

## Marie-Elisabeth Hecker, Violoncello

### Biography

*"No instrument comes as close to the human voice as the violoncello, and Marie-Elisabeth Hecker is able to give her singing without words a warmth of heart that enchants from the first bar. No note could be unimportant to her, for each one is meant to shine, to form itself into a loving thought, into a graceful dance movement, into a beguilingly beautiful cantilena."* Tagesspiegel, Frederik Hanssen, 21 May 2023

Cellist Marie-Elisabeth Hecker touches with the emotional unconditionality and warm sensitivity of her playing. With outward modesty and great inner richness, she feels the music down to the last cell. She herself says about the cello: "For me, it is the most versatile instrument: it can sing, be a pulse generator, the basis for all music, especially chamber music, the position of the tenor. Besides, you can play it very naturally, you don't have to contort yourself." She made her international breakthrough with her sensational success at the 8th Rostropovich Competition in Paris in 2005, where she became the first contestant in the event's history to win first prize as well as two special prizes.

Since then, Marie-Elisabeth Hecker has become one of the most sought-after soloists of the younger generation. Highlights of her career to date include performances with Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Belgian National Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Dresden Philharmonic, Filarmonica della Scala, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Spanish National Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, and Wiener Symphoniker. She has collaborated with conductors such as Barenboim, Gergiev, Harding, Hengelbrock, Herreweghe, Janowski, Luisi, Nagano, Saraste, Thielemann, and von Dohnányi.

Especially with her husband, the pianist Martin Helmchen, she appears in recitals all over the world and has been a guest at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, L'Auditori Barcelona, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Bozar Brussels, the Teatro Colón Buenos Aires, the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Wigmore Hall London, the Carnegie Hall New York, the Louvre Paris, the Toppan Hall Tokyo, the Konzerthaus Vienna and the Tonhalle Zurich, among others. She also regularly performs chamber music concerts in various formations with Antje Weithaas, Christian Tetzlaff, Stephen Waarts, Carolin Widmann and the Apollon Musagète Quartet. Since July 2023, the International Chamber Music Festival "Fliessen", curated by Marie-Elisabeth Hecker and Martin Helmchen, takes place under the umbrella of the Brandenburg Summer Concerts. In the Spreewald region and on the artists' campus of the Drauschemühle just outside Luckau, the artists want to play, live and perform chamber music from duos to octets.

Together with Martin Helmchen, Marie-Elisabeth Hecker premiered York Höller's new double concerto in the spring of 2022 at the Ruhr Piano Festival and the Kölner Philharmonie, which was also performed at the Ultraschall Festival in 2023.

In May 2016, the label Alpha Classics released Marie-Elisabeth Hecker's recording of Brahms' cello sonatas together with Martin Helmchen to great critical acclaim. Recently, her second CD containing Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata and Trio No. 2 (together with Martin Helmchen and Antje Weithaas) has been released by the same label alongside a CD with Elgar's Cello Concerto (together with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra) and the Piano Quintet.

Born in Robert Schumann's hometown Zwickau in 1987, Marie-Elisabeth Hecker started playing the cello at the age of five and attended the Robert Schumann Conservatory, before the distinguished German cellist Peter Bruns became her principal teacher. She continued her studies with Heinrich Schiff and subsequently took part in masterclasses with eminent figures such as Anner Bylisma, Bernard Greenhouse, Frans Helmerson, Gary Hoffman and Steven Isserlis. In 2009, she won a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. She was appointed a professor at Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber in Dresden in August 2017. In cooperation with Music Road Rwanda, she regularly travels to Rwanda in order to support a local music school with concerts and educational projects.

**2024/25 season**

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