Pekka Kuusisto

Violin/conductor

Violinist, conductor, and composer Pekka Kuusisto is renowned for his artistic freedom and fresh approach to repertoire. Kuusisto is Artistic Director of Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor & Artistic Co-Director of Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from the 2023/24 season. He is also a Collaborative Partner of San Francisco Symphony, and Artistic Best Friend of Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

In the 2023/24 season, Kuusisto performs with Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester, Helsinki Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and Boston Symphony Orchestra. He appears as guest conductor with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de chambre de Paris. As *Council*, Kuusisto also tours North America and Australia with American singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane.

In the 2022/23 season Kuusisto debuted with Berliner Philharmoniker and performed with Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. He returned to orchestras such as The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Kuusisto made his debuts as a conductor with Philharmonia Orchestra and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. He is also Sinfonieorchester Basel’s Artist-in-Residence with whom he appeared as conductor, soloist, and recitalist.

Kuusisto is an enthusiastic advocate of contemporary music and a gifted improviser and regularly engages with people across the artistic spectrum. Uninhibited by conventional genre boundaries and noted for his innovative programming, recent projects have included collaborations with Hauschka and Kosminen, Dutch neurologist Erik Scherder, pioneer of electronic music Brian Crabtree, eminent jazz-trumpeter Arve Henriksen, juggler Jay Gilligan, accordionist Dermot Dunne and folk artist Sam Amidon.

In 2023, Kuusisto’s releases included an album for BIS on which he features as conductor of Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra performing the first recording of Jaakko Kuusisto’s Symphony, Op.39, and another for Alba as violinist with Malin Broman and Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra performing works by Tarrodi, Byström, Larsson and Zinovjev. In 2022, Kuusisto released his first album as conductor, partnering with Vilde Frang and Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, presenting the Stravinsky and Beethoven Concerti for Warner (for which he is nominated in the concerto category of the 2023 Gramophone Awards) and as soloist performing the world premiere recording of Ades’ *Märchentänze* for violin and orchestra with Nicholas Collon and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for Ondine. With Pentatone, Kuusisto and Norwegian Chamber Orchestra presented the album *First Light* in 2021 featuring the world premiere recording of Nico Muhly’s violin concerto, *Shrink*. Other recent releases include Ades’ Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths* recorded with Aurora and Nicolas Collon for Deutsche Grammophon, Hillborg’s *Bach Materia* and Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos No.3 and No.4 with Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Thomas Dausgaard for BIS and Daniel Bjarnason’s Violin Concerto with Iceland Symphony Orchestra with the composer conducting for *Sono Luminus*.

Pekka Kuusisto plays the Antonio Stradivari Golden Period c.1709 ‘Scotta’ violin, generously loaned by an anonymous patron.