

Olsi LEKA

cellist, born in Tirana, Albania, in 1980



He started studying the cello at the age of 6. During his studies, he twice obtained the first prize at the 'Young Virtuosi' competition (junior and senior categories), the first prize at the 'Lyons Club Interpretation Competition' in Belgium and the second prize at the 'International Music Competition' in Cyprus.

During his last year at the conservatory he was appointed Cello Solo - First Cellist at the National Orchestra of Belgium, at the age of 24. This allowed him to work with a multitude of conductors and soloists of international renown like Valery Gergiev, Walter Weller, Hugh Wolf, Pinchas Zukerman, Vadim Repin, Misha Maisky, H  l  ne Grimaud and others.

Since then, he performed in chamber music appearances in numerous countries and festivals such as 'Schiermonnikoog Festival' in Netherlands, the 'Different trains Festival' in Albania, the 'Gj  vig Musicfest' in Norway, the 'Excellent Concerts' in the Netherlands and others.

He performed in recitals with the pianists Daniel Blumenthal, Fran  ois-Ren   Duchable, Adam Laloum, Liebrecht Vanbeckevoort, Piet Kuijken, Desar Sulejmani and Peter Caelen.

As a soloist, he played with many orchestras the concertos of P.I. Tchaikovsky, A. Dvorak, R. Schumann, E.Lalo, M. Bruch, W. Bargiel. J.Brahms and more.

The interpretation of the concerto 'Tout un monde lointain ...' by the French composer Henri Dutilleux was another career highlight. After preparation of the oeuvre with the composer in his Parisian Ile Saint-Louis studio, the work was played and recorded live in Brussels in his presence. The composer said it was one of the best interpretations he had ever heard.

In 2007 he was appointed cello Professor at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp and in 2015 he was appointed cello Professor at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. He is regularly invited for cello masterclasses in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Italy France and more.

In recent years, Olsi Leka has devoted himself to the development of personal projects such as recording CDs for various record companies. His last CD "The cello in Madness" is produced by the Belgian label Phaedra, presenting a compilation of unknown Belgian cello works as well as some virtuosity pieces like the sonata en D of Pietro Locatelli.

He plays an exceptional cello crafted by the Italian violin maker Raffaele Gagliano around 1820, and graciously made available by the   ric Feldbusch Foundation. This cello was donated to Eric Feldbusch in 1965 by Queen Elizabeth of Belgium on the occasion of the creation of the piano trio bearing her name.