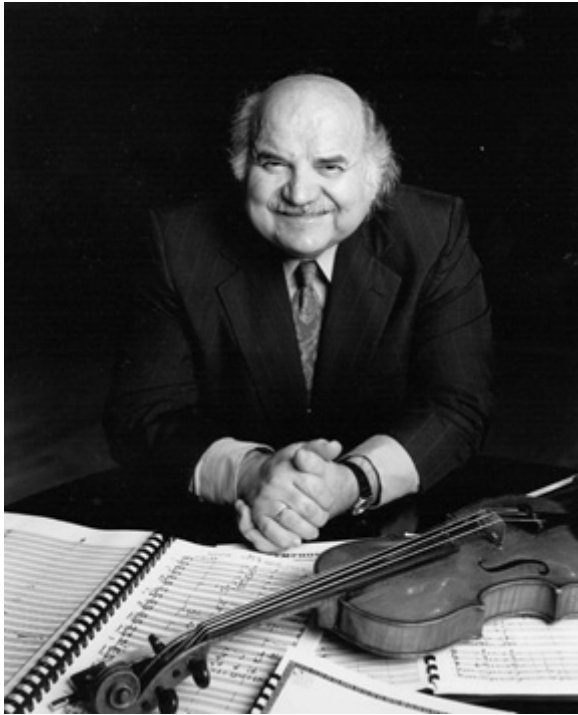


## Composer Dinos Constantinides through his *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*



Dinos Constantinides was born in Ioannina, Greece, in 1929, and died in the United States in 2021. At the age of 12, he began taking violin lessons in Ioannina; at 15, he moved to Athens where he completed his violin and advanced music theory studies at the Hellenic Conservatory of Athens, under the tutelage of Yiannis Papaioannou in theory, Lydia Kouroukli in chamber music, and Giorgos Lykoudis in violin. He dropped out of Law School in Athens and moved to the United States to study violin on a Greek State scholarship. He attended Juilliard School of Music and Indiana University and studied with Ivan Galamian, Dorothy Delay and Josef Gingold. He also earned a PhD in Composition from Michigan State University. In the United States, Constantinides came in contact with great musicians, composers and authors of the era, including I. Stern, S. Barber, D. Mitropoulos, D. Shostakovich, P. Back, and

others. In 1960, he started playing in the Symphony Orchestra of Baton Rouge, in Louisiana, and taught violin and composition at Louisiana State University (LSU) at Baton Rouge.

He has been honored with many awards and distinctions. In 2010, he received an Honorary Doctorate from the Department of Music Science and Art of the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece). His music has been performed all over the world, by numerous orchestras. He has given many concerts and released many recorded works (more than 65 CDs). He has composed over three hundred works, including two operas, six symphonies (his second symphony earned an award), and many works for a wide variety of instruments and voice.

The Concerto for Cello and Orchestra by Dinos Constantinides was written in 1992 and is entitled *China IV – Shenzhen*. It is the fourth composition of his so-called *China Quartet*, and it is inspired by the westernized city of Shenzhen. That is why, the composer has said, there are no Chinese scales or motifs in this composition, just elements of “western roots”. In this concerto, Constantinides has included ideas from the repertory of *solo cello*, as well as from the solo sonatas of J.S. Bach, and phrases from the cello concertos of Schumann, Dvorak and Saint-Saens. The piece is dedicated to the Chinese cellist Ning Tien, a member of the Louisiana Sinfonietta orchestra, who premiered it together with the orchestra, directed by the composer, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1992.

The concerto consists of three movements. The first movement, subtitled *With Expression*, consists of 165 bars. Its tempo ranges from andante to moderato, with alternating 3/4-, 4/4-, 5/4- and 6/4-time signatures, and its dynamics follow a sequence from *pp* to *ff*. It is full of contradictions and radically different timbres. The entire first movement relies on classical, not contemporary articulation; it has continuous sixteenth notes, and makes frequent use of distortions and chromatic and diatonic semitones. Its rhythmic characteristics are quarter and eighth triplets, and eighth and sixteenth quintuplets. The composer himself, in a personal interview with the author, stated that the rhythmic pattern of quarter triplets was inspired by Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5*, Mozart's *Symphony no. 40*, the string sextet from the opera *Capriccio opus 85* by R. Strauss, and Schoenberg's *Verklaerte Nacht*. The piece's polyrhythm and absence of continuous rhythmic consistency are common features of the concerto's first and third movements.

The second movement is subtitled *With Serenity* and consists of 100 bars. Its tempo is noted as *Very slow*, investing its development with a calm character, and the 4/4-time signature is maintained throughout the movement. The *Cadenza* that has been incorporated in this movement does not pose any particular challenge in terms of virtuosity.

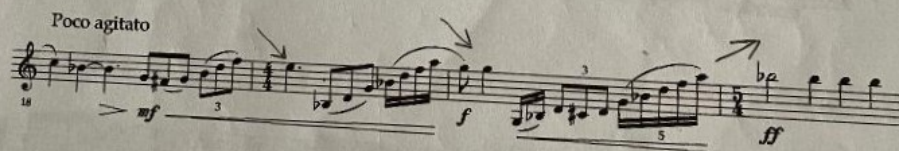
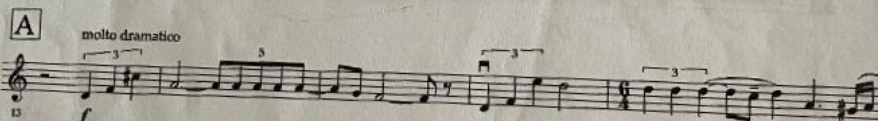
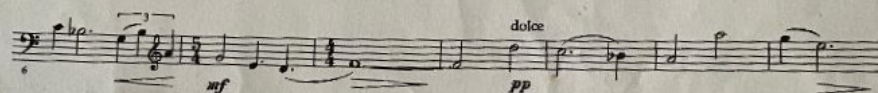
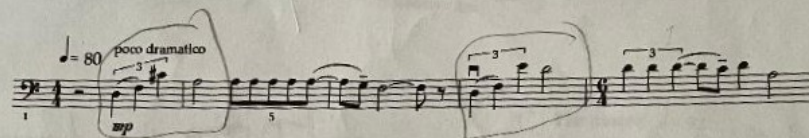
The third movement, subtitled *Playful and Mischievous*, consists of 144 bars. The tempo is *Vivo*. Throughout the entire third movement, there is an alternation between 4/4-, 3/4-, 9/16-, 6/4-, and 5/4-time signatures. The dynamics follow an ascending and descending succession from *pp* both in the solo cello and in the orchestra to *fff*. The composer uses very dense rhythmic writing, mostly sixteenth notes, with many changes of rhythm signatures and patterns, creating a rhythmomelodic elasticity in the development of the musical narrative. It masterfully highlights the role of the solo instrument in several places, assigning to the orchestra the role of basso continuo. It is the most demanding of the three movements, without particular technical issues of interpretation.

The concerto was performed in 2015 in Constanta, Romania, by the Greek cellist Dimitris Patras, professor of cello in the Department of Music Science and Art at the University of Macedonia.

Solo Violoncello

*Dedicated to Ning Tien*  
**Concerto for Cello and Orchestra**  
*China IV - Shenzhen*  
**I**  
**With Expression**

Dinos Constantinides  
1992



Copyright © 1992 by Dinos Constantinides  
International Copyright Secured  
Published and Printed in the USA All Rights Reserved