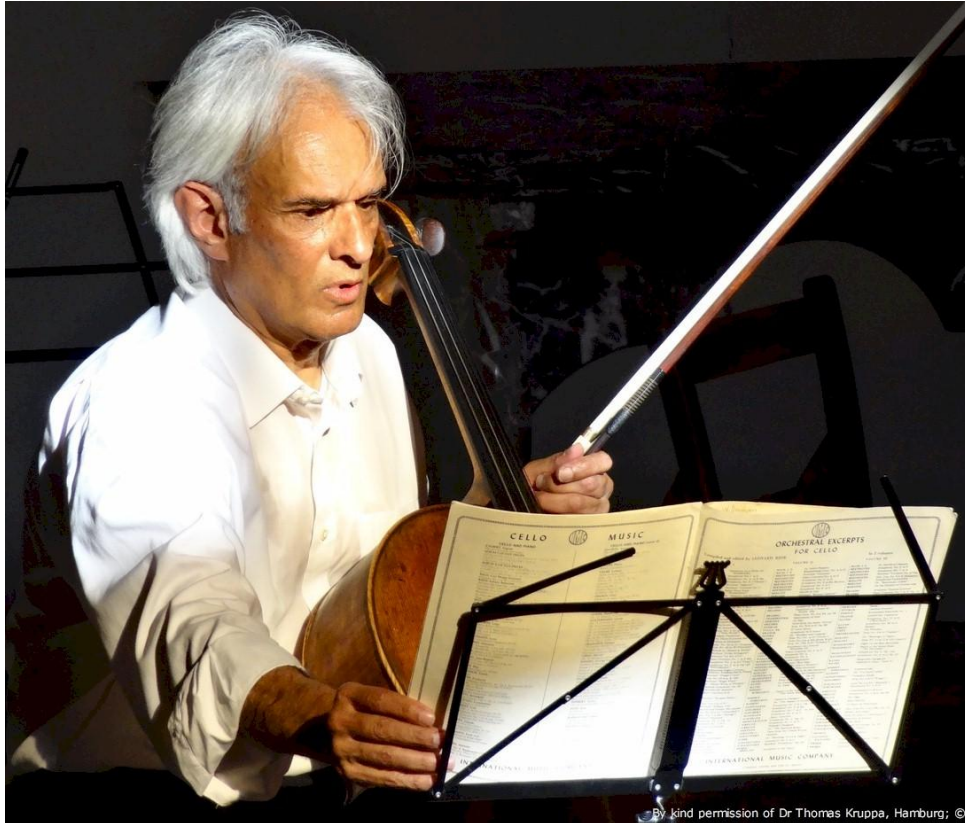

**IN LOVING MEMORY
of
ROHAN DE SARAM**



1939 – 2024

St Martin-in-the-Fields

7 March 2026

For Rohan, March 9th 2025

Wish you were here. There is such a void in my life

Since you've been gone.

As I walk our familiar frequented paths

My mind relives our lives together,

The beauty of it as well as the regrets.

We were living, learning together

As the days unfolded into weeks, months,

And years, forty three in all,

Half your life exactly if you'd been here today

And over half of mine.

We negotiated the journey of life together

For all those years.

You are always in my heart and

On my mind,

Wherever I go.

Thank you for being my companion

For so long, and for

Enlarging the canvas on which the

Tapestry of my life

Entwined with yours.

© Rosie de Saram,
March 9th 2025

*Andante from Sergey Prokofiev's Cello Concerto in E minor Op. 58:
Rohan solo cello with Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra/Anatole Fistoulari*

A Life of Encounters

Welcome and Introduction, Reverend Alexandra Lilley

“Chance Encounters”

Chance Encounter 1: Personal *Rosie*

- Queen Elizabeth Hall 1981
- St Martin-in-the-Fields
- NHS

Chance Encounter 2: Rohan's last contribution to the world of music

- Covid lockdown *Rosie with Stephan Meier*
Extract from the live recording of Rohan's composition “Music for Kandyam Drum, String Sextet & Percussion”, performed by Rohan & Suren de Saram and a String Sextet from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
- Thank you to Gillian Mayer *Rosie*
“Jhala” from “Prabhanda” by John Mayer, written for and performed by Rohan and Druvi de Saram

Chance Encounter 3: Brave New World *Alexandra*

- Hilversum Radio / Nomos Alpha
- Arditti Quartet
- Extract from a tribute from Garth Knox, p. 32 “Le Violoncelle” Janvier 2026, translated from French by Jean-Pierre Lin
Harmony No. 1 from 44 Harmonies from Apartment House 1776 by John Cage, transcribed for String Quartet by Irvine Arditti. performed by the Arditti Quartet

Chance Encounter 4: Four 20th century composers *Sophia*

- James Dillon
- Elliott Carter
- Iannis Xenakis
Extract from “Kottos” by Iannis Xenakis, performed by Rohan
- Luciano Berio
Extract from “Sequenza XIV” by Luciano Berio, written for & performed by Rohan

Chance Encounter 5: Reminders of life in Florence, Italy in the 1950s

- At the British Museum 2025 *Rosie & Anna*
Extract from "Conversations" by Joachim Steinheuer and Rohan.
Extract from "Ciaccona" from "Ciaccona, Intermezzo & Adagio" by Luigi Dallapiccola, performed by Rohan
- Life in Florence in the 1950s
- Tribute to Gaspar Cassadó, Rohan's teacher
Intermezzo from Granados' opera Goyescas, transcribed for cello by Gaspar Cassado, performed by Rohan & Druvi de Saram
- A tribute from Italy by Claudio Pasceri

Chance Encounter 6: The Suggia Award & unexpected encounters in Oxford (late 1950s-1960s) Sophia

- Poulenc & Shostakovich
- Zoltán Kodály
Extract from "Allegro Molto Vivace" from Sonata for Cello Op.8 by Zoltán Kodály, performed by Rohan
- Tully Potter's review from The Strad, January 2000
- Tully's poem "Silence: In Memoriam Rohan de Saram"

Chance Encounter 7: Conductors, Concertos Rosie & Alexandra

- Reminiscences
- Newspaper article "Rohan de Saram", The Times, October 2024

Chance Encounter 8: Tribute to J S Bach

- Poem "The Beauty of Bach" by Rosie de Saram *read by Hermione Lyall*
"Sarabande" from Suite No. 6 in D major by J.S. Bach, performed by Rohan

Chance Encounter 9: How the journey began

- Tribute to Martin Hauerma; "I'll teach that one!"
Extract from Mark Hope's interview with Rohan at soundfestival, Scotland

Finale:

- Poem "Dreaming" by Rosie de Saram *read by Romesh Gunesequera*
- Tribute to Pablo Casals
"Après un Rêve" by Gabriel Fauré, transcribed for cello by Pablo Casals, performed by Junko Yamamoto and Rohan
- Surprise item for Paz and Pia-Lena, Rohan's & Rosie's beloved grandchildren

Dreaming

Yesterday in a dream,
I saw in the darkness of the silent, empty room,
a single red rose,
Glowing.

The warmth of your love shone through
From you
To me.

Like the red rose in Vienna,
in our room,
when,
with our baby daughter,
we looked down at couples,
arm in arm on the skating rink,
patterning the ice.

In the crisp freezing air,
We paid our respects to the composers who had gone before:
among them Schubert, Strauss and Beethoven,
but now you are with them,
your musical journey complete.

One day I will join you
to listen to
The music of eternity.

© Rosie de Saram

November 8th 2025

Tributes

I am so glad it was at a certain Dreamtiger concert at the QEH in 1981 that brought you two together. You were wonderful for him ... I want to remember and commemorate someone absolutely unique. Rohan was more than a great 'cellist and musician, he was a great human being. He seemed always to be there ... we all thought he would live for ever. *Douglas Young*

Although he came to be better known for playing contemporary music, his performances of the great baroque, classical, and romantic works gave one the sensation similar to seeing an old master painting after it had been cleaned and restored! *Alan Brett*

His greatness, his genius lay as much in his humility as in his surpassing and innate talent. He mastered music because he was always servant to music. *Jan & Andrew Jones*

What a massive loss to you and to the whole musical world. Rohan was a giant, a gentle giant, full of so much love and compassion for everyone. Full of humour and laughter, we miss him so much, but will always treasure our friendship with him and with you all, over so many, many years. Rosie you have been amazing! You have been his rock, his lifelong companion through so many difficult times. May he travel with the angels to a place of great and infinite peace; we will never forget you Rohan, you inspired so many, supported so many and made so many joyful through your presence on earth. Blessing to you. *Fiona and Mark Hope*

Rohan was one of the very, very few musicians I've met in whom the musician and person were completely integrated. One felt that music making simply flowed naturally without any artifice, from the core of his being. He was, really, that rare thing, a human masterpiece. Great as a man, great as a musician. *Peter Hill*

Rohan De Saram has left us. With him goes one of the greatest cellists of the second half of the 20th century, an extraordinary man, gentle, always smiling, supported by that faith that allowed him to live an entire life in peace with the world and nature. Rohan was one of my dearest friends, a man of extraordinary artistic sensitivity, of great moral and cultural stature. This is news that I never wanted to receive from his beloved wife Rosemary. *Martino Traverso*

Rohan was someone whom I admired, respected, and simply adored, in equal measure. A very special human being, and a gentle soul loved by so many of us. The words can't come close to express the sense of loss, but also love and gratitude for what Rohan has given to those who were fortunate to know him closely - and to the many, many more who only met him through his art. *Movses and Varty Pogossian*

Tributes

It was a true honour for FHR to release 8 recordings with such a legend. *David Murphy FHR*

He left an indelible impression on me in concert in Australia in the 1980s and has left a permanent and important legacy in our musical culture. His modesty, playfulness, and humility in person was something that struck everyone I think, perhaps especially because of the way it contrasted with the stillness, 'certainty' and expressive power of his performances. In working closely together, it was very touching to see how he approached everything as if for the first time, being as clearly fascinated by something new in his 80s as you might expect of someone just starting out – and always interested in how others tackled challenges (both technically and musically). That combination of openness with astonishing breadth of his experience was absolutely unique. *Neil Heyde*

Your beloved Rohan was such a remarkable person with an expansive mind and deep warm heart; nobody like him. I treasure the memories of my time spent either working with Rohan or very occasionally socially with you all. *James Dillon*

Rohan had the rare ability to be able to play anything. The most perfect technique, musicality and humbleness. Without his drive, openness and ability there would be so much less music for us to enjoy and aspire to. From Vivaldi to Dvořák, Dreamtiger to Xenakis, it was all a gift. His soul was as gentle as the rolling hills of Exmoor. The sweetest of men. Perhaps the greatest cellist to have walked our planet. I think so. *Bob Davey*

One of the greatest cellists and genius musicians of our time. One of my closest musical friends and after twenty five years of performing together in seven countries on three continents, with many visits in London where our families often ate and laughed together, we became family. I will miss you my dear friend and will still play for you so keep listening in the afterlife. *Rajesh Mehta*



Tributes

When I encountered Dostoevsky as a teenager through his novel 'The Brothers Karamazov', my life changed. Why and how it did that I didn't understand at the time, but I met all the things that made life interesting to live, and encountered someone who, like me, but in a much more profound and articulated way, wrestled with the most important questions in life. Dostoevsky defined his character Alyosha, the youngest of the three brothers, as his hero. Why he was the hero we might not understand, he said. He then presented him as perhaps the only person in the world who you could put on the street without housing, money and food, but whom people would gladly help and provide with all these things. Alyosha would not even think of thanking for this help. To the common man it might seem to be due to ingratitude, but rather it was due to him being so pure in heart that he took it for granted that people helped each other, because he himself was such. And had the situation been that he saw someone who needed help, he would gladly have given it without expecting a thank you.

It was also around this time that I came into close contact with Rohan de Saram, who used to visit our family every year to play concerts with my father. I had learnt that Rohan was one of the world's foremost cellists, who had been a member of the Arditti Quartet and played in several of the world's largest concert halls. He had studied with Gaspar Cassado and Pablo Casals, both of whom early praised his exceptional talent. He owned Piatogorsky's bow, he had met and worked with every great 20th century musician imaginable. Glenn Gould, Richter, Michelangeli, Shostakovich, Ligeti, Stockhausen, Poulenc, Berio, Ferneyhough, yes the list can be made long. What I did not expect, was that we were going to be life long friends. On paper, I was a nobody compared to him, and he was 55 years older than I. But he was without pretence, and his thinking and human example went beyond the superficial categories that we so easily put each other in. "If you define me, you negate me", Kierkegaard said. Here I met someone who understood these words at heart.

During his visits, we used to spend time conversing around interesting subjects and listen to music on the "wonder box", which is what he used to call computers. My father showed him that they could give him the opportunity to listen to the great musical recordings of the past. The day before concerts, he used to say that he needed to practice a little bit. For him that often meant to go outside and sit down in the garden that my mother had always so beautifully taken care of. He sat there in complete silence. Sometimes his practising sessions consisted of lying down in a bed on his back with closed eyes. Not sleeping, but practising, he said.

/cont

Tributes

He was a man who listened to everyone as someone he could learn from. Young, old, rich or poor. It did not matter. Imagine a man 55 years my senior, considered a master of his craft, who completely without pretence treated me like his equal, like someone who deserved all his respect. As someone who could teach him as much as I felt that he could teach me. If one has met true humility, one knows it and what it can do.

I realized, with time, that in front of me, Dostoevsky's hero was standing. That is who Rohan was for me. And as Kierkegaard said, a writer that I shared to Rohan my love for; the poet is expressing his unhappy love for the divine, but the meek and humble is the product of the great work of art of the divine itself. When the greatest insights are truly experienced, Rohan said (and he used the story of Aaron and Moses which Schoenberg made an opera about as an example), a person does not write them down. Buddha did not write. Socrates did not write. Jesus did not write. Because these truths can not be spoken of, unless they are shown. When Saint John of the Cross heard one of the great musicians of his day perform for him, he uttered something like "thank you, now we let the silence speak. What is within me is more beautiful".

Rohan was an artist, but most of all, a testament to the human potential of being an embodiment of a work of art. Around him and in his closeness, everything and everyone became peaceful, and it was just his being that caused it, and nothing else. No words or acts he performed, just his being "one of the meek and humble", who was a living testament to the words "anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it". He was not a man of the 21st century. He was not a man even of the 20th century, but rather of the 19th, and with him as a musician, a century of music history leaves us. But he as a person belongs to eternity.

But now, silence. Because these things cannot be expressed in words.

The last time I met him, a few months before his passing, we agreed that in our next meeting, we would play some Schumann together at his home. As we did in a concert in Sweden many years ago. But there was no next time. Perhaps in eternity...

Rest in peace Rohan, my great friend and hero.

Sebastian Enhamre

Acknowledgements

Cover photo: © Thomas Kruppa

“Conversations” by Joachim Steinheuer and Rohan: published by Wolke-Verlag.

Available from wolke@wolke-verlag.de

Rohan’s website: <http://www.rohandesaram.co.uk>

Rosie’s poetry website: <http://www.rambling-rose.uk>

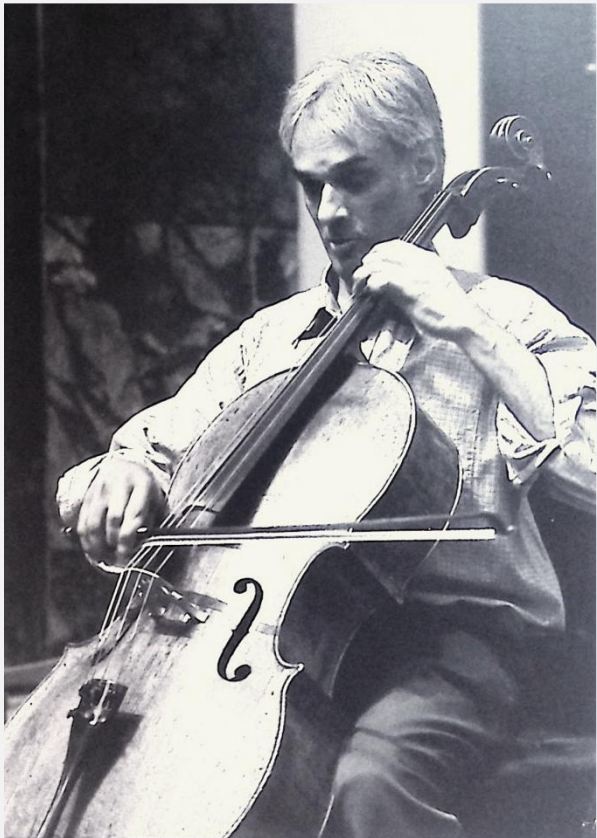
Newspaper article: Durham train journey / Dvořák : The Times: 21.10.2024

Penultimate page: photo portrait of Rohan, Jane Baker

Music extracts:

- **Andante from Prokofiev Cello Concerto op. 58:** Rohan de Saram with Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra/Anatole Fistoulari: Live recording originally broadcast by Nederlandse Christelijke Radio-Vereniging (NCRV) at NGRV Studio, Hilversum, Netherlands on 26th April 1972. Remastered by John Croft (Chairo Audio) for First Hand Records Ltd. (FHR) © FHR
- **Rohan’s “Music for Kandyan Drum, String Sextet & Percussion”** Live recording from Birmingham at the CBSO Hall with BCMG, 4.9. 2024 © BCMG & Rohan de Saram
- **“Jhala” from Prabanda & Ragamalas** by John Mayer, written for & performed by Rohan & Druvi de Saram: reissued by FHR, © FHR
- **Harmony No. 1 from 44 Harmonies from Apartment House 1776** by John Cage, transcribed for String Quartet by Irvine Arditti. performed by the Arditti Quartet: © mode records
- **Kottos** by Iannis Xenakis, performed by Rohan from "Iannis Xenakis: Chamber Music 1955-1990": © Naïve/WDR
- **Sequenza XIV** by Luciano Berio, written for & performed by Rohan, from "Berio, The Complete Sequenzas and Alternate Sequenzas and Works for solo instruments", © mode records
- **“Ciaccona”,** from "Ciaccona, Intermezzo & Adagio" by Luigi Dallapiccola, performed by Rohan, from "Works for solo cello", © FHR
- **Intermezzo from Granados’ opera Goyescas,** transcribed for cello by Gaspar Cassadó , performed by Rohan & Druvi de Saram, from “de Saram in Concert Volume 1” Live recording from the Wigmore Hall: Claudio Records
- **Sonata for Solo Cello Op.8** by Zoltán Kodály : performed by Rohan, from “de Saram in Concert Volume 1” Live recording from the Wigmore Hall: Claudio Records
- **Sarabande from Suite No. 6 in D major** by J. S. Bach: performed by Rohan: from “J. S. Bach: The Complete Cello Suites”: Claudio Records
- **Après un Rêve Op 7 No. 1** by Gabriel Fauré transcribed for cello by Pablo Casals: performed by Junko Yamamoto and Rohan , from “Requiebros”, FHR
- **The Flight of the Bumblebee:** Rimsky-Korsakov Rohan & Druvi de Saram: from “de Saram in Concert Volume 1” Live recording from the Wigmore Hall: Claudio Records

Taped conversation between Mark Hope & Rohan in Banchory at soundfestival, Scotland





Rosie and her family would like to thank everyone here for their love and support. Thank you too to the *soundfestival*, Scotland, the Chahut! Festival in St Germain de Calbert, France and the EstOvest Festival in Italy, for dedicating their festivals last year to Rohan, to Rosie's sister in law Sha and the Goethe-Institut in Colombo for the concert they held in Sri Lanka in Rohan's memory and

to Claudio Pasceri for the solo cello recitals he gave in France and Italy dedicated to Rohan. Also to Ashan Pillai who decided to dedicate his viola recital in Colombo on Feb 27th to Rohan.

Please join us afterwards for refreshments here in the Lightwell outside the hall and to continue sharing memories of Rohan. Books, CDs and a collection of Rohan's silk ties (regularly given as presents) will be on sale or by making donations. All proceeds will go to the following charities:

Child Action Lanka: www.childactionlanka.org

Shelter: www.england.shelter.org.uk

Anyone is welcome to come back to Tufnell Park Tavern, Tufnell Park Road, Rohan's favourite haunt. (Northern Line north from Charing Cross, (High Barnet or Mill Hill East branch, NOT Edgware branch) to Tufnell Park Station.

