

Ildikó Szabó

Biography (3/2024 | 3327 characters with spaces, 508 words)

In 2007, János Starker described his compatriot as *"an exceptionally gifted young cellist"* with the potential for a world career. Since then, Ildikó Szabó has **lived up to this claim**: the Hungarian artist has won prizes at 16 international competitions, including at the Pablo Casals Cello Competition in 2014 at which she won a total of eight prizes.

*"A true artist who enjoys being on stage and manages to perform to the **absolute best of her capabilities in front of an audience**"* says Iván Fischer who has collaborated with her on multiple occasions, where she performed as a soloist with the Budapest Festival Orchestra. She has also performed with the Concerto Budapest, the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, the Magdeburgische Philharmonie, the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Ildikó stems from a family of great musical traditions. From the age of 11, she studied with **László Mező** at the Liszt Academy in Budapest and attended master classes with János Starker, before she began her studies with **Jens Peter Maintz** at the Berlin University of the Arts in 2011. From 2018, she continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik "Franz Liszt" Weimar with **Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt**. *"Her technique is impeccable, her sound is warm and flexible. Her interpretations are both intelligent and heartfelt."* She completed her studies at the Kronberg Academy in July 2023 on the Professional Studies programme.

She played at **prestigious festivals** such as the Rheingau Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, OCM Prussia Cove, BBC at Hay, Verbier Festival, Piatigorsky Cello Festival, IBF Gran Canaria, and the Krzyżowa Music. Previous venues have included the Wigmore Hall, Mariinski-Theater, Elbphilharmonie, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Walt Disney Hall, as well as the Liszt Academy and the Palace of Arts Budapest. She performed regularly at the Fondation Louis Vuitton as a laureate of Gautier Capuçon's "Classe d'Excellence". She has performed with conductors including Iván Fischer, Michael Sanderling, Luciano di Martino, Zsolt Hamar, and Leo McFall. She has cooperated with artists such as Arnold Steinhardt, Ferenc Rados, Kirill Gerstein, Tabea Zimmermann, and Matthias Schorn on numerous **chamber music projects**.

Szabó has a particular passion for **Hungarian and Transylvanian repertoire** - she has developed personal relationships with György Kurtág and Péter Eötvös. Her **discography** reflects said affinity: her solo album "Heritage" (2020) - which was nominated for the German Record Critics' Award - features **world premiere recordings** of works by György Kurtág and Csaba Szabó. Her mentor Alfred Brendel described the recording as *"substantial interpretations by a very special young cellist."* The next recording project came about at his suggestion: the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven were released in May 2023 with the pianist and long-time chamber music partner István Lajkó and nominated for the ICMA Awards 2024.

From October 2023, Ildikó is a junior professor for chamber music at the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar, and a lecturer for cello at the Julius-Stern-Institute - UdK Berlin. She has been actively involved in educational and outreach projects such as TONALi's school concerts and the Konzerthaus Dortmund's Community Music. Ildikó is a Larsen Strings artist.