

ADRIAN BRENDEL

CELLO

‘Brendel looked like a personification of Schubert with his playful interjections and whimsical expressions, and the interplay between violin and cello was a pleasure to watch.’

The Strad

One of the most versatile and original cellists of his generation, Adrian Brendel has travelled the world as soloist, collaborator and teacher. His early immersion in the core classical repertoire inspired an enduring fascination that has led to encounters with many fine musicians at the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls. Brendel's discovery of contemporary music through the works of Kurtág, Kagel and Ligeti in his teenage years opened a vital avenue that he continues to explore with huge enthusiasm alongside his passion for improvisation and programme curation.

In 2014 he became a member of the Nash Ensemble of London, with whom he is resident at Wigmore Hall throughout every season. Since 2025, he has been co-artistic director for the group, with pianist Simon Crawford-Phillips. Brendel has recorded a wide range of music for Philips, Hyperion, ECM new series, NMC, BIS and other labels. These include a survey of Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano with his father Alfred Brendel, a collection of pieces dedicated to him during many years of valuable collaboration with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, and much of the core chamber music repertoire.

2025 marked the beginning of Brendel's tenure as artistic director of Bath Mozartfest and Bachfest, one of the UK's most established classical music festivals. As founder of Plush festival in Dorset from 1995-2017, he forged an original programming style bringing together diverse thematic strands across a wide span of music, from Machaut to the present day. The festival attracted artists such as Sir András Schiff, Radu Lupu, Lawrence Power, Miklós Perényi, Oliver Knussen and John Taylor amongst many regular visitors, and featured music by more than 100 contemporary composers.

A new musical venture - Tree of Strings - begins in South West England in 2026, with a particular focus on young musicians and education. Brendel is a familiar presence at many of Europe's leading festivals including Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Verbier, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh and Salzburg. He performs as soloist with orchestras including NDR Hamburg, Gulbenkian, Academy of St Martins, Philharmonia and RSNO, and in recital with Till Fellner, Alasdair Beatson, Dame Imogen Cooper and Denes Varjon. His many chamber music partners include the Takács, Ebene, Belcea and Jerusalem quartets, Ensemble 360, Viviane Hagner and Lawrence Power.

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Brendel was made an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in 2021 where he also gives masterclasses as guest professor, alongside a cello class at Guildhall school in London and private tuition. Increasingly in demand as a teacher, his schedule takes him to academies around Europe every year.

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