Gwendolyn Masin

Biography (2026/27)

“A daring and exciting performer who ventures courageously into unknown territory with relish.” – The Irish Times

Gwendolyn Masin is one of today’s significant concert violinists and an innovator in classical music. Born in Amsterdam into a lineage of classically-trained musicians from Central Europe, she grew up surrounded by preeminent figures such as Herbert Blomstedt, Ida Haendel, Yehudi Menuhin, David Oistrakh, and David Zinman — an environment that would shape her artistry and creative curiosity.

Driven by a restless questing spirit and a deeply personal vision, the multi-hyphenate has built an abundant, inclusive corner in the world of music. An internationally acclaimed soloist, she is also a published author, educator, festival founder and artistic director, as well as the architect of numerous transdisciplinary projects.

Her concerts have taken her across Europe, the Americas, Asia, South Africa, Russia, and the Middle East. Of Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Irish, South African, and Swiss heritage and versed in five languages, she stays connected to those roots through frequent collaborations with leading orchestras across these countries — and extends that reach further afield with tours and recordings in the USA, Slovakia, Poland, Spain, Portugal and beyond.

She has partnered with authors Lukas Hartmann, Melinda Nadj Abonji, and Meral Kureyshi on multidisciplinary productions. Since 2018, she has collaborated with Lukas Bärfuss, jointly realising and performing transdisciplinary work grounded in academic research.

Gwendolyn Masin records for Naxos, Orchid Classics, and Virgin Classics, with a discography spanning neglected works by Irene Wieniawska and Zara Levina to popular pieces such as Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story — voted among Art Muse London’s top five releases of 2020. A commissioner of new music, she has premiered numerous works by leading composers including Thorsten Encke, Don Li, Daniel Schnyder, Dobrinka Tabakova, and John Buckley, whose First Violin Concerto is dedicated to her. Her performances have been broadcast by SRF 2 Kultur, VPRO, NDR, and RTÉ, among broadcasters across Europe and the Americas.

Chamber music plays an important role in her musical life. She has performed alongside Maxim Vengerov, Gérard Caussé, Natalie Clein, Pascal Rogé, György Sebök, Reto Bieri, and Rahel Harnisch among many distinguished colleagues. In 2007 she co-founded the Lipkind Quartet, touring Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Japan until 2009. Her festival appearances include IMS Prussia Cove, Prague Spring Festival, and Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival.

Celebrated for her versatile programming, Masin is founding artistic director of *GAIA Music Festival*, as well as of the International Chamber Music Series, and artistic director and faculty member of Dublin's *International Master Course* at the National Concert Hall, alongside artists such as Frans Helmerson, Gary Hoffman, Kim Kashkashian, Gilles Apap, and Mihaela Martin. Founded in Stuttgart in 2006 and held annually in Switzerland since 2009, *GAIA* is recognised as one of Switzerland's foremost chamber music festivals and won the Göppinger Culture Prize as early as 2007. She also established the multidisciplinary series *In Search of Lost Time* in 2004, and from 2018 to 2023 created elaborate, one-off productions blending classical music with other art forms for Casino Bern.

Violin in hand, she has appeared as keynote speaker at conferences and institutions across Europe — including TEDx, the Utrechts Conservatorium, Hochschule für Musik Saar, and the National Conservatory School of Music in Lisbon — as well as at universities such as Princeton and Berklee College of Music, and major institutes across South Korea, Hong Kong, and the Middle East. A guest lecturer at Bern Academy of the Arts (HKB), she is frequently invited to give violin and chamber music masterclasses taking her across Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. From 2013 to 2020, she was professor of violin studies at the Haute École de Musique de Genève.

Her writing has appeared in The Strad and other specialist journals. In 2009, Müller & Schade published her award-winning book, *Michaela's Music House – The Magic of the Violin*, making her the youngest female violinist to author her own violin method. It has since been published with Künzelmann in both English and German.

Gwendolyn holds performance and conducting degrees with highest honours from conservatoires in Bern, London and Lübeck, as well as a PhD in musicology from Trinity College Dublin. Early achievements include prizes at the Violin Days in Cape Town, the Nederlands Vioolconcours, all the major Irish competitions, and the Carl Flesch Prize in Baden-Baden,

together with a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship and the Outstanding Young Persons of Switzerland Award. She is Switzerland's first Licensed Body Mapping Educator, and serves as director of the Music Instrument Fund of Ireland and expert advisory board member of the Cultural Commission of Berne.

As she told the Basler Zeitung:
"The experience of live music is everything. To me, it's the ultimate form of communication, moving us into dimensions that language, for example, cannot reach. A word is not a sentence, but a note can be an entire story."

(around 4'500 characters, October 2026)