Born in Buenos Aires, Martha Argerich began studying the piano at the age of five with Vincenzo Scaramuzza. Considered a child prodigy, she made her way to Europe, where she studied in London, Vienna and Switzerland with Bruno Seidlhofer, Friedrich Gulda, Nikita Magaloff, Madeleine Lipatti and Stefan Askenase.

In 1957, Argerich won first prize at the Bolzano (Ferruccio Busoni) and Geneva competitions, followed by the Chopin competition in Warsaw in 1965. Since then, her career has gone from strength to strength.

A regular guest of the most prestigious orchestras and festivals in Europe, Japan, the United States and Israel (with Zubin Mehta and Lahav Shani), she also specializes in chamber music. She performs and records regularly with pianist Nelson Freire, cellist Mischa Maisky, violinist Gidon Kremer, as well as Daniel Barenboim. She says ‘I find something very soothing about this sense of concord within an ensemble.’

Her discography is vast, including recordings with EMI/Erato, Sony, Philips, Teldec and Deutsche Grammophon. They include Beethoven’s Concertos nos. 1 and 3, for which she received a Grammy Award, and Mozart’s Concertos nos. 20 and 25, both with Claudio Abbado, a Berlin recital with Daniel Barenboim (Mozart, Schubert, Stravinsky), a CD of live performances in Buenos Aires with Daniel Barenboim of works by Schumann, Debussy and Bartók, and a CD of performances in duo with Itzhak Perlman featuring works by Schumann, Bach and Brahms.

In 1998, she became artistic director of the Beppu Argerich festival in Japan, with a view to fostering young talent.

Martha Argerich has received a number of notable honours: the Officier des Arts et des Lettres in 1996 from the French government, followed by the Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres in 2004, membership of the Santa Cecilia academy in Rome from 1997, Musician of the Year – an accolade from Musical America in 2001 –, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette (for her contribution to the development of musical culture and support of young artists), from the Japanese government, and the prestigious award Praemium Imperiale, from the Emperor of Japan in 2005. She also received the Kennedy Center Honors from Barack Obama in December 2016, and became a Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in 2018, an award bestowed by president Sergio Mattarella.