

Biography

Martin Kuuskmann is currently one of the most exciting and charismatic young soloists around. As an undisputed bassoon virtuoso his repertoire spans from the early Baroque era to jazz and contemporary music. He has appeared as a soloist and a chamber musician with orchestras and festivals throughout Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia and the United States. The New York Times has recently praised Martin Kuuskmann's playing as "dynamic...amazing...gripping...", adding, "Mr. Kuuskmann played stunningly..."

Martin's ambitions to explore the contemporary music and the bassoon itself has led to the premieres of seven new bassoon concertos written especially for him by some of the leading composers of our time such as Estonians Erkki-Sven Tüür, Eino Tamberg, Tõnu Kõrvits and Americans Christopher Theofanidis, Charles Coleman, Gene Pritsker. A major addition to his repertoire is the most recent concerto by American composer David Chesky, recorded with the Symphony Orchestra of the Norrlands Opera in Sweden for Chesky Records, and released in January of 2007.

Martin Kuuskmann's collaboration with the jazz great John Patitucci led to the creation of Caprice No. 1 for bassoon and strings by Patitucci, which he has performed in several venues across the world. His collaboration with composers Daniel Schnyder, Randall Woolf, Gene Pritsker, Robert Martin have produced an array of works from acoustic to amplified and electronically enhanced compositions. His near future projects include a new bassoon concerto by the great Austrian composer HK Gruber, commissioned for Martin by the Tonkünstler Orchestra in Vienna and a concerto for bassoon and violin by Gregor Huebner.

As a dedicated chamber musician Martin is a cofounder of the Taylor-Kuuskmann Project with the legendary bass trombonist David Taylor, an unusual and very active electro-acoustic duo exploring music from all genres. A highly sought after chamber musician, Martin has been a guest at international music festivals in Hamburg, Kuhmo, Bellingham, Gstaad, Umeå, Kristiansand, among many others.

As a founding member of the Grammy nominated Absolute Ensemble Martin Kuuskmann has been a featured soloist on several recordings performing Michael Daugherty's virtuosic and madcap concerto, Dead Elvis, of which he has so far given over 40 performances across the world receiving wide critical acclaim. He is also a member of the New York Lyric Chamber Music Society.

As a recording artist, Martin Kuuskmann's world-music album, The Path of Mantra (Erdenklang Records), blends bassoon improvisations with music and chanting by Tibetan monks. His album, Archipelago (CCn'C Records), with Bill Schimmel on accordion and David Rozenblatt on percussion features music from the medieval era

to rock and jazz. Martin's current projects include records of Mozart and Hummel bassoon concertos with Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and of bassoon concertos written for him by Estonian composers (Tüür, Tamberg, Kõrvits) with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Tallinn, Estonia, Martin Kuuskmann graduated from Tallinn Music High School and received his B.M. at the Manhattan School of Music and M.M. at the Yale University School of Music, both under full tuition scholarships. His major teachers include Stephen Maxym, Frank Morelli, Rufus Olivier, Vernon Read and Ilmar Aasmets. He has and continues to give lectures on career as a musician, as well as conducting master classes from performance to special techniques in major conservatories and universities in North-America and Europe. In 2007 Martin will be joining the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music.