

# GWENDOLYN MASIN

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*Biography / Short Version (2017/18)*

Gwendolyn Masin is one of today's significant concert violinists. She is regarded as "a formidable talent that demands attention" (*The Irish Times*), "appearing to merge with her instrument and in so doing, enchanting her audience" (*Thuner Tagblatt*). She is celebrated for "setting first-rate standards in concert performance with her technically superior, refined, intensive and richly contrasting expression" (*Der Bund*).

Masin is descendant of a lineage of classically-trained musicians and remembers playing violin as naturally as having a conversation when she was a child. Her family, imbued with musical insight, helped her to avoid "the pitfalls of child prodigy status" (*Figaro.hu*). Her formative years were shaped by musical instruction, world travel, performing for audiences in reputable concert halls, and collecting accolades internationally – all by the age of five. At eleven she gained national exposure in Ireland after appearing on *The Late Late Show*. She has been a regular guest on TV and radio shows and has performed to critical acclaim in Asia and throughout Europe, Russia, South Africa, the Middle East, and North America as a soloist with renowned orchestras and as a chamber musician.

Masin holds degrees with highest honors from the Royal Schools of Music in London, England; the Hochschule der Künste in Berne, Switzerland; and the Musikhochschule in Lübeck, Germany. Her teachers include Herman Krebbers, Igor Ozim, Ana Chumachenco, Zakhar Bron and Shmuel Ashkenasi. Masin began to actively cultivate her own style of violin-playing, her identity as an artistic tour de force, and receive numerous international awards and prizes while carrying out formal studies.

Not only is she an esteemed soloist and chamber musician, Masin also writes, transcribes music, and advises composers. Collaboration with contemporary artists is a large part of Masin's repertoire. In an effort to make music more accessible, Masin commissions artists – closely working with them and performing their music or integrating their art form into her interpretations.

Masin is also greatly involved in curating and producing music festivals. Most prominent for Masin is her role as Artistic Director of *GAIA*, an annual festival held in Switzerland, recognized as one of the country's most important. It brings together acclaimed musicians for a long weekend of concerts and community. Masin also co-directs and produces the audio and visual media that is showcased as part of *GAIA* in collaboration with Naxos, the world's leading classical music group.

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It is a disservice to all other facets of this modern-day Renaissance woman to regard her solely as a musician. Research and application of music methodology are an inseparable part of Masin's undertakings. Her doctoral thesis from Trinity College examines the similarities and differences within 20th-century violin pedagogy. In 2009, the award-winning *Michaela's Music House, The Magic of the Violin* was published by Müller & Schade in English, with a new edition in German appearing in 2017. Written by Masin, the book serves to instruct beginner violinists and includes her personal exercises and compositions.

Presently, Masin teaches violin and chamber-music master classes at institutes and festivals throughout Europe and North America and gives lecture recitals and talks concerning her areas of expertise. She is Professor of Violin Studies at the Haute École de Musique de Genève, Switzerland, since September 2013.

The 2017/2018 season is witness to new recordings, performances and publications by Masin. She has been invited to the National Concert Hall, Dublin, for a much-anticipated, six-concert series which she will create and co-curate with renowned pianist, Finghin Collins. Chamber music collaborations will take her to Hungary, Lithuania and France, and she will perform the Bach Concerti in Portugal with Concerto Moderno. This season also sees the publication of the German translation of *Michaela's Music House, The Magic of the Violin*, Masin's book about violin technique. The tutor is in three parts and includes her notes and compositions. It will be available via Müller & Schade starting in August 2017. Masin will also teach master classes this season in Spain, Portugal and Ireland. Set to debut in November 2017 is *Flame* (Orchid Classics), an album made with the violinist's long-standing duo partner, pianist Simon Bucher. It features repertoire ranging from Debussy and Ravel to Stravinsky and Szymanowski. The *Flame* programme will tour venues in Switzerland and Germany. In 2017, Masin released *ORIGIN*, (Fountainhead Productions in collaboration with Naxos), a collection of the compositions and improvisations that are the basis of her bravura repertoire and encores. She has performed the *ORIGIN* programme with her ensemble in seven countries and will continue to do so in 2017/2018 in the Netherlands, Ireland and Hungary.

Masin's intrinsic ability to play the violin is not simply inherited, but founded in her voracious curiosity to understand human nature, musical expression, and the psychological connection to said expression. She explains, "I feel that music is a perpetual companion and my life feeds and informs my love for it and vice-versa. 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."