

Biography | September 2024

Isabelle van Keulen is one of the few musicians who have been able to establish themselves equally as violin and viola players. Her charisma and musical versatility have made her a much sought-after musician on the most important concert stages.

As a soloist, Isabelle van Keulen performs regularly with renowned orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the BR and NDR radio orchestras, the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra Manchester and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. She is also a welcome and regular guest of leading orchestras in the U.S.. and has worked with conductors such as Valery Gergiev, Philippe Herreweghe, Andris Nelsons, Sir Roger Norrington, Hugo Wolff and David Zinman.

Between 2009 and 2012, she was the artistic director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and, in addition to performing in Oslo, also undertook extensive concert tours, including to Asia as a soloist with the orchestra. She has held the position as Professor of Violin, Viola and Chamber Music at the Lucerne University of Music since 2012 and has been artistic director of the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss am Rhein since the 2017/2018 season.

In addition to her solo work, Isabelle van Keulen also devotes herself to chamber music. Her artistic collaboration with pianist Ronald Brautigam spans decades, the duo having celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2010 with the Beethoven violin sonata cycles. She is also closely associated with the mezzo-soprano Christiane Stotijn and the clarinet player Sharon Kam. As artistic director she played a key role in shaping the Delft Chamber Music Festival between 1997 and 2006.

The performance of contemporary works being very important to her, the repertoire includes numerous works from the 20th and 21st centuries, including works by composers such as Henri Dutilleux, John Adams, Lera Auerbach, Oliver Knussen and Brett Dean. The recording of Erkki-Sven Tüür's Violin Concerto dedicated to Isabelle van Keulen, which she recorded with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi, caused a sensation in the press and attracted particular attention.

Isabelle van Keulen's activities are well documented. Her discography reflects the wide range of musical works: the duo recordings with Ronald Brautigam are of particular importance and include works by Grieg, Elgar, Sibelius, Strauss, Rota and Respighi, as well as a recording of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto alongside the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra under Mario Venzago. Other recordings include Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 and Walton's Viola Concerto with the NDR Radiophilharmonie as well as a complete recording of all Beethoven sonatas together with pianist Hannes Minnaar.

She has released three CDs of works by Astor Piazzolla with the Isabelle van Keulen Ensemble. The CD "Variations on Buenos Aires" was released in January 2022.

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Concerts in 2024 will take her to the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Konzerthaus Vienna and Wigmore Hall London, among others.

Short version

Isabelle van Keulen is one of the few musicians who has been able to establish herself as both a violinist and violist on the major concert stages. As a soloist, she regularly works with major orchestras from all over the world under leading conductors.

She was artistic director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra for three years, has held a professorship for violin, viola and chamber music at the Lucerne University of Music since 2012 and has been artistic director of the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss am Rhein since 2017. In the field of chamber music, she was artistic director of the Delft Chamber Music Festival between 1997 and 2006.

Numerous recordings reflect the breadth of her activities: her recordings span works from the Baroque and Classical periods to the 20th and 21st centuries, tango music and the Violin Concerto by Erkki-Sven Tüür dedicated to her. Most recently, she released the CD "Variations on Buenos Aires" in 2022.

Concerts in 2024 will take her to the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Konzerthaus Vienna and Wigmore Hall London, among others.