

VITA, MURIEL RAZAVI 2025

The American-Iranian violist Muriel Razavi is regarded as one of the most promising musicians of her generation, performing internationally across various formations and genres of classical music. She holds professorships in viola at the Mozarteum University Salzburg and the State University of Music Trossingen. Razavi is also the founder and artistic director of the Leipzig-based Soundseed Festival, which focuses on contemporary works by female composers from the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region and emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches.

Previously, Razavi served as Deputy Principal Violist of the MDR Symphony Orchestra Leipzig and worked for two years as a mentor in the mentoringArts program at the Leipzig University of Music and Theatre, preparing students for professional careers in music. She has also taught as an instructor for the German National Youth Orchestra (Bundesjugendorchester) and the Saxony Youth Orchestra (Landesjugendorchester Sachsen).

Razavi is pursuing her doctoral studies at the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre under the artistic supervision of Daniel Barenboim. Her research focuses on Re-Orientalism in contemporary music by Iranian female composers associated with the Iranian Female Composers Association (IFCA). In 2022, she was awarded the “Prize for an Outstanding Program with Special Social Relevance” at the Dbü Competition for her solo viola performance “Ancient Eve is Once Again Offering Apples.” This performance was featured during the 2022/23 season at both the Ultraschall Festival Berlin and Heidelberger Frühling. She debuted with Golfram Khayam’s viola concerto “Her Path Through Clay & Silk” under Thorsten Encke’s direction in 2022. In 2024, she premiered Khayam’s double concerto for viola and santur alongside Kiomars Musayyebi and the Bridges Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Nabil Shehata, at Frankfurt’s HR Sendesaal.

Razavi has received numerous accolades, including winning the Washington String Competition (Washington D.C., 2018) and prizes at international competitions such as Michael Spisak (Katowice, 2017) and Città di Cremona at the 43rd International Viola Congress (Cremona, 2016). She has performed at prestigious festivals such as Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Rheingau Music Festival, Stavelot Festival (Belgium), Yeosu Festival (South Korea), and Semanas Musicales de Frutillar (Chile), where she also gave a masterclass. Her chamber music collaborators include Baiba Skride, Kian Soltani, Harriet Krijgh, and Antje Weithaas.

As both a soloist and chamber musician, Razavi performs over 60 concerts annually (2024). She is a long-standing member of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim’s direction and regularly commissions new works. Additionally, she performs with Mutter’s Virtuosi, an ensemble led by violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, touring extensively across Europe. Razavi studied with renowned teachers such as Tabea Zimmermann, Nils Mönkemeyer, Tatjana Masurenko, and Wilfried Strehle, completing her master’s degree with distinction at Berlin University of the Arts in 2019.

As a baroque violist, she has deepened her expertise in historical performance practice through collaborations with ensembles such as Balthasar Neumann Ensemble (Thomas Hengelbrock), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (London), Il Pomo d’Oro, and Le Concert Olympique (Belgium). She plays on a custom viola by French luthier Patrick Robin and an Alemannic baroque viola modeled after historical designs by Dorothea van der Woerd.

In addition to her musical achievements, Razavi holds a Bachelor’s degree in “History and Culture of the Near East – Iranian Studies” from Freie Universität Berlin and a Master’s degree in “Religion and Culture” from Humboldt Universität Berlin.

Razavi’s work combines artistry with academic rigor, exemplified by her receipt of Austria’s Theodor Körner Prize in 2024 for her artistic-scientific research contributions.