

Monique Mead

OFFICIAL BIO FOR THE 2022–2023 SEASON

Monique Mead's rich and varied career is a testament to her enduring belief that music has the power to connect, heal, and uplift humanity. Whether performing on stage, in nature, at a school, or in a hospital, Monique strives to create transformative musical experiences that connect people more deeply with themselves and others.

In 2019, Leading up to Beethoven's 250th birthday Monique set out to perform his Violin Concerto 50 times in 250 days for people who, like herself and the composer, felt the pain of adversity in their lives. Lifting up people's stories of struggle and triumph, the performances culminated in a celebration of the 'indomitable human spirit' in Pittsburgh's Carnegie Music Hall on Beethoven's birthday.

Shortly thereafter, in a pandemic-isolated world, Monique and her teens collaborated with neighbors to bring people together through weekly porch concerts featuring local musicians, resulting in a series that has since become an annual tradition. In response to the current mental health crisis, Monique continues to develop performance modalities that integrate the healing effects of nature, mindfulness, and sound vibration in collaboration with psychotherapy practices, universities, and yoga studios. These healing experiences are often premiered at Rancho La Puerta, a premiere wellness resort in Mexico where Monique presents classes and directs an annual Chamber Music Festival.

These endeavors underscore Monique's lifelong commitment to stretching the boundaries of performance to explore how the integration of music into everyday life inspires greater well-being for individuals and communities.

It was this belief that that inspired Monique's unconventional approach to introducing young people to classical music, using emerging technology as well collaborations with soccer stars or hip-hop artists to break down barriers and create space for authentic interaction. Since 1998 her programs with major orchestras and festivals in the United States and Europe have drawn international acclaim for their popular appeal and innovative approach. Her youth concerts reached millions via radio and television broadcasts and concerts with the Munich Radio Orchestra, Cologne Philharmonic, Düsseldorf Symphony, Berlin Radio Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and the Mainz Mozart Festival, among others.

In this capacity, she has collaborated with artists such as Manfred Honeck, Leonidas Kavakos, Jon Kimura Parker, Sarah Chang, Noah Bendix-Balgley, Nicola Benedetti, and Yan Pascal Tortelier to create extraordinary musical experiences for young people.

Further endeavors to make concerts and music education more widely accessible include a mentorship of Orquesta Guadalupe that creates a safe haven for girls in the Tijuana slums, an annual music camp at Olympic National Park, and the 2021 launch of Azure, an all-behaviors-welcome concert series for families with autism.

Having bypassed the traditional gatekeepers to create her own international performing career, Monique now mentors musicians within the culture of innovation at Carnegie Mellon University, where she has served as Director of Music Entrepreneurship since 2011. Offering hands-on

experiences and community-integrated learning, she strives to free musicians from limiting beliefs and support them in building careers that amplify their unique talents and values.

Born into a large musical family, Monique's love affair with the violin began at age 7 and her desire for a life in music was sparked attending Interlochen Arts Camp as a young teen. While still an undergraduate at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, she toured Europe with Leonard Bernstein and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra, a transformational experience that inspired her career path as an artist-educator.

Monique finds inspiration in nature walks, yoga, and artful cuisine. She plays on a 1860 J.B. Vuillaume violin and enjoys performing with her talented teens, Isabel and Tino, on harp and piano.

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