Pekka Kuusisto

Violin/conductor

Violinist, conductor and composer Pekka Kuusisto is renowned for his artistic freedom and fresh approach to repertoire. Widely recognised for his flair in directing ensembles, Kuusisto is Artistic Director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra (from season 21/22), Artistic Partner with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. He is also Artistic Director of the ACO Collective and Artistic Best Friend of Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Highlights of the 2019/20 season include concerto appearances with the NDR Elbphilharmonie, Chicago, NHK, Gothenburg, MDR, Swedish Radio and Finnish Radio symphony orchestras, and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich where he is an artist “In Focus”. Kuusisto returns as violinist-director-conductor to the Tapiola Sinfonietta, and the Norwegian, Swedish and Scottish chamber orchestras. He is the main guest artist for Amsterdam’s annual Prinsengrachtconcert joining the Camerata RCO for the largest classical open-air concert in the Netherlands, and co-curator of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra’s residency at Heidelberger Frühling 2020.

The Finnish violinist is an enthusiastic advocate of contemporary music. This season he will perform the world premiere of Nico Muhly’s violin concerto co-commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Recital Centre, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra with the kind support of the MCO Foundation and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He also performs concertos written for him including Daníel Bjarnason’s Violin Concerto and Anders Hillborg’s Bach Materia. In recent seasons Kuusisto has also premiered new works by Sauli Zinovjev, Philip Venables and Andrea Tarrodi.

Kuusisto is 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.

He has worked with South-Korean artist Aamu Song on the project *REDDRESS* which blurs boundaries between performance and visual art. Together with Samuli Kosminen, Kuusisto co-composed the score to the new animated Moominvalley television series. He has also collaborated with Cannes award winning director Juho Kuosmanen in the Greenpeace campaign film ‘*The Elegy of the Forest*’.

Kuusisto has released several recordings, notably for Ondine and BIS. He has recently recorded Hillborg’s Bach Materia and Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos Nos.3 and 4 with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Thomas Dausgaard for BIS, and Thomas Adès’ violin concerto Concentric Paths with the Aurora Orchestra and Nicholas Collon for release on Deutsche Grammophon. Past releases include Erkki-Sven Tüür’s *Noesis* concerto for violin and orchestra for Ondine and Sebastian Fagerlund’s violin concerto *Darkness in Light* for BIS, both recorded with Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Hannu Lintu.

Other recent season highlights have included concerto appearances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and Philharmonia. He has recently toured Europe with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and the UK and Singapore with the Aurora Orchestra.