



Cello

A Journey Through Silence to Sound

Kate Kennedy

Keynote

A cello has no language, yet it possesses a vocabulary wide enough to tell, bear witness and make connections across time and continents. It can communicate in ways that we can only dream of when limited by words.

Description

'Strikingly original' *The Times*

'Absorbing' *Wall Street Journal*

'Just as a cello's voice is divided across four strings, each with its own colour and character, this is a journey in four parts, in search of four players and their instruments...'

In *Cello*, Kate Kennedy weaves together the lives of four remarkable cellists who suffered various forms of persecution, injury and misfortune. The Hungarian Jewish cellist and composer Pál Hermann managed to keep one step ahead of the Gestapo for much of the Second World War but was eventually captured and murdered. Lise Cristiani, the first female professional cello soloist, undertook an epic – and ultimately fatal – concert tour of Siberia in the 1850s, taking with her one of the world's greatest Stradivari cellos. Anita Lasker-Wallfisch was incarcerated in both Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen camps, only surviving because she was the cellist in the Auschwitz-Birkenau women's orchestra. Amedeo Baldovino of the Trieste Piano Trio was forced to jump from a burning ship with his 'Mara' Stradivari, losing the cello, and nearly losing his own life when the boat was shipwrecked off Buenos Aires.

Counterpointing the themes raised by these extraordinary stories are a sequence of interludes that draw together the author's reflections on the nature and history of the cello, and her many interviews and encounters with contemporary cellists. Kate Kennedy's own relationship with the cello is a complicated one. As a teenager, she suffered an injury to her arm that imposed severe limitations on her career as a performer on the instrument that was her first love. She realised that, in order to understand what the cello meant to her, she needed to find out what the cello – and, crucially, the absence of the cello – had meant to some other cellists, past and present.

Kate Kennedy has written an eloquent and multi-textured homage to this warmest of stringed instruments – part quest narrative, part detective story, part philosophical meditation.

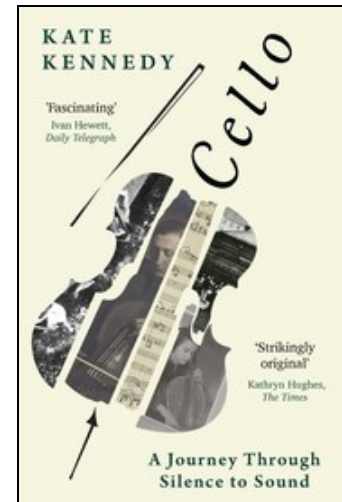
Sales and Marketing Highlights

- In *Cello*, Kate Kennedy weaves together the lives of four remarkable cellists who suffered various forms of persecution, injury and misfortune - part quest narrative, part detective story, part philosophical meditation.
- The hardback outing led to the discovery of Pál Hermann's cello which had been lost for 60 years. His daughter and the author have been invited by the President of the European Parliament to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day in Brussels in 2025.
- Kate Kennedy is a regular presenter and contributor for Radio 3. She regularly speaks and performs at literary and music festivals

Reviews

"This wonderful book is a love-letter to cellos and cellists, a gripping quest across Europe for lost and sometimes miraculously re-found instruments, a startling plunge into the dark histories of our times, a meditation and improvisation on music and musicians, and a moving personal story of a cellist who has rediscovered her own gift for playing and with it the central meaning of her life." - *Hermione Lee*

"Kate Kennedy's quest across seas and continents, following the lives of four great



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