

# SHUMAN ASSOCIATES INC

**JENNIFER KOH**  
Violin

## **Biography**

Violinist Jennifer Koh is recognized for her intense, commanding performances, delivered with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance. With an impassioned musical curiosity, she is forging an artistic path, choosing works that both inspire and challenge her. She is dedicated to performing the violin repertoire of all eras from traditional to contemporary, believing that the past and present forms a continuum. She is also committed to exploring connections in the works she performs, searching for similarities of voice among diverse composers and associations within the works of a single composer.

In 2009 Ms. Koh debuted “Bach and Beyond,” a series of three recitals that explore the history of the solo violin repertoire from Bach’s Six Sonatas and Partitas to modern day composers including newly commissioned works. The first recital in the series, “Bach and Beyond Part I,” connects Bach’s Partitas Nos. 2 and 3 to works by Ysaÿe, Saariaho, Carter, and Salonen with a video commission by Tal Rosner. The short film, a dynamic interpretation of Salonen’s work, *Lachen Verlernt*, was presented at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival and is included as a visual component on her recording “Rhapsodic Musings: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Works for Solo Violin,” released on the Cedille label in 2009. Since the launch of the series, Ms. Koh has performed “Bach and Beyond Part I” at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York, the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, Oberlin College, Amherst College, UNC Chapel Hill, UC Santa Barbara, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. This season she will perform the program at the Lammermuir Festival in East Lothian Scotland and in Portland, Maine. “Bach and Beyond Part II” will premiere in the 2013 season and will feature a new work for solo violin by Phil Kline and Bartók’s Sonata for solo violin, bookended by Bach’s Sonata No. 1 and Partita No. 1.

In October 2011, Ms. Koh will perform Bach’s complete Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin in a single concert – a feat long considered the ultimate test of a violinist’s command of his/her instrument – presented by Columbia University’s Miller Theatre at the Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2009, to commemorate the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bach’s birth, Ms. Koh performed a series of six concerts devoted to the Sonatas and Partitas, also presented by Miller Theatre. Following her performance of Bach’s Partita in D Minor, Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* wrote, “she gave a deeply expressive account of the Chaconne, dispatching the challenges with such security that you did not notice the sheer virtuosity at work. The ovation was so ardent that Ms. Koh, who had been visibly engrossed in her performance, wiped away tears.”

This season, Ms. Koh launches a new project called “Two x Four,” which celebrates the relationship between teacher and student through music. Named for two violinists and four works, Ms. Koh will be joined by Jamie Laredo, her former teacher at the Curtis Institute of Music, in performances of works for two violins and orchestra including Bach’s Double Concerti for Two Violins, Philip Glass’s *Echorus* for two violins and string orchestra, and newly commissioned pieces by composers Anna Clyne and David Ludwig. Partners in the commissions of the new compositions, including the Curtis Chamber Orchestra, Delaware Symphony, IRIS Orchestra and Vermont Symphony Orchestra, will present the “Two

x Four” program either in its entirety or in parts in coming seasons. In May 2012, Ms. Koh and Mr. Laredo will perform Bach’s Double Concerti and Ludwig’s new work with the Delaware Symphony, the lead partner in Ludwig’s commission.

In the 2011-12 season, Ms. Koh will play a broad range of concertos that reflect the breadth of her musical interests, including Bruch’s Violin Concerto No. 1 with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Christoph Eschenbach, Brahms’s Violin Concerto with the Seattle Symphony led by Ludovic Morlot, Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No. 2 with the Chattanooga Symphony led by Kayoko Dan, and Saariaho’s Violin Concerto with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra led by Alexander Mickelthwate. Additionally, she will perform Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, appear as soloist in Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* with the Saint Louis and Toronto symphony orchestras, of which the latter will be featured on NPR’s “What Makes it Great” with Rob Kapilow, and join pianist Benjamin Hochman in a performance of Mendelssohn’s Concerto for Piano and Violin with the Asheville Symphony. Ms. Koh will also collaborate with pianist Shai Wosner in duo recitals of works by Janáček, Bartók and Brahms in Denver and Kansas City, among other cities. Beyond North America, Ms. Koh will perform Menotti’s Violin Concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in honor of the centennial of the composer’s birth at the Lammermuir Festival, where she is also performing “Bach and Beyond,” and she will perform works by Ravel and Saint-Saëns with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra led by Pavel Kogan and Sibelius’s Violin Concerto with the Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo in Brazil.

This season, Ms. Koh will become the first female to perform the solo violin role of Einstein in a new production of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass’s *Einstein on the Beach*. Never before seen in North America outside of New York City, Ms. Koh will perform Einstein in a preview performance in Ann Arbor with the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan in January 2012, at Toronto’s Luminato Festival in June 2012, and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and for Cal Performances at Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley in the fall of 2012. Presented in celebration of Philip Glass’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, the new production is a historic restaging based on the original 1976 version and the first revival with the original creators since 1992.

Ms. Koh is passionate in her efforts to expand the violin repertoire and has established relationships with many of today’s composers, regularly commissioning and premiering new works. Recently, Ms. Koh became the only violinist other than Lorin Maazel to perform his violin concerto, conducted by Mr. Maazel at the Castleton Festival in Virginia. She also gave the U.S. premiere of Augusta Read Thomas’s Third Violin Concerto “Juggler in Paradise” with the National Symphony led by Christophe Eschenbach, a work she performed in her 2008 PROMS debut with the BBC Symphony conducted by Jiri Belohlavek; she premiered Mark Grey’s *Mugunghwa* with the LA Masterworks Chorale; and a new Missy Mazzoli work, *Dissolve, O My Heart*, commissioned for her by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a concert that also featured Ms. Koh with composer/guitarist Steve Mackey in his own piece, *Four Iconoclast Interludes* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by John Adams. This season, Ms. Koh will again perform Ms. Mazzoli’s *Dissolve, O My Heart* in recital with pianist Reiko Uchida at the Brooklyn Central Library as part of Carnegie Hall’s neighborhood concerts and their American Mavericks celebration. Also on the program are Harrison’s *Grand Duo*, Adams’s *Road Movies*,

and Jennifer Higdon's *String Poetic*, which was commissioned for Ms. Koh in 2006. Ms. Koh recently performed another new work by Ms. Higdon, "The Singing Rooms," a concerto for violin with chorus, with the commissioning orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Christoph Eschenbach, the Minnesota Orchestra led by Osmo Vänskä and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra led by Robert Spano, the latter of which was recorded and released by Telarc in September 2010.

Since the 1994-95 season when she won the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Ms. Koh has been heard with leading orchestras and conductors around the world, including the Atlanta Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, New World Symphony, New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra. Abroad, she has appeared with the BBC London Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony, the Brandenburg Ensemble, Czech Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony, Lahti Symphony, Moscow Radio Symphony, the Singapore Symphony, and the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra where she performed the Russian premiere of Ligeti's Violin Concerto conducted by Valerie Gergiev. A prolific recitalist, Ms. Koh appears frequently at major music centers and festivals including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, Marlboro, Spoleto, Wolf Trap and The Festival International de Lanaudiere in Canada.

A committed educator, Ms. Koh has won high praise for her performances in classrooms around the country under her innovative "Music Messenger" outreach program. Now in its eighth year, the program continues to form an important part of her musical activities. "The majority of children in this country have not been given an opportunity to learn music as a form of self expression," Ms. Koh asserts, "and I want to share the experience of creating and listening to music with them." Her outreach efforts have taken her to classrooms all over the country to perform for thousands of students who have little opportunity to hear classical music in their daily lives. "Music is a visceral experience which can create a positive outlet for emotions and a place for inner expression that is more compelling than time spent in front of the television or at a mall," she adds. Ms. Koh is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Foundation for the Advancement for the Arts, a scholarship program for high school students in the arts.

Ms. Koh brings the same sense of adventure and brilliant musicianship to her recordings as she does to her live performances. In addition to "The Singing Rooms," released by Telarc last year, Ms. Koh has recorded six albums for the Chicago-based Cedille label, including most recently "Rhapsodic Musings: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Works for Solo Violin." Her Grammy-nominated recording "String Poetic" presents the world premiere of Higdon's work for which the album is named, as well as works by John Adams, Lou Harrison and Carl Ruggles, performed with pianist Reiko Uchida. Other Cedille recordings include an acclaimed CD devoted to the complete Schumann violin sonatas; "Portraits," a disc featuring the Szymanowski and Martinu violin concertos recorded with the Grant Park Orchestra under conductor Carlos Kalmar; a concept album titled "Violin Fantasies" comprising fantasies for violin and piano by Schumann, Schoenberg and jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman; and an program centered on Bach's

Chaconne that includes solo chaconnes by turn of the century contemporaries Richard Barth and Max Reger.

Born in Chicago of Korean parents, Ms. Koh began playing the violin by chance, choosing the instrument in a Suzuki-method program only because spaces for cello and piano had been filled. She made her debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 11. Ms. Koh earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Oberlin College and went on to study at the Curtis Institute, where she worked extensively with Jaime Laredo and Felix Galimir. Ms. Koh currently resides in New York City with her husband, pianist Benjamin Hochman.

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