

JOAN KWUON, Violinist

Biography

Violinist, JOAN KWUON is praised by the New York Times for her “fiery, intensely musical and impassioned playing.”

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Ms. Kwuon made her Tanglewood Music Festival debut with the Brahms Violin Concerto at the invitation of Sir André Previn. Following this debut, she was presented in her New York debut in recital at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall. Ms. Kwuon’s virtuosity and radiant stage presence have been recognized by media ranging from *The Today Show*, CBS News and Lifetime Television to National Public Radio.

Highlights of Ms. Kwuon’s recent seasons include the United States tour with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Celebrating Mozart’s 250th birthday, she performed Mozart Violin Concerti conducted by Charles Dutoit and Matthias Bamert. Ms. Kwuon was the featured soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra and André Previn performing the Sibelius Concerto, and with Maestro Previn and the Prometheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall performing Mozart Concerto No. 3. She also appeared with Orchestra Europa with conductor Nayden Todorov, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales with Thierry Fischer, the Bulgarian National Academic Orchestra, the Jyväskylä Sinfonia of Finland with Patrick Gallois; the Moscow State Radio Symphony with Sergei Kondrashev; the NHK Symphony Orchestra with Heinz Wallberg; the Busan Philharmonic; Louisiana Philharmonic and the International Sejong Soloists.

In February 2008, Joan Kwuon appeared in Sonata Recital with pianist André Previn at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. In that same season, Joan Kwuon performed the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the Mozart Concerto No. 1 with the Buffalo Philharmonic, and the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Amarillo Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Kwuon also performed the Brahms and Tchaikovsky Concerti with the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico and Music Director Enrique Batiz on their American tour in Spring 2008.

Highlights of Ms. Kwuon’s 2008-09 season include a re-engagement with the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico playing the Saint Saëns Concerto No. 3 in Mexico. She opens the Mixon Hall Masters Series at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Ravinia Festival Rising Stars Series, the College of Wooster Series and makes her San Francisco recital debut on the prestigious San Francisco Performances Series. Ms. Kwuon plays the Beethoven Concerto at the Opening Gala of the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra with

conductor Heiichiro Ohyama, the Mozart 3rd Concerto with the Cleveland Institute of Music Chamber Orchestra with Carl Topilow and the Sibelius Concerto with the UANL Symphony Orchestra in Monterrey, Mexico with Maestro Felix Carrasco-Cordova. This summer she will make her Chautauqua Festival debut appearing with conductor Gunther Herbig. In addition, she will embark on a recital tour presenting the Sonatas and Partitas of Bach. Her new CD of the Previn and Strauss Violin Sonatas, Mozart's Adagio and Rondo, and Tchaikovsky's Mélodie will soon be released.

As a recitalist, Joan Kwuon she made her Metropolitan Museum debut in 2006 and has been presented by venues including University of Illinois' Krannert Center, Universities of Georgia, Rockefeller, Iowa, George Mason, Wooster College and the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia. She has appeared in Boston on WGBH, on "Around New York" on WNYC, and is a frequent guest on "Live from WFMT" in Chicago. Ms. Kwuon has been engaged as guest artist at numerous international music festivals including Great Mountains Music Festival in Korea, Cité de la Musique and Consonance in France, the Summer Festival in Prague, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and La Jolla's Summerfest. She has enjoyed collaborations with Cho-Liang Lin, Jaime Laredo, Sharon Robinson, the Juilliard String Quartet, Bright Sheng, Heidi Grant Murphy, Vladimir Feltsman, and Tony Bennett.

Ms. Kwuon received advanced degrees from Indiana University, The Juilliard School and the Cleveland Institute of Music. She currently teaches at The Juilliard School, The Bowdoin International Music Festival, and has recently joined the faculty of The Cleveland Institute of Music. Joan Kwuon is grateful to Elliott and Mona Golub for the generous loan of the 1734 'Spagnoletti' Guarneri del Gesù.

www.joankwuon.com

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Critical Acclaim

“...Ms. Kwuon’s fiery, intensely musical and impassioned playing...offered vibrant contrasts between moods and styles.”

“In the Brahms, which began the program, Ms. Kwuon highlighted the gentle, songful qualities of the sonata (which quotes melodies from the composer’s lieder) with a warm, lilting tone and introspective poise. She aptly conveyed the wit and playfulness of the opening of the Prokofiev sonata, originally written for flute and piano but later arranged by the composer for the violinist David Oistrakh. Ms. Kwuon sounded colorfully spiky in the Scherzo and fiery in the concluding Allegro”

“Beethoven’s final sonata for piano and violin, which concluded the evening, is distinguished by its lyrical serenity. Here again, Ms. Kwuon demonstrated her winning musicality, particularly lovely in the heart-stopping Adagio espressivo.”

— Vivien Schwietzer, *The New York Times*

“Kwuon is a musician of impeccable taste and poise who plays the fiddle with utmost elegance. She claims a bow arm that many would envy, and her program Sunday proved that she easily navigates a range of styles.”

“The two Mozart pieces with which they began established Kwuon’s artistic credentials. In the Adagio in E Major, K. 261, and Rondo in C Major, K. 373, her intonation was pure and her sound silvery (like the glittering gown she wore), and she phrased with natural grace. The former work was marked by nuanced tenderness, the latter by lilting animation of materials.”

“Kwuon altered her timbre and phrasing to suit the music’s expressive needs, beautifully negotiating the disembodied harmonics in the slow movement and wild cascades in the finale.”

“ Previn’s Tango, Song and Dance proved a tender and jazzy enchantment in the hands of Kwuon and Robie...”

— Donald Rosenberg, *The Plain Dealer*

“A big, fiery player with a commanding technique, dead-on double stops, and an uncommonly rapid and even trill.”

— Richard Dyer, *The Boston Globe*

“Violinist Joan Kwuon took the composer’s Sonata for Violin and Piano No.3 in D Minor, turned it inside out and delivered a finely articulated and tempestuous interpretation that was almost a call to arms. Watching her perform was a little like watching a ballet dancer: She was perfectly poised and controlled, yet the music had a frantic current of power. Kwuon brought a modern sensibility and old-fashioned technique to bear on the piece, turning out a vibrant, rollicking sound that rocked the house.”

— Jennifer Roolf Laster, *San Antonio Express-News*

"American violinist Joan Kwuon was the impressive soloist in the Sibelius Concerto. She swiftly established and sustained that unique northern atmosphere as she and Previn developed a perfect rapport. Her playing was exciting, often moving, impassioned and poised...a revelation."

— *South Wales Echo*, Cardiff, Wales

"...violinist Joan Kwuon opened the program impressively with Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto. Kwuon played with patient, precise poetry, as though she had spent years contemplating each note. It’s so good when such a well-known piece can feel fresh and completely new."

— John Sutherland, *The Seattle Times*

“ When Joan Kwuon emerged from the wings to play in front of the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra last Tuesday, Beethoven hadn’t given her much to do at first. Concertos go that way sometimes Beethoven’s only violin concerto, in D Major (Opus 61), begins with a long passage for the orchestra alone, and the soloist just has to wait. Most players shift around impatiently, but Kwuon, in a gorgeous turquoise gown, maintained a graceful and confident pose, tilting her head slightly toward different sections as each took the main theme. When she began playing, it was easy to understand why she seemed so calm she has perfect clarity, a sweet, rich tone, and a clean, straightforward attack that Beethoven would have appreciated. This concerto, written at the height of the

composer's heroic middle period, likewise requires performers to balance its competing demands for power and subtlety, since it develops a bold and simple theme into an extremely complex musical statement; Kwuon managed it with ease.

— James Donelan, *Santa Barbara INDEPENDENT*

"She stressed not only brilliance and flourish, but an uncommon penchant for gracefulness in short pieces, as well as intelligent musicianship in masterworks."

— Henry Roth, *The Strad*

"Kwuon's playing style has a bright, youthful edge...emotional and romantic, contemplative and sonorous, rhythmic and virtuosic."

Grace Jean, *The Washington Post*

"The evening's highlight was a beautiful reading by guest artist Joan Kwuon. The truly great performers subordinate themselves to the composer's musical intentions, yet inject flair and beauty, and Kwuon certainly fulfilled these requirements. Beautifully executed."

Robert Rollin, *Youngstown Vindicator*

"Kwuon played with a refined classical style and produced a solid, warm tone. In the cadenzas, her bowing was immaculate, with understated elegance."

— William Thomas Walker, *Classical Voice of North Carolina*

"Joan Kwuon made my day with one of the most satisfying, airborne and enjoyable recitals I have heard this season. Kwuon has first-class technical equipment, spot-on intonation, and a connoisseur's grasp of idiomatic style...mobile lyricism...vibrant bravura...wrenchingly heartfelt."

— Harris Goldsmith

“Kwuon’s virtuosity was self-evident throughout the piece, but she was most impressive in the “Adagio” second movement where her broad, lush tone filled the hall with Mozart’s emotive melodies.”

— Jay Goodwin, *Independent Florida Alligator*

“Kwuon is a very gifted, serious violinist. Her technique is solid and disciplined, her tone pure and vibrant, and her stage presence has a natural, unaffected charm.”

— Edith Eisler, *Strings Magazine*

“American violinist Joan Kwuon gave an elegant, natural and fleeting solo.”

— *New Jersey Star-Ledger*

“It was a night to remember. Violinist Joan Kwuon, radiantly pretty in an auspicious red gown, made a powerful artistic and social statement.”

— Benjamin Ivry, *Strings Magazine*

“The soloist was the brilliant young violin virtuoso Joan Kwuon. Kwuon played brilliantly. Indeed, the whole “Four Seasons” evoked bravos at the end, and many in the audience stood and applauded”

— John Frayne, Champaign-Urbana *The News-Gazette*

“...violinist Joan Kwuon in the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D Major, OP. 35, was one of the best in recent memory. She flies through difficult presto passages with seeming ease and, more important, with precision and clarity. Better than most interpreters of this old warhorse, who use it as a vehicle for virtuoso display, Kwuon realizes the musical intent behind the fireworks that made it seem unplayable when first introduced. The long and devilish cadenza of the first movement sounded like an improvisation by Paganini. It held the attention, not from tension about whether the performer would make it through creditable – that was never in doubt – but from fascination with where the music would go next.”

— Christopher Hyde, *Portland Press Herald*