

Julian Steckel, Cellist

Biography

"A musician who lets the notes dance rather than whirl, an exceptional cellist who draws out things in the music that perhaps even the composers never knew were there." Fono Forum

Always ready to place himself wholly in the service of the music and his audience, cellist Julian Steckel delves deeply into a score to uncover the inner connections and forces that hold a piece together. His energetic power stems from a cultivated simplicity that enables effortless playing and seemingly limitless technical ability. "As an interpreter I trust my inner landscape more and more and let the audience in. It is a vulnerability that ultimately makes you stronger," he says.

Julian Steckel's solo career was launched when he won the ARD International Music Competition in 2010. Since then he has appeared with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, the Munich Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra Tokyo, working with conductors including Iván Fischer, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Roger Norrington, Nicholas Collon, Fabien Gabel, John Storgårds, Lahav Shani, Gustavo Gimeno, Katharina Wincor and Daniele Rustioni.

Last season he opened the Dvořák Festival in Prague together with the Bamberger Symphoniker and Jakub Hrůša, and made his debut with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra under Ruth Reinhardt. Further highlights included Walton's Cello Concerto with Tianyi Lu in Leipzig, Strauss's *Don Quixote* with the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra and Elias Grandy in Japan, as well as numerous chamber music appearances.

Chamber music – a constant source of inspiration and the communicative backbone of his musicianship – has brought him together with partners such as Janine Jansen, Christian Tetzlaff, Veronika Eberle, Vilde Frang, Sharon Kam, Antoine Tamestit, Lars Vogt, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Paul Rivinius, Martin Helmchen, Timothy Ridout, and the Modigliani, Armida and Ébène Quartets. Steckel also began the current season with a strong focus on chamber music: as artistic director of the vielsaitig festival in Füssen, he presented a multifaceted programme in the town known as a historical centre of European lute and violin making. Performances with distinguished partners such as Carolin Widmann, Paul Meyer, Nils Mönkemeyer and Amihai Grosz took him to the Alte Oper Frankfurt and on a tour of Japan.

This was followed in the present season by concerts with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony under Tabita Berglund, performing Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto, and by a monumental solo project: all of Bach's Cello Suites, performed in Shanghai and Beijing. He opens 2026 with a concert with the Leonkoro Quartet at the Muziekgebouw Amsterdam, before returning to the Musikverein Vienna and Festspielhaus St. Pölten to perform Dvořák's Cello Concerto with the Tonkünstler Orchestra and Tomáš Netopil – a work he will also play this season with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra under Ana María Patiño-Osorio. He can additionally be heard with Saint-Saëns at the Orquesta de Extremadura and will make his debut with Haydn at the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. He will perform Gulda's Concerto for Cello and Wind Orchestra with the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, where he has been a regular guest in recent seasons.

Julian Steckel's discography includes several acclaimed duo recordings with pianist Paul Rivinius, featuring works by Mendelssohn, French cello sonatas, Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev; and, with Antje Weithaas, sonatas by Kodály. His recording of the cello concertos by Korngold, Bloch and Goldschmidt with the Rheinische Philharmonie under Daniel Raiskin received the ECHO Klassik award. He has also recorded the cello concertos of C. P. E. Bach with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra conducted by Susanne von Gutzeit.

He studied with Ulrich Voss, Gustav Rivinius, Boris Pergamenschikow, Heinrich Schiff and Antje Weithaas. "My very first teacher made lightness and simplicity the central principles of playing. Listen to yourself, plan what you do, and do it right the first time. I owe everything to that insight," Julian Steckel explains. Today he passes on that approach to the next generation as Professor of Violoncello at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich.

Season 2025/26

This biography is to be reproduced without any changes, omissions or additions, unless expressly authorised by the artist management.

Link to the artist page: <https://en.karstenwitt.com/artist/julian-steckel>