through its interpretive detail, its sonic quality and its respect for the work.

AVAILABLE — On all platforms on 30 October