

Nora Chastain

Violin

American violinist Nora Chastain was described by Sir Yehudi Menuhin as "... one of the most elegant and refined violinists I know."

The granddaughter of American composer Roy Harris, Ms. Chastain was born in Berkeley, California. After beginning her violin studies with Anne Crowden, she continued at the Cincinnati Conservatory and the Julliard School with Dorothy Delay. Later, at the International Menuhin Music Academy Gstaad, she was a student of Alberto Lysy, Ana Chumachenko and Sir Yehudi Menuhin. She also worked intensively with Sandor Vegh.

At age sixteen, Ms. Chastain made her debut in Berlin with Barber Violin Concerto. Since then, she has been a regular guest soloist with such orchestras as the San Francisco Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Cincinnati Philharmonia, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra, Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn, Orquestra Nacional do Porto, MDR Symphonieorchester Leipzig, Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, Bern Symphony Orchestra, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Peru. She has worked with conductors such as Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sebastian Weigle, Jose Serebrier, Michael Sanderling, David Stern and Marc Tardue. In addition, many composers have written works for Ms. Chastain, among them Daniel Schnyder, Gerhard Samuel, Susanna Erding, and Georg Wörzer.

An avid chamber music player, Ms. Chastain is a founding member of the Menuhin Festival Piano Quartet and Trio Kreisleriana. With them, she has toured extensively, playing in concert halls in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, Bonn, Paris, Milano, Zürich, Geneva, Edinburgh, Washington DC, New York, Boston, San Francisco and Sydney. Her chamber groups have performed at the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Schwetzingen Festspielen and Menuhin Festival Gstaad. She has collaborated in chamber music projects with, among others, Sharon Kam, David Geringas, Pascal Devoyon, Joshua Bell as well as with the Faure Piano Quartet, the Carmina Quartet and the Merel Quartet.

Ms. Chastain's recordings for Chandos, Ars, Claves, Koch-Schwann and Naxos include sonatas of Mozart; complete Beethoven sonatas; sonatas of Faure, Debussy, Honegger; many works for piano trio and quartet; Beethoven Concerto with Bartok Concerto #2; and Casella Triple Concerto.

A recent recording of Concierto Indio by the Peruvian composer Teodoro Varcacel was nominated for a Grammy award.

Ms. Chastain has been a prize winner at several competitions, including the Menuhin Competition in Paris in 1985, as well as being awarded the prestigious annual "Förderpreis der Europäischen Wirtschaft" in Zürich as soloist.

As one of Europe's most sought after teachers, Nora Chastain has amongst her students international prize winners, concertmasters of major European orchestras, members of well known chamber ensembles, and music faculty members of universities and conservatories. She gives regular master classes and serves on juries of international competitions. A main focus of her teaching is the integration of the American and European traditions of violin playing.

Nora Chastain is Professor of Violin at the Universitaet der Kuenste Berlin. From 1991 – 2020 she held a position at the Zuercher Hochschule der Kuenste, and from 1993-2004 she was Professor of Violin at the Musikhochschule Luebeck.