

István Várdai, Artistic Director

István Várdai grew up in a family of musicians in Pécs. He studied at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, the Vienna Academy of Music as well as the German Kronberg Academy. He was honoured with several prestigious international prizes: in 2008, he won first prize at the Geneva International Music Competition, along with three special prizes - the Audience Prize, the "Pierre Fournier" Prize and the "Coup de Cœur Breguet" Prize. In Moscow 2007, he took third prize at the 13th International Tchaikovsky Competition, one of the top-ranking classical music competitions. In 2014, he won the ARD International Cello Competition in Munich, and in 2012, he received the Prix Montblanc, awarded to the most promising young musicians in the world.

István Várdai plays a Stradivari cello, one of the less than 65 surviving cellos manufactured by the famous violin maker. The legendary instrument is also known as the "Ex du Pré-Harrell" Stradivari, referring to its former owners, the late British cellist Jacqueline du Pré and the American artist Lynn Harrell.

In 2020, he joined the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra as its Artistic Director. His art concept touches on the preservation of traditions and the pursuit of continuous renewal. The orchestra aims to expand its repertoire with re-arrangements of existing and contemporary masterpieces.