

Tanja Becker-Bender

Geigerin . Violinist

Curriculum Vitae

Tanja Becker-Bender was born in Stuttgart, Germany, into a family of scientists and musicians of Bohemian origin. Early musical success, manifested in top prizes at the international competitions in Geneva (CIEM), Brussels (CIM Chimay), Tokyo (Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award), Houston, Gorizia and Genoa (Premio Paganini), led her to perform as a soloist under the baton of Kurt Masur, Gerd Albrecht, Fabio Luisi, Uriel Segal, Hartmut Haenchen, Hubert Soudant, Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi and Carlos Miguel Prieto with renowned orchestras such as the Tokyo Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, and Houston Symphony, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart of the SWR, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, and the Vienna, Zurich and Prague Chamber orchestras, as well as the English Chamber Orchestra.

Also an avid chamber musician, Tanja Becker-Bender has played in festivals together with Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, Boris Pergamenschikow and Arnold Steinhardt and given recitals in New York, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Paris, London, Rome and Vienna.

Tanja Becker-Bender has received her most significant musical education from the world's leading quartet musicians: early studies with Wilhelm Melcher (Melos Quartett) in Stuttgart and a year of studies with David Takeno at the Guildhall School in London were followed by studies with Günter Pichler (Alban Berg Quartett) at the University of Music in Vienna and with Robert Mann (Juilliard String Quartet) and Bartók's student György Sándor at The Juilliard School in New York. Further important impulses came through work with Eberhard Feltz in Berlin and Ferenc Rados in Budapest.

Applying the idealistic approach of chamber music to all genres of music, whether concertos, virtuoso pieces, new music in first performances or baroque music on period instruments, Tanja Becker-Bender is constantly striving to get to the essence of each work she performs, and dedicates herself to a wide range of repertoire. Her interest in new music has led her to collaborations with composers such as Cristóbal Halffter, Peteris Vasks and Michael Gielen, and first performances of works by Rolf Hempel, Alexander Goehr and Benedict Mason.

After the release of CDs with works of Dvorák, Beethoven, Albinoni, and Swiss composer Jean Perrin, her recording of Niccolò Paganini's "24 Capricci" for Hyperion Records in London (2009) has received accolades from critics around the world and was distinguished as "Editor's Choice" of both the magazines "Gramophone" and "Classic FM". In February 2011, a recital disc for Hyperion was released, featuring violin works by Erwin Schulhoff. This CD was chosen as "Disc of the month" by the renowned "BBC Music Magazine". In January 2012, Max Reger's Violin Concerto and Romances followed, also for Hyperion, collaborating with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under the baton of Lothar Zagrosek. This disc was labelled "Outstanding Disc of the Month" by the "International Record Review" and awarded the "Star of the Month" by the German "Fonoforum".

The new season will begin with the release of a recital disc, together with pianist Péter Nagy, featuring Ottorino Respighi's Works for Violin and Piano. Performances include the Violin Concerto by Peter Ruzicka under the baton of the composer himself, as well as a return to the Konzerthaus Berlin performing Max Reger's Violin Concerto.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* characterized Tanja Becker-Bender's playing as consisting of 'completely mature virtuosity and phenomenal intensity of expression and balance'. In 2006 she was appointed one of the youngest-ever professors in Germany, at the University of Music Saarland in Saarbrücken, succeeding Maxim Vengerov. After being offered positions at the University for Music and Theater in Hamburg and at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna in 2009, she is now professor for violin at the University for Music and Theater in Hamburg.

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