

Steven Isserlis

Violoncello

Acclaimed worldwide for his profound musicianship and technical mastery, British cellist Steven Isserlis enjoys a distinguished career as a soloist, chamber musician, educator, author and broadcaster.

As a concerto soloist he appears regularly with the world's leading orchestras and conductors. gives recitals every season in major musical centres, and performs regularly with historical instruments. Unusually, he also directs chamber orchestras from the cello in classical programmes. Recent and upcoming highlights include a survey of the complete Bach Cello Suites at the Wigmore Hall and elsewhere; recital programmes with Ian Bostridge, Stephen Hough, Robert Levin and Richard Egarr; a special recital with Sir Andras Schiff at the Beethovenhaus in Bonn performed on fortepiano and Beethoven's own cello; his appointment as Guest Artistic Leader of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra; a European tour with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Joshua Bell; extensive recital tours in the US, Australia and Asia with Connie Shih; premieres of the orchestral version of Thomas Adès's *Lieux retrouvés*, conducted by the composer, in Lucerne, at the BBC Proms and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; performances of Haydn's C major concerto with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Adam Fischer and of Prokofiev's concerto op 58 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski; and his debut with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at the Salzburg Mozartwoche.

As a chamber musician, he has curated series for many of the world's most famous festivals and venues, including the Wigmore Hall, the 92nd St Y in New York, and the Salzburg and Verbier festivals. These specially devised programmes have included 'In the Shadow of War', a major four-part series for the Wigmore Hall to mark the centenary of the First World War and the 75th anniversary of the Second World War; explorations of Czech music; the teacher-pupil line of Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Ravel; the affinity of the cello and the human voice; varied aspects of Robert Schumann's life and music; and the music of Serge Taneyev (teacher of Steven's grandfather, Julius Isserlis). For these concerts Steven is joined by a regular group of friends which includes the violinists Joshua Bell, Pamela Frank and Janine Jansen, violist Tabea Zimmermann, and pianists Jeremy Denk, Alexander Melnikov and Denes Varjon

He takes a strong interest in authentic performance. In addition to working with many of the foremost period instrument orchestras, he frequently gives recitals with harpsichord and fortepiano. Together with Robert Levin, and using original or replica pianos from the early nineteenth century, Isserlis has performed and recorded Beethoven's complete music for cello and piano; and with Richard Egarr, he has performed and recorded the viola da gamba sonatas of J.S. Bach as well as sonatas by Handel and Scarlatti.

He is also a keen exponent of contemporary music and has premiered many new works including John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil* (as well as several other pieces by Tavener), Thomas Adès's *Lieux retrouvés*, Stephen Hough's *Sonata for Cello and Piano, Left Hand (Les Adieux)*, Wolfgang Rihm's *Concerto in One Movement*, David Matthews' *Concerto in Azzurro*, works for cello and piano by Olli Mustonen, and *For Steven* by György Kurtág.

Writing and playing for children is another major interest. Steven Isserlis' books for children about the lives of the great composers – *Why Beethoven Threw the Stew* and its sequel, *Why Handel Waggled his Wig* – are published by Faber and Faber, and have been translated into multiple languages. His latest book, incorporating and updating Schumann's famous *Advice for Young Musicians*, is to be published by Faber and Faber in August 2016. He has also written the text for three musical stories for children - *Little Red Violin*, *Goldiepegs and the Three Cellos* and *Cinderella* - with music by Oscar-winning composer Anne Dudley; these are published by Universal Edition in Vienna. He has also given many concerts for children, for several years presenting a regular series at the 92nd Street Y in New York.

As an educator Steven Isserlis gives frequent masterclasses all around the world, and for the past eighteen years he has been Artistic Director of the International Musicians' Seminar at Prussia Cove in Cornwall, where his fellow-professors include Sir Andras Schiff, Thomas Adès and Ferenc Rados. As a writer and broadcaster, he contributes regularly to publications including *Gramophone*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, has guest edited *The Strad* magazine, and makes regular appearances on BBC Radio including on the *Today* programme, *Soul Music*, as guest presenter of two editions of *Saturday Classics*, and as writer and presenter of a documentary about the life of Robert Schumann. Most recently, he presented a documentary on BBC Radio 4 '*Finding Harpo's Voice*', about his hero Harpo Marx.

His diverse interests are reflected in an extensive and award-winning discography. His recording of the complete Solo Cello Suites by J.S. Bach for Hyperion met with the highest critical acclaim, and was Gramophone's Instrumental Album of the Year and Critic's Choice at the Classic BRITS. Other recent releases include the Elgar and Walton concertos, alongside works by Gustav and Imogen Holst, with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Paavo Järvi; Prokofiev and Shostakovich concertos with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Paavo Järvi; Dvořák Cello Concertos with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Daniel Harding; the complete works for cello by Beethoven with Robert Levin on fortepiano, selected for the Deutsche Schallplatten-Preis; and recitals discs with Richard Egarr, Stephen Hough, Thomas Adès and (for BIS) a Grammy-nominated album of sonatas by Martinů with Olli Mustonen. In September, Sony Classical will release a Brahms album including the Double Concerto with Joshua Bell and the 1854 version of the B major piano trio with Joshua Bell and Jeremy Denk.

The recipient of many awards, Steven Isserlis's honours include a CBE in recognition of his services to music and the Schumann Prize of the City of Zwickau. He is also one of only two living cellists featured in Gramophone's Hall of Fame.

He gives most of his concerts on the Marquis de Corberon (Nelsova) Stradivarius of 1726, kindly loaned to him by the Royal Academy of Music.

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