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JENNIFER KOH

Violinist

Violinist **Jennifer Koh** mesmerizes audiences with the sheer intensity of her playing. As a virtuoso whose natural flair is matched with a probing intellect, Ms. Koh is committed to exploring connections between the pieces she plays, searching for similarities of voice between among composers, as well as within the works of a single composer. In the words of Allan Kozinn of *The New York Times*: “Jennifer Koh's violin recitals are consistently pleasing, not only because she is in command of a strong technique and a rich arsenal of tone, but also because she builds her programs thoughtfully, with a sensible balance of contemporary works and standard repertory.” These qualities have most recently been recognized by a Grammy nomination for her recording “String Poetic,” on the Cedille label, which includes a world premiere by Jennifer Higdon as well as music by John Adams, Lou Harrison Carl Ruggles.

Highlights of Ms. Koh’s 2009–2010 season include return guest appearances with the New Jersey Symphony, National Symphony of Washington, D.C., and the New World Symphony, among other ensembles. Abroad, she makes her PROMS debut with the BBC Symphony directed by Jiří Bělohlávek in the UK premiere of Augusta Read Thomas’s violin concerto, “Juggler in Paradise,” and is also heard with the BBC Scottish Orchestra and Dresden Philharmonic. A new concerto written and commissioned for Ms. Koh by Klas Torstenssans will be premiered in Amsterdam with the NIEUW Ensemble in May 2010. To commemorate the 325th anniversary of J.S. Bach’s birth, Ms. Koh launches “Bach and Beyond,” a three-program recital project that will explore the solo violin repertoire from Bach's six Sonatas and Partitas to newly commissioned works for solo violin. In recital, Ms. Koh also plays all six violin sonatas and partitas of Bach at New York’s Miller Theatre. Ms. Koh’s other recital engagements include all-Mozart and Schubert programs with pianist Shai Wosner and a duo program with cellist Anssi Karttunen with performances in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. (Kennedy Center), New York (Miller Theatre and the Baryshnikov Arts Center), San Francisco (Herbst Theatre), Oberlin College (OH), Houston (Da Camera Society), and Minneapolis (Schubert Club).

In November 2008, Ms. Koh made her debut with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra performing the Russian premiere of Ligeti’s Violin Concerto under Maestro Valery Gergiev in St. Petersburg. Other engagements that season included solo appearances with the orchestras of Atlanta, Philadelphia, Minnesota, Houston, and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC. She was heard in recital in Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia; and in chamber music in New York at the 92nd Street Y. Besides performing various contemporary works such as Saariaho’s violin concerto “Gaal theater,” Ms. Koh performed the Brahms, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, and Mozart Concerto No. 4, as well as the Beethoven Triple Concerto.

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 New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, the New World Symphony, and Montreal Symphony. Abroad, she has appeared with the Czech Philharmonic, the BBC London Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of

Wales, Iceland Symphony, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Lahti Symphony, Moscow Radio Symphony, the Brandenburg Ensemble, and the Singapore Symphony.

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, Wolf Trap, Spoleto, and The Festival International de Lanaudiere in Canada.

Ms. Koh records regularly for the Chicago-based Cedille label, and in addition to her recent recording “String Poetic,” she has released an acclaimed CD devoted to the complete Schumann violin sonatas plus earlier discs of music by such varied composers as Bach, Schubert, Szymanowski, Martinů, Schoenberg, and jazz great Ornette Coleman. Also released on Cedille was Ms. Koh’s “Portraits” which features the Szymanowski, and Martinů violin concertos recorded with the Grant Park Orchestra under conductor Carlos Kalmar. Her recording “Violin Fantasies,” for the Cedille label, has been praised for its sense of adventure and brilliant musicianship. In the words of John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune*, “The idea of a concept album built around violin fantasies from various periods by composers with distinctly different voices is so good I’m surprised other fiddlers haven’t ventured it. Jennifer Koh, the young violinist on this new Cedille recording, regards each of the four fantasies (Schubert, Schumann, Schoenberg, Ornette Coleman) as a ‘life’s journey,’ and something of that spirit of high adventure informs her collaboration with pianist Reiko Uchida.” Ms. Koh’s first Cedille recording was an imaginative program centered on Bach’s great Chaconne (with solo chaconnes by turn of the century contemporaries Richard Barth, and Max Reger).

A committed educator, Ms. Koh has also won high praise for her performances in classrooms around the country under her innovative Music Messenger outreach program. Now in its seventh 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,” she asserts, “and I want to share the experience of creating and listening to music with them.” Ms. Koh’s outreach efforts have taken her to classrooms all over the country to perform challenging music – whether it be Bach, Paganini, or Bartók -- 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. She is also 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.

Born in Chicago of Korean parents, Ms. Koh currently resides in New York City. Ms. Koh is a graduate of Oberlin College and an alumna of the Curtis Institute, where she worked extensively with Jaime Laredo and Felix Galimir. Ms. Koh is grateful to her private sponsor for the generous loan of the 1727 Ex Grumiaux Ex General DuPont Stradivari she uses in performance.

For further information please contact Hemsing Associates at 212-772-1132 or visit www.hemsingpr.com