

Xavier Phillips

Cello

Born in Paris in 1971, Xavier Phillips began to study the cello at the early age of 6. By 15, he entered Philippe Muller's studio at the CNSM in Paris and graduated with First Prize in 1989.

After these formative years, he won several international prizes (the Second Prize and Special Prize at the Young Artists of Belgrade competition, the Special Prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the Third and Special Prize at the Rostropovitch Competition in Paris and First Prize, awarded unanimously, at the 1st Competition of Helsinki). His participation brought him to the attention of Mstislav Rostropovitch, who had been particularly taken with his playing during the Rostropovitch Competition. Their encounter proved especially fruitful since it marked the beginning of a long collaboration during which Xavier Phillips received the guidance and encouragement of the master cellist.

He was quickly invited to perform at international concert venues with such prestigious orchestras as the Orchestre National de France, the Philharmonique de Radio France, the Berliner Symphoniker, the Houston Symphony, the BBC Scottish Orchestra, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the Filarmonica della Scala and with such eminent conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Kurt Masur, Christoph Eschenbach, James Conlon, Marek Janowski, Serge Baudo, Vladimir Fedosseyev, Ion Marin, Kazushi Ono, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Gunther Herbig, Eliahu Inbal, and Vladimir Spivakov.

After his debut with the Orchestre de Paris in September 2001, Mstislav Rostropovitch – seeing an accomplished soloist with ever increasing maturity – invited him to play Prokofiev's *Symphonia Concertante* under his baton with Washington's National Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic.

Less than a year later, still under the baton of his mentor Mstislav Rostropovitch, Xavier Phillips made his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme*. Following these back-to-back successes in the United States, he was invited to the Seattle Symphony Orchestra for several concerts under Vassili Sinaïski's baton.

In September 2006, he was given the honor of being the first soloist invited by the Orchestre de Paris for the reopening of the Salle Pleyel. He was hailed for his interpretation of Henri Dutilleux's *Tout un monde lointain*. The composer, who was present, said afterwards: "Xavier Phillips fully owns this work and evokes the very essence of its title – all a distant world."

After numerous concerts in Spain, Portugal and the United States, where his interpretation of this masterpiece continued to be a huge success, Valery Gergiev invited him to perform the work under his direction with the Marinsky Theater orchestra in Saint-Petersburg in June 2008.

Xavier Phillips's eclectic and varied discography has been acclaimed by critics; he received a "Choc" award by the magazine *Le Monde de la Musique* for the following recordings: *Kodály* (Harmonia Mundi/Lontano) with his brother Jean-Marc Phillips-Varjabedian, *Works for Cello & Orchestra* (Lalo, Fauré, Caplet at EMI Classics), *Sonatas of Schnittke, Shostakovich and Prokofiev* with the pianist Hüseyin Sermet (Harmonia Mundi), as well as the Grand Prix du Disque for Alberic Magnard's chamber music (Auvidis Valois). The CD *Armenia*, devoted to Armenian music with Jean-Marc Phillips-Varjabedian and Vahan Mardirossian, Warner Classics) obtained a "Choc de l'année" ("Choc of the year") in 2007.

Always attuned to contemporary music, he has also participated in recordings of such young and talented composers as J.L. Agobet, G. Connesson, T. Escaich and A. Gasparov and has been at the forefront of commissioning and performing new works for cello, among these the *Concerto* by Alexandre Gasparov, the *Concerto* by Garrett Byrnes and the upcoming *Concerto* by Gregory Mertl.



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Alongside his work as soloist, Xavier Phillips, has been a dedicated teacher. He has been the assistant of Roland Pidoux for several years at the CNSM in Paris and has given numerous workshops and master classes. He is always interested in sharing his knowledge with others.

Xavier Phillips has also dedicated himself to chamber music – a passion that he has shared with such artists as Schlomo Mintz, Jean-Marc Phillips-Varjabédian, Régis Pasquier, David Grimal, Emmanuel Strosser, Vahan Mardirossian, Igor Tchetuev, Vanessa Wagner, Romain Guyot...

Xavier Phillips plays on a Matteo Gofriller cello from 1710.