

# JOAN KWUON, Violinist

## 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*