

Monica Huggett was born in London, in 1953, the fifth of seven children. In order to differentiate herself from her piano-playing siblings, she took up the violin at age six. Her talent became apparent quickly and, by the age of twelve, it had been decided by her parents and teachers that she would become a violinist, which saved her from the agony of having to decide what to do with her life.

At age sixteen, she entered the Royal Academy of Music as a student of Manoug Parikian. Although she did well and won several prizes, she was not entirely comfortable with her instrument until she was given a baroque violin to try. She was immediately won over by the mellow quality of the gut strings and became a fervent champion of the baroque violin.

From age seventeen, Monica has earned her living solely as a violinist and artistic director – beginning in London as a freelance violinist – and currently as the newly-appointed first artistic director of the Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program. In the intervening four decades, she co-founded the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra with Ton Koopman; founded her own London-based ensemble Sonnerie; worked with Christopher Hogwood at the Academy of Ancient Music; with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert; and toured the United States in concert with James Galway. She has served as guest director of the Seville Baroque Orchestra; the Kristiansand Symphony Norway; Arion Baroque Orchestra, Montreal; Tafelmusik, Toronto; the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; Philharmonia Baroque, San Francisco; the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra; and Concerto Copenhagen. She also performs frequently as a solo violinist all over the world.

Monica has given master classes in Banff, Dartington, Vicenza, Dublin, and Medellin, and has been professor of baroque violin at the Hochschule für Künste, Bremen and the Koninklijke Conservatorium in The Hague. Monica's expertise in the musical and social history of the Baroque Era is unparalleled among performing musicians. This huge body of knowledge and understanding, coupled with her unique interpretation of Baroque music, has made her an invaluable resource to students of the baroque violin.

Monica's discography numbers in the hundreds, many of which, sadly, are currently out of print. She is working on reviving some of her favorite recordings. She is still making new recordings and a CD of Mendelssohn Piano Trios will be released later in 2009, as well as a CD of 17th century Italian instrumental music with the Irish Baroque Orchestra.

Among her recent prizes are the 1997 Editor's Choice award, Gramophone magazine, for J.S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin; the Vantaa Baroque Energy Prize (Finland), 2005; and Gramophone's Best Instrumental Recording Award, for Heinrich Biber's Violin Sonatas, 2002. The latest CD release from Sonnerie "Music for a Young Prince" early versions of the J S Bach Four Orchestral Suites, won a Diapason d'Or in June 2009.

Alongside her work at Juilliard Monica continues as artistic director of both the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and the Portland (Oregon) Baroque Orchestra.