

## Ruth Killius | Biography

### Viola



"She plays the viola masterfully and with great passion."

Ruth Killius's extraordinary ability to use her instrument to revive the wealth of viola literature from the Classical to the Modern Age is without equal. The versatility of her playing has bestowed her instrument with new meaning. In particular, through her passionate commitment to contemporary music, she has successfully made the viola an essential part of the music of the 21st century.

Ruth Killius, who studied under Ulrich Koch and Kim Kashkashian, expanded the standard repertoire for the viola with the addition of contemporary music. She collaborated in the performance of numerous original premieres e.g. the Brian Ferneyhough String Trio together with members of Geneva's Ensemble Contrechamps as well as in Elliott Carter's Oboe Quartet with Heinz Holliger. Holliger wrote his Double Concerto for violin, viola and a small orchestra, a commission from the Salzburg Festival, for her. The performance of the original premiere of John Casken's double concerto *That Subtle Knot*, dedicated to the duo Thomas Zehetmair and Ruth Killius, together with the Royal Northern Sinfonia attracted widespread attention.

In 2020/2021 she will perform solo and double concertos, among other works in Moscow with the Russian National Youth Orchestra, the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, in Winterthur with the Musikkollegium and in Gateshead with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Together with Thomas Zehetmair, Ruth Killius formed the Zehetmair Quartet in 1994, which is now considered one of the world's leading string quartets. A recording featuring Hindemith's String Quartet no. 4 and Bartók's String Quartet no. 5 was cited as a reference recording in the media and was distinguished with the Diapason d'Or of the year. In 2013, the ensemble released a recording dedicated to Beethoven, Bruckner, Hartmann and Holliger. You can hear the quartet live this season in Amsterdam, Gateshead, Asciano and Innsbruck, among other locations.

For ECM, Ruth Killius has recorded a CD featuring works by Elliott Carter and Isang Yun together with Heinz Holliger and Thomas Demenga. The recording released under the Glossa label featuring Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century under Frans Brüggen is considered to be a reference recording. In April 2018, her latest recording of all Hindemith sonatas for viola was published by NoMadMusic.

The duo Thomas Zehetmair and Ruth Killius can be heard in numerous music centres. The widely regarded album *Manto and Madrigals*, inspired by Scelsi's *Manto* for a singing violist featuring works of Bartók, Holliger, Martinů et al. was released on ECM in March 2011.