

Joyce Yang Biography

Blessed with “poetic and sensitive pianism” (Washington Post) and a “wondrous sense of color” (San Francisco Classical Voice), Grammy-nominated pianist Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism, and interpretive sensitivity. She first came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The youngest contestant at 19 years old, she took home two additional awards: Best Performance of Chamber Music (with the Takács Quartet), and Best Performance of a New Work. In 2006 Yang made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall along with the orchestra’s tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea. Yang’s subsequent appearances with the New York Philharmonic have included opening night of the 2008 Leonard Bernstein Festival – an appearance made at the request of Maazel in his final season as music director. The New York Times pronounced her performance in Bernstein’s *The Age of Anxiety* a “knockout.”

Over the last two decades, Yang has blossomed into an “astonishing artist” (Neue Zürcher Zeitung), showcasing her colorful musical personality in solo recitals and collaborations with the world’s top orchestras and chamber musicians through more than 1,000 debuts and re-engagements. She received the 2010 Avery Fisher Career Grant and earned her first Grammy nomination (Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance) for her recording of Franck, Kurtág, Previn & Schumann with violinist Augustin Hadelich (“One can only sit in misty-eyed amazement at their insightful flair and spontaneity.” – *The Strad*).

Other notable orchestral engagements have included the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Hong Kong Philharmonic, the BBC Philharmonic, as well as the Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne, and New Zealand symphony orchestras. She was also featured in a five-year Rachmaninoff concerto cycle with Edo de Waart and the Milwaukee Symphony, to which she brought “an enormous palette of colors, and tremendous emotional depth” (Milwaukee Sentinel Journal).

In solo recitals, Yang’s innovative program has been praised as “extraordinary” and “kaleidoscopic” (Los Angeles Times). She has performed at New York City’s Lincoln Center

and Metropolitan Museum, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Chicago's Symphony Hall, Zurich's Tonhalle, and all throughout Australia on a recital tour presented by Musica Viva.

As an avid chamber musician, Yang has collaborated with the Takács Quartet for Dvořák – part of Lincoln Center's Great Performers series – and Schubert's "Trout" Quintet with members of the Emerson String Quartet at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. Yang has fostered an enduring partnership with the Alexander String Quartet and together released three celebrated recordings under Foghorn Classics.

Yang has released 10 discography, which includes celebrated solo discs (Collage and Wild Dreams, Avie Records), where she "demonstrated impressive gifts" (New York Times). Yang also released a live-performance recording of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with Denmark's Odense Symphony Orchestra (Bridge Records), which International Record Review called "hugely enjoyable, beautifully shaped ... a performance that marks her out as an enormous talent." As a champion of new music, Yang has premiered and recorded numerous pieces by living composers including piano concerti by Michael Torke, Jonathan Leshnoff, and Reinaldo Moya.

In recent years, Yang has focused on promoting creative ways to introduce classical music to new audiences. She served as the Guest Artistic Director for the Laguna Beach Music Festival in California, curating concerts that explore the "art-inspires-art" concept – highlighting the relationship between music and dance while simultaneously curating outreach activities to young students. Yang's collaboration with the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet of Half/Cut/Split – a "witty, brilliant exploration of Robert Schumann's Carnival" (The Santa Fe New Mexican) choreographed by Jorma Elo – was a marriage between music and dance to illuminate the ingenuity of Schumann's musical language. The group toured nationwide, including five performances at the Joyce Theater in New York.

In the summer of 2026, Yang made a celebrated return to the Aspen Music Festival, Baltimore Symphony, São Paulo Symphony, and San Diego Symphony. In the 2026/2027 season, as one of the most in-demand soloists today, Yang continues to present her wide range of repertoire all over the U.S. and makes her anticipated return to Australia,

performing with the Sydney Symphony (Sydney Opera House), Queensland Symphony, and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Yang received her first piano lesson from her aunt at the age of four. She quickly took to the instrument, which she received as a birthday present. Over the next few years won several national piano competitions in her native country. By the age of ten, she had entered the School of Music at the Korea National University of Arts, and went on to make a number of concerto and recital appearances in Seoul and Daejeon. In 1997, Yang moved to the United States to begin studies at the pre-college division of the Juilliard School with Yoheved Kaplinsky. After winning the Philadelphia Orchestra's Greenfield Student Competition, she performed Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto with that orchestra at just twelve years old. She graduated from Juilliard with special honor as the recipient of the school's 2010 Arthur Rubinstein Prize, and in 2011 she won its 30th Annual William A. Petschek Piano Recital Award. She is a Steinway artist.