

BOKYUNG BYUN

Classical Guitarist

A performer, educator, and doctoral candidate, Korean guitarist Bokyung Byun enjoys a reputation as one of the most sought-after artists in the world, sparked by her staggering number of first-place finishes in international competitions and proven by her numerous performances across Asia and North America. Known for her performances that elevate contemporary compositions alongside traditional repertoire, she is praised by *The Guitar* for having “fleet-fingered, delicate precision,” and her performing is celebrated by *Classical Guitar Magazine* as “confident and quite extraordinary.”

A true trailblazer, Ms. Byun holds the distinction of being the first female winner of the prestigious JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition, where Falletta herself described Byun’s performance as “stunning, showcasing her gorgeous tone, immaculate technique, and sophisticated musicianship.” This win is among many wherein Byun excelled in the competitive circuit, including first-prize finishes at the Frances Walton Competition, the Montreal International Classical Guitar Competition, and the Philadelphia Classical Guitar Competition.

Always pushing the envelope forward, Ms. Byun’s concert program often features contemporary music alongside traditional repertoire. As Bokyung herself says, “As much as possible, it’s vital and exciting to audiences for concerts to join the new with the old. For guitar music to continue to grow, I believe that new works must actively be cultivated in programming, and it is my hope that audiences leave my performances with new experiences.”

This skill at navigating both classic repertoire and fresh work has led to a variety of solo experiences with orchestra, including with the Buffalo Philharmonic, West Los Angeles Symphony, New Juilliard Ensemble, The Little Orchestra Society, the Euro-Asian Philharmonic, and the Aspen Music Festival Orchestra. Also known for her versatility, Ms. Byun also regularly performs within the orchestra as ensemble member, including a performance as part of Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect under Sir Simon Rattle.

With her perspectives, techniques, and experience, Ms. Byun actively contributes to the music community in multiple venues. Thus, a bevy of festivals, workshops, and guitar societies look to her as a solo recitalist and for masterclasses, including the Kumho Young Artist Series, Philadelphia Guitar Festival, Toronto Guitar Weekend, Guitar Montréal, Sauble Beach Guitar Festival, Ventura Guitar Society, Knoxville Guitar Society, and Daejeon Guitar Festival, among others. As a pedagogue, she has served three years as instructor of Chamber Music at the Aspen Music Festival and through The Juilliard School, served as Guitar Instructor and Ensemble Director of the school’s Music Advancement Program, and served primary school students in partnership with the City College of the Arts and George Jackson Academy.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Bokyung Byun began playing guitar at the age of six. At eleven, she took the stage for her first full-length solo recital, leading to an early start in her teen years performing numerous concert tours around Korea, to enthusiastic response, including millions of views on YouTube. By her teen years, she had gained national attention for first-prize finishes in three renowned competitions: the Korea Guitar Association, the Music Association of Korea, and the Guitar Foundation of America International Youth Competition.

Byun soon moved to the United States, where she briefly studied in Los Angeles before moving to New York City, where she entered The Juilliard School at the age of sixteen. She is now pursuing a fully-funded doctoral degree at the University of Southern California as the recipient of the prestigious International Artist Fellowship, and holds Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School. She is grateful to the masterful instruction of her pedagogues, who include Scott Tennant, William Kanengiser, Chen Zhi, Tae-soo Kim, and Sharon Isbin.

Please visit www.bokyungbyun.com for more information.