

Christian Poltéra | Biography

Violoncello



"He is a virtuoso on his instrument and knows how to elicit every conceivable timbre from his Stradivarius cello. Even in the fastest passages, the shortest note remained richly articulated; the long, sustained lines, in turn, were imbued with great expressiveness."

As one of the most impressive cellists of his generation, Poltéra's performance focuses on music alone: without excessive gestures, he reveals the essence of a work. His unique timbre is characteristic of his interpretations, masterfully adapted to each epoch and style.

Already at a very young age, the Swiss Christian Poltéra gravitated to the cello. He began his studies with Nancy Chumachenco and then continued with Boris Pergamenschikov and Heinrich Schiff in Salzburg and Vienna. In 2004, he was awarded the *Borletti-Buitoni Prize* and named *BBC New Generation Artist*. As a *Rising Star* two years later, he was able to present himself to audiences in all the great European concert halls.

Invitations from renowned orchestras take him all over the world. He has made guest appearances with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Los Angeles and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestras, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Seoul Philharmonic. His conducting partners have included Riccardo Chailly, Christoph von Dohnányi, Bernard Haitink, John Eliot Gardiner, Krzysztof Urbanski, Philippe Herreweghe, Paavo Järvi and Andris Nelsons. In 2026, Christian Poltéra performed the world premiere of Mario Venzago's new cello concerto in Heidelberg.

In addition to his solo career, Poltéra devotes himself to chamber music. A number of recordings (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Hindemith, Schoenberg) document the unique interplay of the Trio Zimmermann with Frank Peter Zimmermann and Antoine Tamestit. In a piano trio with Esther Hoppe and Ronald Brautigam, he plays historically informed or modern programs in European centers such as Edinburgh, Amsterdam, London and Zurich. In addition, he performed and still performs with colleagues such as Mitsuko Uchida, Isabelle Faust, Sharon Kam, Lars Vogt, Leif Ove Andsnes and Kathryn Stott, as well as with the Chiaroscuro, Gringolts, Hagen, Auryn and Zehetmair string quartets. He was Artist in Residence at the Schwetzingen Festspiele where he programmed and played three chamber music concerts.

He is also a welcomed guest at other major international festivals such as Salzburg, Lucerne, Schwarzenberg (Schubertiade), Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, Schleswig-Holstein and London (Proms). In addition, Christian Poltéra presented a cycle of J. S. Bach's Cello Suites in Brussels, Vevey, as Artist in Residence at the Schwäbische Frühling and most recently at three concerts in Taiwan.

Christian Poltéra's much acclaimed recordings reflect his versatile and extensive repertoire. Among the award-winning (*BBC Music Award*, *Gramophone Choice*, *Diapason D'Or*) CD recordings with BIS are the cello concertos of Haydn, Dvořák, Walton, Ligeti, Barber, Dutilleux, Lutosławski, Honegger, Hindemith, Shostakovich, Martinů and Martin, as well as sonatas of Mendelssohn, Fauré and Saint-Saëns. In 2024, an album dedicated to Sergei Prokofiev, featuring Juho Pohjonen and the Sinfonia Lahti directed by Anja Bihlmaier was released, as well as an album with Ronald Brautigam and Brahms' sonatas. For the latter, Poltéra was once again awarded the *Diapason d'or de l'Année*.

Since 2013, Christian Poltéra is Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Days in the mountain church of Büsingen. He is also a professor at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and regularly gives masterclasses. He plays an Antonio Casini cello built in 1675 and the legendary *Mara* cello of Antonio Stradivari from 1711.