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 the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor & Artistic Co-Director: Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from the 2023/24 season. He is also Artistic Partner with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, a Collaborative Partner of the San Francisco Symphony, and Artistic Best Friend of Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

In the 2022/23 season Kuusisto debuted with Berliner Philharmoniker and performed with the 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 makes his debuts as a conductor with the Philharmonia, and Gothenburg symphony orchestras. He is also Sinfonieorchester Basel’s Artist-in-Residence with whom he appears as conductor, soloist, and recitalist.

As a conductor, recent highlights include appearances with Helsinki Philharmonic, Saint Paul Chamber, and European Union Youth orchestras, the Concertgebouworkest, and Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Orchestre de chambre de Paris and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

In the 2021/22 season Kuusisto performed the world premiere of Bryce Dessner’s Violin Concerto with HR Sinfonieorchester, and later with the Philharmonia, San Francisco Symphony, and Orchestre de Paris. He performed the world premiere of Thomas Adès’ Märchentänze for violin and orchestra with the Finnish Radio Symphony orchestra and later with Barcelona, Gothenburg, and Danish Radio symphony orchestras. He was also the Philharmonia Orchestra’s Featured Artist. In recent seasons Kuusisto premiered new works by Sauli Zinovjev, Daníel Bjarnason, Anders Hillborg, Philip Venables and Andrea Tarrodi.

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 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, 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 the 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 Nos.3 and 4 with the 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 a patron through Tarisio.