

Cello Concerto. What Next?

Other Works to Explore

You might enjoy comparing the Cello Concerto with the three chamber works Elgar wrote just before it: the Violin Sonata, the Piano Quintet and the String Quartet. While these chamber works have many similarities with the Cello Concerto, Elgar's Violin Concerto of 1911 is a very different work. It is half again as long, and expansive, rather than concentrated like the later works. Elgar was a violinist himself, and the work reveals an exceptional understanding of the instrument. Many Elgarians consider the Violin Concerto the height of Elgar's accomplishments as a composer, and there are many inspired performances to choose from, including one by Yehudi Menuhin and the composer, recorded in 1932.

More works for cello : Perhaps what makes the cello so appealing is that its timbre is closest of any instrument to that of the human voice. If listening to Elgar's Cello Concerto makes you want to explore the instrument further, here are some highlights of its repertory :

- **J. S. Bach : Cello Suites, No. 1-6 (1720):**
Few works have ever plumbed the depths of the instrument's character as productively as these suites for unaccompanied cello.
- **Franz Joseph Haydn : Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 2 in D major (1783):**
Contains a famous adagio and was an important landmark in the cello's development as a solo instrument.
- **Ludwig van Beethoven : Cello Sonata No. 3 (1808):**
Composed at the same time as his Pastoral Symphony. A tuneful and lyrical work that makes the most of the instrument's resonant voice.
- **Camille Saint-Saens : Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor (1880):**
A dazzling showcase for the soloist's virtuosity but also an impressively concentrated and expressive score.
- **Antonin Dvorak : Cello Concerto in B minor (1895):**
The cello in heroic mode. Written at the pinnacle of Dvorak's artistry, the work is intensely dramatic and contains some of his most memorable melodies. It influenced Elgar's Violin Concerto, which is written in the same key.
- **Claude Debussy : Sonata in D minor (1915):**
Like Elgar, Debussy turned from orchestral music to chamber music during the war. A spare and evocative nocturne.