



Biography - María Dueñas, Violin

Spanish violinist María Dueñas beguiles audiences with the breathtaking array of colours she draws from her instrument. Her technical prowess, artistic maturity and bold interpretations have inspired rave reviews, captivated competition juries, and secured invitations to appear with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors.

Born in Granada in 2002, María Dueñas fell in love with classical music via the recordings her parents played constantly at home and the concerts she attended in her native city. She started playing the violin at six and enrolled at her hometown's conservatory of music a year later. In 2014 she won a scholarship abroad sponsored by Juventudes Musicales de Madrid as well as the Humboldt Foundation's Wardwell Stipend and at first moved to Dresden to study at the Carl Maria von Weber Academy of Music. There she was soon discovered by conductor Marek Janowski, at whose invitation she later made her debut with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Since 2016 she has been studying with the renowned violin pedagogue Boris Kuschnir at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has hailed the “freedom and joyous individuality” of her playing, while *The Strad* described her rising-star status as “seemingly unstoppable”, after she won a whole series of international violin competitions. Not least among these was her livestreamed run to victory at the 2021 Menuhin Violin Competition, at which she won not only the first prize and audience prize, but also a global online following. Her competition victories began with the 2017 Zhuhai International Mozart Competition and 2018 Vladimir Spivakov International Violin Competition. In addition to her success at the Menuhin Competition, 2021 saw her win first prize at the Getting to Carnegie Competition, the Grand Prize at the Viktor Tretyakov International Violin Competition, and the career advancement prize at the Rheingau Music Festival. She was also named as a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist 2021-23. In April 2023, she was awarded the prestigious *Premio Princesa de Girona de las Artes y las Letras* in her native Spain.

In 2022, María Dueñas signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Her spectacular debut album, entitled *Beethoven and Beyond*, recorded live at the Vienna Musikverein with the Wiener Symphoniker and Manfred Honeck, was released in May 2023. It features Beethoven's violin concerto, for which she has composed her own cadenzas. It also includes five showpieces for violin and orchestra by Kreisler, Saint-Saëns, Spohr, Wieniawski and Ysaÿe and the cadenzas written by the same composers for the first movement of the Beethoven concerto.

The multi-faceted artist became fond of composing after she started writing cadenzas for Mozart's violin concertos. A solo piano piece, *Farewell*, was awarded a prize in the 2016 “Von fremden Ländern und Menschen” Competition for Young Composers. Recorded by Evgeny Sinaiski, it was also transformed into a music video. Her most recent composition, *Homage 1770* for solo violin, was released this summer by Deutsche Grammophon.



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A dedicated chamber musician, María Dueñas has performed with baritone Matthias Goerne and pianist Itamar Golan, among other artists. She has also premiered several works written for and dedicated to her by the late Catalan composer Jordi Cervelló, including the *Milstein Caprice*.

She has meanwhile performed with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Dresden Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Berlin, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and BBC Symphony Orchestra under conductors such as Manfred Honeck, Herbert Blomstedt, Marek Janowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Gustavo Gimeno, Michael Sanderling, Alain Altinoglu and Alan Gilbert. At the Évian Festival 2023, she played together with Renaud Capuçon. María Dueñas maintains a close relationship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel. After her 2021 debut at the Hollywood Bowl, they joined forces again the following year for the world premiere of Gabriela Ortiz's violin concerto *Altar de cuerda*, of which she is the dedicatee, causing an international sensation and followed by sold-out performances at Carnegie Hall, in Boston and at the Cervantino Festival in Mexico. In 2024, further concerts will follow in Los Angeles and on tour in Barcelona, Paris and London.

Highlights of the 2023/2024 season also include a tour with the Kammerphilharmonie Bremen under Paavo Järvi, concerts with the Dresden Philharmonic under Kent Nagano, and her debuts with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding, the Munich Philharmonic (again with Manfred Honeck), the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France under Mikko Franck, and the Bamberg Symphony under Christoph Eschenbach.

María Dueñas plays a Nicolò Gagliano violin of 1774, on loan from the German Musical Instrument Fund administered by Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, and the Stradivari *Camposelice* of 1710, on generous loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

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