



Biography - Tabea Zimmermann, Viola

Tabea Zimmermann is a musician of extraordinary versatility. As an internationally sought-after soloist, chamber musician, and educator, she profoundly shapes the musical world far beyond the concert stage. At the heart of her work lies the viola—both as an expression of artistic excellence and personal conviction.

Born in southern Baden, she made her debut at the Berlin Philharmonie at just eleven years old. Following significant competition successes in Geneva, Paris, and Budapest, she became Germany's youngest professor at the age of 21. She remains deeply committed to teaching, currently holding positions at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts and the Kronberg Academy.

A special focus of her artistic work is contemporary music. Numerous composers—including György Ligeti, Heinz Holliger, Wolfgang Rihm, Enno Poppe, and Michael Jarrell—have dedicated works to her or premiered pieces with her. For Zimmermann, engaging with new music is closely linked to evolving classical interpretive approaches. Chamber music is as central to her artistry as the “play & lead” principle, which sees her directing orchestral projects from within the ensemble. Recent collaborations in this spirit include performances with Ensemble Resonanz, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the German National Youth Orchestra. A new project with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra is set to follow in spring 2026.

Around the same time, she embarks on an extensive recital tour across North America with pianist Javier Perianes, with stops in Washington, New York, Québec, Montreal, and Princeton. She also maintains a long-standing musical partnership with pianist Thomas Hoppe, with many future concerts already planned. In May and June 2026, she joins the Belcea Quartet once again for a concert tour across Germany.

Artistic collaboration on equal footing is a core value she lives by—within music and beyond. As artist-in-residence, she has appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. In summer 2025, she is one of the Artistes Étoiles at the Lucerne Festival, where she will perform chamber music, Bartók's Viola Concerto with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Maxim Emelyanychev, and the Swiss premiere of Dieter Ammann's (1962) No templates for viola and orchestra. She will then continue her artistic partnership with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season also include the world premiere of a new work by Georges Aperghis at the Donaueschingen Festival (with EXAUDI), Bartók's Viola Concerto with the Oslo Philharmonic under Jukka-Pekka Saraste, and concerts with the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich under Marek Janowski, and the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under Johanna Mallwitz.

As president of the Swiss Hindemith Foundation and chair of the board of the Ernst von



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Siemens Music Foundation, Tabea Zimmermann actively shapes cultural policy processes. Through the David Shallon Foundation, which she founded, she supports international and socially relevant music projects.

For her broad-ranging engagement, she has received numerous honors, including the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and honorary membership in the German Music Council.

Tabea Zimmermann stands out like few other musicians for her artistic integrity, intellectual independence, and music born of deep personal conviction.