



Leonidas Kavakos

Violin, Conductor

Artiste étoile, Lucerne Festival 2019

Leonidas Kavakos is recognised across the world as a violinist and artist of rare quality, acclaimed for his matchless technique, his captivating artistry and his superb musicianship as well as for the integrity of his playing. He works with the world's greatest orchestras and conductors and plays as recitalist in the world's premier recital halls and festivals. He is an exclusive recording artist with Sony Classical.

The three important mentors in his life have been Stelios Kafantaris, Josef Gingold, and Ferenc Rados, with whom he still works. By the age of 21, Leonidas Kavakos had already won three major competitions: the Sibelius Competition in 1985, and the Paganini and Naumburg competitions in 1988. This success led to him recording the original Sibelius Violin Concerto (1903/4), the first recording of this work in history, and which won Gramophone Concerto of the Year Award in 1991.

Kavakos is now an exclusive recording artist with Sony Classics. His latest recording, to be released worldwide in October 2019 in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth in 2020, is the Beethoven Violin Concerto which he conducted and played with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, coupled with the Beethoven Septet played with members of the orchestra. In the anniversary year, Kavakos will both play and play/conduct the Beethoven Violin Concerto with orchestras across Europe and the USA. He will also play the complete Beethoven Sonata cycle in Shanghai and Guangzhou, Milan and Rome, and a number of single Beethoven recitals in various cities including London's Wigmore Hall, Barcelona, Parma and Copenhagen.

In 2007, for his recording of the complete Beethoven Sonatas with Enrico Pace, Kavakos was named Echo Klassik Instrumentalist of the year. In 2014, Kavakos was awarded Gramophone Artist of the Year.

Further accolades came in 2017 when Kavakos was awarded the prestigious Leonie Sonning Prize – Denmark's highest musical honour, given annually to an internationally recognised composer, conductor, instrumentalist or singer. Previous winners include Daniel Barenboim, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Alfred Brendel, Benjamin Britten, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Yehudi Menuhin, Simon Rattle, Mstislav Rostropovich, Arthur Rubenstein and Dmitri Shostakovich.

August 2019 was a full and rewarding month: after the Verbier Festival where he appeared in recital with Evgeny Kissin and conducted the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra in a programme in which he played Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with Antoine Tamestit, he joined YoYo Ma and Emanuel Ax at the Tanglewood Music Festival for a programme of Beethoven Piano trios, in a duo recital with Ax of Beethoven Sonatas, and in an orchestral concert with the Boston Symphony in which he played and conducted Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Dvořák Symphony No. 7.

Kavakos was also invited as Artiste Etoile at the Lucerne Festival where he appeared with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Mariinsky Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, Vienna Philharmonic with Andes Orozco Estrada, and in recital with Yuja Wang.

In the 2019/20 season, in addition to concerts with major orchestras in Europe and the United States, Kavakos will once again join YoYo Ma and Emanuel Ax for three programmes in Carnegie Hall comprising Beethoven trios and sonatas. He will undertake two Asian tours, first as soloist with the Singapore Symphony and Seoul Philharmonic and in recital in the NCPA Beijing, and then in the spring he performs with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra, prior to playing Beethoven Sonata Cycles in Shanghai and Guangzhou with Enrico Pace.

In recent years, Kavakos has succeeded in building a strong profile as a conductor and has conducted the London Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Gürzenich Orchester, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Filarmonica Teatro La Fenice, and the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. In the forthcoming season he will return to two orchestras where he has developed close ties as both violinist and conductor: L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. This season he also plays/conducts the Czech Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI.

Born and brought up in a musical family in Athens, Kavakos curates an annual violin and chamber-music masterclass in Athens, which attracts violinists and ensembles from all over the world and reflects his deep commitment to the handing on of musical knowledge and traditions. Part of this tradition is the art of violin and bow-making, which Kavakos regards as a great mystery and to this day, an undisclosed secret. He plays the 'Willemotte' Stradivarius violin of 1734 and owns modern violins made by F. Leonhard, S.P. Greiner, E. Haahti and D. Bagué.

2019-2020 season / 767 words. Not to be altered without permission.

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