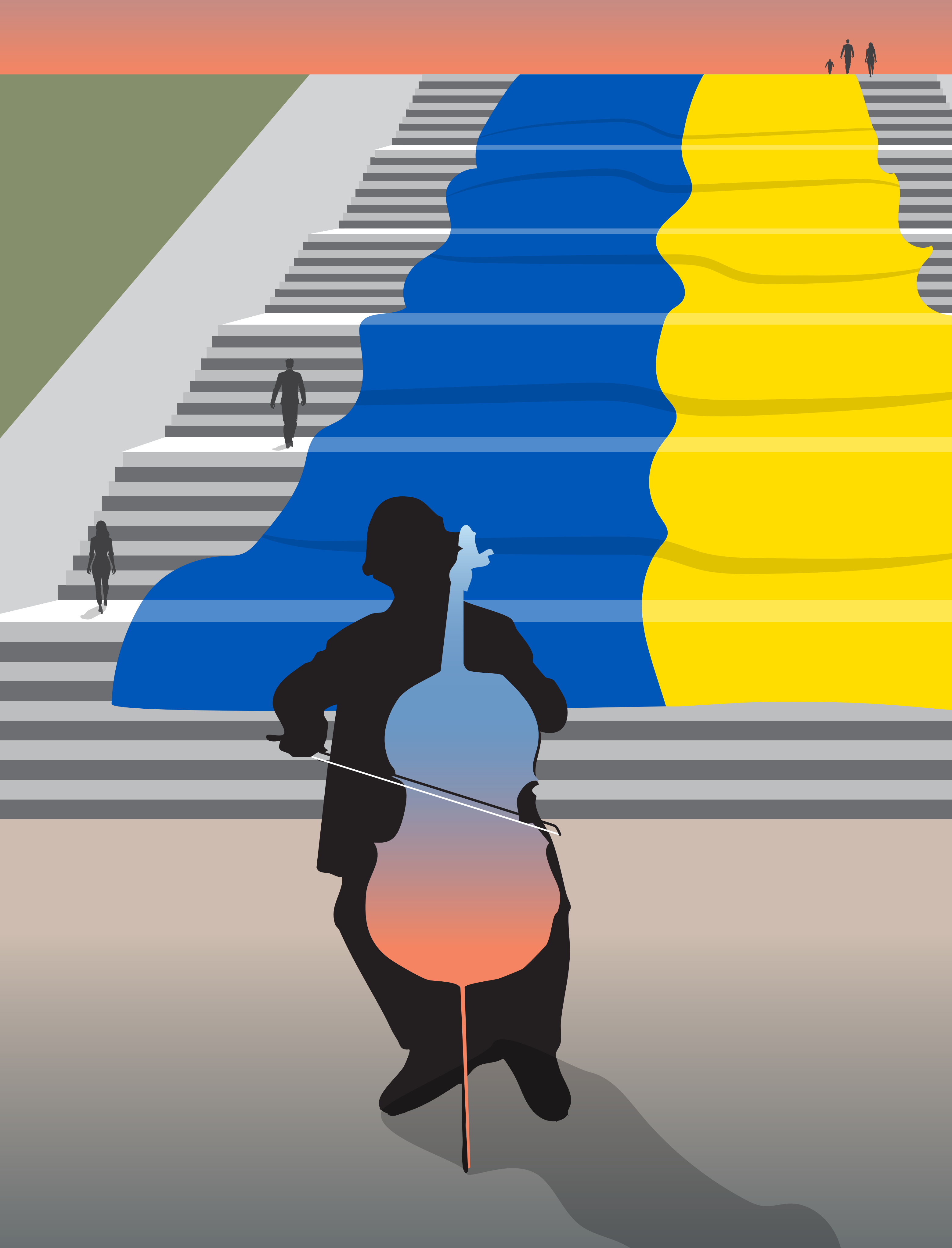




Thomas de Hartmann

La Kobsa

Matt Haimovitz



PENTATONE

DE HARTMANN

LA KOBSA

Matt Haimovitz

Thomas de Hartmann

(1884-1956)

La Kobsa (1950)

- | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| 1 | Assez lent | 2. 45 |
| 2 | Allegro vivace | 2. 23 |

Total playing time: 5. 08

Matt Haimovitz, cello



It was my honor to join the Odesa Philharmonic and Maestro Hobart Earle on a four-city tour of Ukraine in May 2024. Made possible by a grant from the US State Department, we brought Ukrainian-born composer Thomas de Hartmann's Cello Concerto from 1935 to war-weary audiences in his native country for the first time.

Outside of the concert halls and opera houses, I explored the breadth of Ukraine, visiting among others Odesa's Potemkin Stairs, an outdoor farmer's market in Lviv, and the center of Kyiv displaying captured Russian tanks. With cello in tow, I played impromptu solo sets of Bach Cello Suites, Philip Glass works and more. However, it was de Hartmann's solo cello piece *La Kobsa* that elicited the widest smiles from civilians and wounded soldiers. From the first prayerful notes, there was a spark of recognition, a distraction and relief from the incessant air raid sirens, the relentless drone of power



generators, and other reminders of a country at war. *La Kobsa* captures the generosity and resiliency of the Ukrainian people.

In his spirited solo piece, de Hartmann transforms the cello into a Ukrainian kobsa, an ancient lute-like instrument played by the Kobzars or bards. Composed in 1950 when the composer was residing in the US, “*La Kobsa: deuce musique de veilleurs Ukrainiens pour violoncelle solo*” is part of a larger collection of his chamber music.

La Kobsa is an entry point to de Hartmann's Cello Concerto which I recorded live in 2023 with the MDR Orchestra and Dennis Russell Davies at Leipzig's Gewandhaus. The Cello Concerto is featured on the 2024 album "Thomas de Hartmann Rediscovered" which includes the Violin Concerto played by Joshua Bell, INSO-Lviv Symphony Orchestra and Dalia Stasevska. I am grateful to Efrem Marder and the Thomas de Hartmann Project for introducing me to this important and long forgotten composer and will always treasure my memories of Ukraine and the big heart of her people.

Matt Haimovitz

July 20, 2025

Boston, MA

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*This album was recorded at
Skywalker Sound in Marin County,
California on June 5, 2025.*

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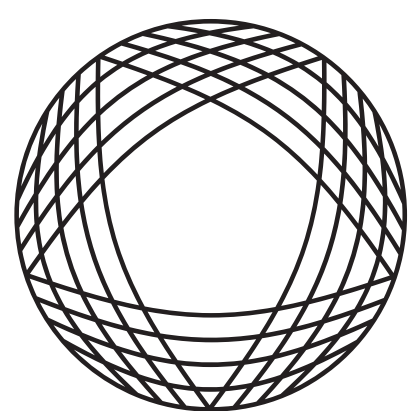
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