

# GWENDOLYN MASIN

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*Biography / Short Version (2019/20)*

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 received 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.

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.

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Authored by Gwendolyn, the book serves to instruct beginner violinist. It is in three parts and includes her studies and compositions. *Michaela's Music House* is available in English and German and is part of the ESTA Edition collection available via Müller & Schade. 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.

Recent seasons for Gwendolyn have included solo appearances with orchestras, recitals and chamber music performances in South Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Lithuania, Italy and France. Chamber music partners have included Kit Armstrong, István Várdai, Hannes Minnaar, Christoffer Sundqvist, Lars Anders Tomter, Natalie Clein, Pascal Rogé, and Alexander Lonquich.

This autumn, the 2019 season will begin with a four-concert series at The Casino, the great hall of Berne; the series affords Gwendolyn carte blanche to work with some of her favourite artists from around Switzerland and beyond including collaborations with Andreas Schaerer and Barbara Dennerlein. Other concerts include recitals with pianists such as Caspar Vos and Cédric Pescia, as well as major collaborations with the writer Lukas Bärfuss. Gwendolyn will also have solo performances with orchestras such as Concerto Budapest.

The 2019/2020 season also heralds the continuation of Gwendolyn's collaboration with pianist Finghin Collins. Following their six-concert series in the National Concert Hall of Dublin, summer 2020 marks the second edition of the National Concert Hall International Summer Academy, which they founded in 2019. In addition to teaching masterclasses in Europe, Gwendolyn has designed and will begin offering "The Exhale", a masterclass that aims to inspire well-being in musicians through a holistic approach to playing. The inaugural iteration of "The Exhale" will take place at Lake Biel.

Following the release of three recordings in three years: *ORIGIN* (2016), *FLAME* (2017) and *TROIS* (2018), Gwendolyn is in pre-production for the follow-up to *ORIGIN*. Unlike *FLAME* and *TROIS* which are recital programmes with her long-standing duo partner Simon Bucher, the *ORIGIN* follow-up is designed around her ensemble of rising stars – gifted students from her own class and from a myriad of institutions across Europe – and features music from film, opera, and folk music that has been reworked for the players.

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."