Concertstück pour Violoncelle (1905)

for piano and cello

by

Juliette Folville

Edited by Ronald Krentzman
Women's Philharmonic Advocacy – www.wophil.org

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Edited and engraved by Ronald Krentzman.

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WPA was founded in 2008 to work for equity for women composers and

celebrate the legacy of The Women's Philharmonic (1980-2004)

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Background to this Edition

The score for Juliette Folville's Concertstück pour Violoncelle (1905) was uncovered by Chandra Asken in Belgium while on a research trip for The Women's Philharmonic, circa 2000. The manuscript is held in the library of the Conservatoire de Musique in Liège, where Folville had been employed as a music professor. It was edited by Chandra Asken together with conductor Kathleen McGuire, and given its US premiere on May 13, 2007 as part of a Mother's Day concert performed by The Community Women's Orchestra (CWO) in Oakland, CA. This may also have been the first performance of the orchestral version since the composer's death.

The Community Women's Orchestra was established in 1985 as a community offshoot of The Women's Philharmonic (TWP, a fully professional ensemble). Nan Washburn, one of the founders of TWP, began the CWO, which continues to this day. Dr. Kathleen McGuire, Music Director 2005-2013, led the performance of Folville's Concertstück. The cello soloist was Rebecca Roudman, who continues as an active cellist, both in the symphonic world and as a crossover artist. The recording of the 2007 performance is available on WPA's Youtube channel.

For this 2026 edition by Women's Philharmonic Advocacy, the Concertstück was newly edited and engraved by our senior editor, Ronald Krentzman. Musicologist Dr. Fauve Bougard, PhD in *Histoire, histoire de l'art et archéologie* (History, Art History and Archeology), Université libre de Bruxelles (2025) has written the article below about Folville. Bougard's Masters Thesis (also from Université libre de Bruxelles) is a detailed study of Juliette Folville. She is currently based in Toronto.

Preface by Dr. Fauve Bougard

The Belgian composer Juliette Folville (1870–1946) had some success in her lifetime, and left a considerable output, most of which remains to be rediscovered today.[1] She began her musical career as a child prodigy on the piano and violin, performing at charity concerts in the Liège area. She soon branched out into composition, honing her craft in the 1880s in the class of Jean-Théodore Radoux, director of the Royal Conservatory of Liège and a friend of the family. Contrary to the customs of the time, Folville owed her precocious beginning to the special attention of her father, who supervised her early musical training. Jules Folville, a successful lawyer, was an enthusiastic amateur musician and actively supported his daughter's career by providing her with a comfortable financial situation and organizing numerous concerts for her. The budding composer also benefited from the patronage of Countess Louisa de Mercy-Argenteau, who introduced her to various national and international artistic networks, in particular that of the 'Russian Five', whose music she promoted. Thanks to this enviable situation, Juliette Folville was able to compose several major works as early as the 1880s, including three orchestral suites, a violin concerto, and a cantata. In 1889 she was the first woman to try to compete for the Belgian Prix de Rome, an ambition ultimately abandoned for moral reasons: the Royal Academy would not let her be accompanied by chaperone nor arrange any special accommodation for the month-long stay at the conservatory imposed on the candidates.[2]

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[1] On Folville, see Fauve Bougard, Juliette Folville (1870-1946), compositrice et interprète. Une pionnière dans le milieu musical belge, Brussels, Université des Femmes, 2020 [publication of a master thesis submitted at the Université libre de Bruxelles in 2018].

[2] On women in the Belgian prix de Rome, see Fauve Bougard, "'La question femme' : les compositrices et le prix de Rome de Belgique", *Revue belge de musicologie*, n$^{b.}$ 73, 2019, p. 72-92.

Her father's untimely death in 1890, and the debts he left behind, placed the single child Folville in a precarious financial situation, forcing her to devote herself to the more lucrative pursuits of performance and teaching to sustain both her and her mother. Surviving correspondence show her actively promoting herself and her work to impresarios and concert halls across Belgium and neighboring countries. Her relationship with the Conservatoire royal de Liège and director Jean-Théodore Radoux allowed her to perform regularly on the institution's stage, as both a soloist and conductor. Though she completed her opera *Atala* in 1891, her musical output slowed significantly in the 1890s, for lack of time. In 1894, the composer César Cui, a regular correspondent of hers, encouraged Folville to 'compose on the tram and on the train';[3] Radoux similarly urged her not to 'let teaching take over everything else'.[4] A growing frustration with her financial situation and inability to devote herself to composition nevertheless comes through in Folville's correspondence from this period.

The composition of the *Concertstück* for cello and orchestra in 1905 coincided with a gradual improvement in Folville's circumstances. She had been appointed assistant piano teacher at the Liège Conservatory in 1897, and promoted to teacher of the girls' class three years later. This permanent and better-paid position complemented her teaching duties at the Chanoinesses de Jupille boarding school and allowed her to settle permanently in Liège. Thanks to her new financial stability, Folville was able to devote herself more regularly to composition, and the following years saw the creation of several orchestral works, including the *Concertstück*. This work was completed on 10 August 1905 and premiered two weeks later at the Liège Conservatory under the composer's direction, with the cello part performed by Maurice Dambois, a professor at the Conservatory and the dedicatee. The next day, 26 August 1905, the two artists performed the work again at an orchestral concert dedicated to the work of Juliette Folville and organized as part of the World's Fair then taking place in Liège. A critic from the *Guide musical* praised the work as 'attractive, full of exquisite episodes, and remarkably well written for the instrument'[5].

Structured around classical sonata procedures, the *Concertstück* is basically a concerto of three movements telescoped into one, in the tradition of Liszt and Saint-Saëns. A composer of her time, Folville helped herself to the riches of post-Franckian harmony, tinged with a modality redolent of the Russian school, especially Borodin, the 'godfather' of her musical youth and a composer whose influence endured in other works of her maturity, such as the orchestral suite *Impressions d'Ardenne* (c. 1910). The sumptuous orchestration supports and highlights a lyrical solo writing that exploits the many technical and sonic possibilities of the cello, particularly showcasing the instrument and its performer.

Published in piano reduction in 1906 and promoted by Dambois, who introduced it to British audiences in May 1906, the *Concertstück* remained in the repertory of various soloists until the 1930s; Adèle Clément, notably, gave the French premiere in 1908.

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[3] César Cui to Juliette Folville, 7 December 1894, Archives du Musée de la Littérature, ML 2217/85.
[4] Jean-Théodore Radoux to Juliette Folville, 25 August 1901, Bibliothèque du Conservatoire royal de Liège, Varia, box 11.
[5] P.D., « Correspondances », *Le Guide musical*, vol. 51, n$^{b.}$ 38, 17-24 Septembre 1905, p. 602-603.

Piano reduction

Á Monsieur Maurice Dambois

Concertstück pour Violoncelle

avec accompagnement d'orchestra

JULIETTE FOLVILLE
(1870 – 1946)

Solo Violoncello

Grave

déclamé

Piano

Grave

pp

poco rall. ..... *suivez*

pp

poco rall. .....

5

1 [a tempo]

8

1 [a tempo]

pp

p

rall. .....

13

dim.

rall. .....

p

2 **Allegro appassionato**

2 **Allegro appassionato**

18

sf *pp*

21

24

p *mf* *dim.*

27

mf

30

mf molto espressivo

33

p

36

mf

mf

39

f

42

f

f

f

poco rall. .....

45

poco rall. .....

a tempo

49

a tempo

f

p

rall. ..... 4 a tempo

52

rall. ..... 4 a tempo

poco cresc.

f

fp

mf