



Steven Isserlis

Cello

Steven Isserlis is a cellist whose passion for music transcends conventional divisions. Acclaimed worldwide for his musicality and technique alike, he is equally at home drawing the audience into his circle of friends for chamber music or in recital; delving into the historical archives to emerge with a forgotten gem; or on the concert platform with some of the world's most prestigious orchestras and conductors.

Recent engagements included a residency at Frankfurt's Alte Oper, who prominently featured Isserlis as their 'Auftakt' artist, performances with the Orchestre de Paris under Christoph Eschenbach at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Charles Dutoit; and tours with the Philharmonia Orchestra, The City of Birmingham Symphony and the Australian Chamber orchestras.

Highlights of the 2008/2009 season include a tour of China with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Leonard Slatkin, a series of three recitals with Dénes Várjon devoted to Mendelssohn, Chopin and Schumann at the 92nd St. Y in New York, recitals at the Wigmore Hall with Tom Adès and Olli Mustonen, appearances with the Minnesota and National Symphony Orchestras and two performances of Dvorák's Cello Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic under Alan Gilbert.

British-born Isserlis takes a strong interest in authentic performance, playing with many of the foremost period instrument orchestras. Recent seasons have seen Isserlis perform all Beethoven's works for cello with fortepianist Robert Levin both in Boston and at London's Wigmore Hall, and Dvorák's Cello Concerto with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Sir Simon Rattle.

The chamber concerts of Isserlis' devising are renowned, not only for the quality of performance, but also for his ingenuity and innovation in programming. He recently presented a highly successful Russian series of his own devising at the Wigmore Hall, French and Russian programmes as part of his residency at Frankfurt's Alte Oper, and a series of chamber music and educational events at the New Zealand International Arts Festival.

Writing and playing for children is another major interest for Isserlis. His first book, a children's history of the lives of six great composers, *Why Beethoven Threw the Stew*, was published by Faber and Faber in 2001, and a sequel, entitled *Why Handel Waggled his Wig*, was published in 2006. Both books have been met with high critical acclaim, and are translated into many languages. Last season he launched his own highly successful children's series at the 92nd St Y in New York. Isserlis's

interest in musical education has another outlet in the masterclasses he gives regularly all over the world; and for the past ten years he has been Artistic Director of the masterclass and chamber music seminar IMS Prussia Cove. He has also published several editions and arrangements, principally for Faber Music, and is engaged in writing a series of musical stories for children with the composer Anne Dudley.

Steven Isserlis is a keen exponent of contemporary music and works with many composers on new commissions. He recently gave the world première of Wolfgang Rihm's Cello Concerto at the Salzburg Festival, and future plans include the première performances of works written for him by Mikhail Pletnev and Thomas Adès.

With an award-winning discography, Isserlis' recordings reflect his diverse interests in repertoire. His most recent release is of the complete Solo Cello Suites by Bach on the Hyperion label, which has been met with the highest critical acclaim and won many awards, including Listeners' Disc of the Year on BBC Radio 3's CD Review, Gramophone Magazine's Instrumental Disc of the Year and "Critic's Choice" at the 2008 Classical Brits. Other recent releases include two recordings with Stephen Hough: the Brahms sonatas, coupled with works by Dvorák and Suk, for Hyperion Records, and a highly-acclaimed disc of children's cello music for BIS Records.

Awarded a CBE in 1998 in recognition of his services to music, Steven Isserlis has received many honours, including in 2000 the Schumann Prize of the City of Zwickau (Schumann's birthplace); previous recipients include Gilels, Masur, Richter and Fischer-Dieskau.

Steven Isserlis plays the 'Feuermann' or 'De Munck' Stradivarius of 1730, kindly loaned to him by the Nippon Music Foundation of Japan.