

Elizabeth Kenny

Lutenist



“Kenny is an exquisite musician.”
The Guardian

Elizabeth Kenny is one of Europe's leading lute players. Her playing has been described as “incandescent” (Music and Vision), “radical” (The Independent) and “indecently beautiful” (Toronto Post). In twenty years of touring she has played with many of the world's best period instrument groups and experienced many different approaches to music making. She has an extensive discography of collaborations with ensembles across Europe and the USA, and her own repertoire interests have led to critically acclaimed recordings of solo music from the ML Lute Book, and songs by Lawes, Purcell and Dowland.

In 2011 Elizabeth was one of three shortlisted nominees for the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards in the Best Instrumentalist category. In 2007 she founded her group Theatre of the Ayre, its focus on seventeenth century vocal music with an improvisational character. She devised and directed *Le Malade Imaginaire* and *A Restoration Tempest* for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. The group's recent CD release, *The Masque of Moments* - their debut recording for Linn - was named 'Disc of the Week' on BBC Radio 3's Record Review. She was one of the artistic advisory team for the York Early Music Festival from 2011-14. She returned to York in 2016 as a judge for the National Centre for Early Music's Young Composers' Award, as part of a growing commitment to enlarging the repertoire for the lute with new work.

Elizabeth also appears alongside Ian Bostridge on Warner Classic's *Shakespeare Songs*, which won a 2017 Grammy Award for 'Best Classical Solo Vocal Album'.

Elizabeth continues her collaboration with countertenor Robin Blaze having recently given acclaimed performances together at the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, Carnegie Hall, and at the Mayfield, Ryedale and Canterbury Festivals. In 2018 they performed together at New York's Carnegie Hall.

She has given premiere performances of solo and chamber pieces by James MacMillan, Benjamin Oliver, Heiner Goebbels and Rachel Stott. In June 2019 she premiered Nico Muhly's *Berceuse* for solo theorbo, which was written for her in 2018, and features on her CD *Ars longa: Old and new music for theorbo* for Linn records which was nominated in the 2020 BBC Music Magazine Awards in the Instrumental category.

In June 2020 she gave a live broadcast recital with Iestyn Davies at Wigmore Hall, and again for the York Early Music Festival. In 2021, Elizabeth performs a series of concerts with the newly formed Benedetti Baroque Orchestra, coinciding with a Decca Classics album release, and also plays at the Tetbury Music Festival, London International Festival of Early Music, and the Trigonale Festival der Alten Musik in Austria.

She also continues her collaboration with Isabelle Faust, Kristian Bezuidenhout and Kristin von der Goltz in a programme of Bach, Biber and Westhoff across Europe.

Elizabeth taught for two years at the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin, and was Professor of Musical Performance and Head of Early Music at Southampton University, before becoming Director of Performance at Oxford University. She guest-edited a Dowland-themed issue of *Early Music* to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the composer's birth in 2013, and is the author of occasional articles on seventeenth century performance. She is currently Dean of Studies at the Royal Academy of Music.

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