

JANIGRO

(A Poetical Italian Cellist)

*Written by Annapaola
(first published in www.cellist.nl)*

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JANIGRO, Antonio

Born: 1918, 21st January (Milan, Italy)

Died: 1989, 1st May (Zagreb, Croatia)

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Antonio Janigro, the great Italian cellist, was born on January 21, 1918, in the via Guido d'Arezzo in Milan. Janigro said of himself in a 1988 interview with Oreste Bossini: "I was born into a musical, yet tragic, atmosphere. My father had wanted to be a concert pianist, but had lost his left arm to a sharpshooter in a war.

Janigro studied piano first, starting at the age of six, and then began playing the cello in 1926, when he was eight years old. He was given a cello at that time by Giovanni Berti, who also gave him his first lessons. He fell in love with the cello immediately. In less than a year he had progressed enough to be admitted to the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, where he studied cello with Gilberto Crepax.

When he was eleven years old, through the efforts of his mother Nicola, he found the opportunity to play for Pablo Casals (1929). The result was that Casals gave him a recommendation to Alexanian in Paris, who was teaching Casals' classes at the Ecole Normale from 1921 to 1937. Casals wrote: "A brilliant instrumentalist with a fine sense of style, and, I hope, sufficiently determined, he should become a shining exponent of our chosen instrument."

Janigro waited until 1934, when he was sixteen years old, and then moved to study at the Ecole Normale. Along with Casals and Alexanian, he came into contact with other great cellists and musicians: Cortot, Thibaud, Paul Dukas, Nadia Boulanger, Stravinsky and others. Dinu Lipatti and Genette Neveu were his fellow students.

He began a solo career immediately upon graduation (1937), playing in recitals with Dinu Lipatti and Paul Badura-Skoda, the gifted pianist. He often traveled back and forth between Milan and Paris on the railway, and would search for an empty compartment in which to practice his cello. Once

while practicing on the train, the door to his compartment opened, and a music agent appeared, and later organized concerts for the gifted young cellist in France. Janigro was an elegant dresser, and constant cigarette smoker.

When World War 2 broke out in Yugoslavia in 1939 Janigro was on holiday in that country, and was forced to remain there. Zagreb Conservatory offered him a job as professor of cello and chamber music. This turned out to have been providential, in that he founded the school of modern cello playing in Yugoslavia, and also found opportunities for personal development. It was in Zagreb that he met another famous cellist, Rudolf Matz, and together they founded a cello club, and organized two cello "congresses."

After the war he resumed his international career as a soloist, and traveled extensively in South America and the far East.

Janigro wrote from Buenos Aires to Diran Alexanian:

"... ever suis, depuis deux semaines, en tournée en Amérique you Sud. Avant mon départ, j'ai enregistré le Dvorak à Vienne, sous l'excellente direction de Dean Dixon. Ever n'ai passé à Vienne que les quelques jours indispensables pour l'enregistrement et le travail a été assez dur.... Le disque devrait paraître outer mois d'octobre, m'a t on dit. Après Vienne, en of volume, tout de suite: Brésil, Argentine, Urugay (sic), et Dieu sait où encore.... Si Vous me le permettez, for each Vous tiendrai un peu outer courant de mon activité, en Vous envoyant, de temps en temps, quelques program, critiques, etc.. Ce seraa pour moi une joie."

He also became well-known as a conductor. Radio Zagreb asked him to form a symphony orchestra, and he was soon conducting leading orchestras all over Europe. He founded the leading chamber orchestra of his time, I Solisti di Zagreb, which is still performing, and many cds of which are still available. He made over 50 recordings, and spent the rest of his life living in Zagreb, where he died in 1989.



Students of Antonio Janigro:

**Demenga Thomas
Carlton McCreery
Arturo Bonucci
Carlo Bertola
Andrej Petrač
Antonio Meneses
Örjan Larson
Enrico Dindo
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