

Elissa Lee Koljonen violinist

Recognized as one of the most celebrated violinists of her generation, **Elissa Lee Koljonen** has thrilled audiences and critics in over one hundred cities throughout the world. Ms. Koljonen initially received international acclaim when she became the first recipient of the prestigious Henryk Szeryng Foundation Award and silver medalist of the Carl Flesch International Violin Competition. Her playing has been lauded by the Helsingin Sanomat (Helsinki) as “sparkling, sensual and personal”. Dan Tucker of the Chicago Tribune writes, “She displayed boundless technique and musicianship”, and reports the Detroit News, “...Koljonen brings to her playing not just assured technique but unflinching purpose and confidence.”

Ms. Koljonen returned to the Philadelphia Orchestra in July 2007 performing the Shostakovich Violin Concerto #1. Other recent and upcoming engagements include her debut in Spain with James Judd and the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, performances with José-Luis Novo and the orchestras in Annapolis and Binghamton, the Delaware Symphony, Reading Symphony, the Kimmel Center’s Summer Solstice, and the Philadelphia premiere of Behzad Ranjbaran’s Violin Concerto with JoAnn Falletta. Ms. Koljonen will open the season in New Haven in 2010. Other engagements include the Boston Pops, Royal Philharmonic and the symphonies of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Oregon, Pittsburgh, Helsinki and Seoul. Ms. Koljonen has collaborated with such noted conductors as Mattias Bamert, James DePriest, Lawrence Foster, Richard Hickox, Neeme Järvi, Louis Lane, Andrew Litton, Eiji Oue and the late Bryden Thompson. Her engagements have taken her to some of the world’s most important venues, among them the Vienna Musikverein, Salzburg Mozarteum, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, London’s Barbican Centre, Seoul Arts Center, Boston’s Symphony Hall, and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia.

As a recitalist, Ms. Koljonen has performed in many musical capitals including London, Amsterdam, Salzburg, Seoul, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York. A 2004 performance in Carnegie Hall was hailed with excellent critical review. Also an avid chamber musician, Ms. Koljonen appears regularly at festivals throughout North America, Europe and Asia. She garnered critical acclaim for her debut at the Queen Elisabeth Hall in London and her appearances with the London Mozart Players and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo in a special concert celebrating the 700th anniversary of the Grimaldi Dynasty.

Ms. Koljonen is a protégé of the great Aaron Rosand at the Curtis Institute of Music. Through his influence, she continues the legacy and tradition of Leopold Auer and his legendary school of violin playing. She resides in Philadelphia with her husband and their two children.

“She is...a violinist of immense presence....This was a knowing audience, so it might have detected her exquisite timing and precision. Or perhaps all it sensed was a violinist of considerable soul.”

The Philadelphia Inquirer

“...a big, bright sound, focused pitch, and a sure sense of style...[she] plays with such conviction and assurance, that when you hear her, especially her Bach, it is difficult to challenge her interpretation.”

New York Concert Review

“The concerto [Shostakovich First Violin Concerto] is supposed to do quite a lot, and in Koljonen’s hands it did it all.”

Broad Street Review (Philadelphia)

Koljonen played with every fiber of her being, giving an intense, powerful performance of this highly emotional showcase for violin.” [Elgar Violin Concerto]

Reading Eagle

“...the sound she can create is beautiful, penetrating and has many nuances...sparkling, sensual and personal.”

Helsingin Sanomat (Helsinki, Finland)

“It was Koljonen who shone, her note-perfect finesse and interpretive flair making this an exemplary performance.”

Strad Magazine

“...not just assured technique but unflinching purpose and confidence.”

The Detroit News

“... plenty of opportunity for the soloist to show off her brilliant finger-work and pungent tone.”

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

“...[she] gave Beethoven’s Violin Concerto a performance of high distinction, probing it impeccably in true classic style...”

Miami Herald

“...Her phrasing was thoughtful, and her interpretation lit up with sparks of her own personality...genuine, unexaggerated warmth of expression.”

The Cincinnati Enquirer