

## Elizabeth Pitcairn '02



Violinist Elizabeth Pitcairn is well known and widely acclaimed for her work as a soloist. She is recognized not only for her superb talent, but also her red violin – the famed "Red Mendelssohn" Stradivarius of 1720, said to have inspired the Academy award-winning film *The Red Violin*; she appears in a documentary accompanying the 10th anniversary DVD release.

Pitcairn remembers fondly her time as a student at USC, though recalls that her mother was hesitant to let her bring her Stradivarius to campus her freshman year – concerned that it may not be safe in a freshman dorm!

Among her favorite memories are a visit to the Kennedy Center in 1991 and performing with Dan Lewis and the USC Symphony there.

While at USC, Pitcairn studied with renowned violin professor Robert Lipsett. She says that the faculty at USC were an inspiration to her, and made USC feel like a second home. Her experience at USC prepared her well for her career.

"I'm very proud to be a USC alumna," she says. "The faculty were very nurturing and have opened many doors for me."

Though she now lives in Los Angeles, with her violin she now toured the world as a prominent soloist, and has used the violin's story to help support students in music. The Little Red Violin Foundation, which she founded, provides scholarships to students wishing to study in summer intensive programs.

She has recently been named the executive director of the Luzerne Chamber Music Festival, in New York, where she has been on the faculty for many years, and where she attended as a young musician.

Pitcairn has been commissioned to perform a number of pieces, including making her Swedish debut in the premiere of the Tommie Haglund Concerto "Hymns to the Night" on the label Phono Suecia, which was nominated for a Swedish Grammy in 2011.

In addition to her thriving music career, she is an avid skier, and appreciates the balance she had doing things outside of music as a child and now as an adult. Now, coming into her own as a performer, mentor, and teacher, she feels good about the path her career is taking.

"I'm glad I grew into the touring through the long road of building my career and contacts, and was able to build a good reputation and name for myself," she says. Happy to have grown into her career at a pace she could handle, she notes, "Little by little you get somewhere in life. I love that now I can be on the road and see the world."