



Kyung Wha Chung

Violin

A sound of utter resplendency, a brilliantly shining tone right across the instrument. Simply, relentlessly magnificent.

The Sunday Times,
December 2014



Kyung Wha Chung is recognised throughout the world as one of the finest violinists of her generation. A prolific recording artist, her dazzling and probing artistry has made her a much-acclaimed performer throughout her forty-year career. Lauded for her passion, her musicality, and the intense excitement that she brings to her performances, Chung's uniquely expressive interpretations of the violin literature have established her as an artist of the very highest stature. Born in South Korea, Chung first heard the violin at the age of six. Instantly mesmerised by its tone, she was swiftly recognised as a child prodigy, making her concert debut aged nine with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, performing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto. At thirteen, Chung enrolled at The Juilliard School, New York, and began studying with renowned pedagogue Ivan Galamian. She also studied with Paul Mekanowitzky and Joseph Szigeti.

Upon winning the prestigious Edgar Leventritt Competition in 1967, Chung was immediately engaged by major American orchestras – including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic – and also performed at the exclusive White House Gala. She made her sensational European debut in 1970, performing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with Sir André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra, at London's Royal Festival Hall. This concert was met with great critical acclaim and public attention, and – as a result – Chung received offers of concerts throughout the United Kingdom. Subsequently obtaining an exclusive recording contract with Decca/London, Chung's debut album – of the Tchaikovsky and Sibelius concertos with Sir André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra – brought her to international attention, and she continued to perform with the world's greatest orchestras (including the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, among others). Throughout her career, Kyung Wha Chung has enjoyed working alongside the world's finest conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Charles Dutoit, Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Muti, Sir André Previn, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Georg Solti and Klaus Tennstedt. Her chamber music partnerships have included high calibre pianists such as Peter Frankl, Kevin Kenner, Stephen Kovacevich, Radu Lupu, and Krystian Zimerman.

Kyung Wha Chung has recorded numerous award-winning albums, and her extensive discography reflects the impressive breadth of her repertoire. Following her recording contract with Decca/London, in 1988 Chung subsequently signed for a period with EMI Classics, and also released recordings with RCA and Deutsche Grammophon. Winner of two Gramophone Awards (the first, for her Deutsche Grammophon album of Strauss and Respighi sonatas with Krystian Zimerman; the second, for her EMI recording of Bartók's Second Violin Concerto with Sir Simon Rattle), Chung has also received many prizes and top honours – including the Medal of Civil Merit from the South Korean government, and the Ho Am Prize for the Arts in 2011.

Following an injury to her hand, Chung stopped performing in 2005. During this time away from the stage, she found a new calling as a teacher, joining the faculty of her alma mater, The Juilliard School. In addition to this, Kyung Wha Chung is Chair Professor for Music at Ewha University in Seoul, and Charity Ambassador for Better World (an active patron for their Child Rescue Project in Africa). She is also the Artistic Director of the Great Mountains Music Festival & School, based in South Korea.

Five years after her retirement, 2010 marked Chung's triumphant return to the Asian stage. Greeted by enthusiastic audiences and the highest critical acclaim, in 2013 she embarked on an extensive Asian tour of fifteen cities, including Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing. Kyung Wha Chung made her much anticipated return to the European concert platform in December 2014, with a national UK tour culminating in a sensational sell-out recital at the Royal Festival Hall, London. In July 2016 she opened the prestigious Verbier Festival, performing the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Verbier Festival Orchestra and Charles Dutoit. Kyung Wha Chung has signed an exclusive international record contract with Warner Classics, the first release of which – Solo Bach Sonatas & Partitas – will be released in October 2016. This season will also see Chung performing works from the CD at Suntory Hall (January 2017), The Barbican (May 2017) and Carnegie Hall (May 2017).