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Pianist Min Kwon's New Album "America/Beautiful"

The album assembles seventy-six variations on "America the Beautiful" for solo piano

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Pianist **Min Kwon** has released her new album *America/Beautiful* on the **Delos** label.

The five-volume brings together contributions from seventy-six composers inspired by the patriotic song *America the Beautiful*.

In *America/Beautiful*, Kwon hopes to celebrate the unique mélange of voices that characterizes American cultural identity. The resulting seventy-six solo piano works come from a broad range of musical styles and vocabularies, ultimately forming a cohesive whole that reflects the diversity and strength of American society.

"I wanted to create something meaningful and galvanizing at a time when America did not feel beautiful to many," Kwon tells The Violin Channel. "At the heart of the project were three goals. First, I wanted to bring together composers of



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different backgrounds and beliefs for a common purpose: to reflect on and wrestle with the idea of beauty in this country. Second, I wanted to offer listeners something meaningful and moving, that offers a kind of time stamp of a historically crucial moment in America. And finally, I wanted to leave something lasting for other pianists, a body of work that they could continue to share for years to come, representing what 'American' music can be."



With the commissioning project, Kwon drew inspiration from the Diabelli Variations, a set of fifty composer's variations on a theme by Anton Diabelli. "I wanted to create an American Diabelli Variations, which is famous among pianists, and one that historically had fifty composers participating in it 200 years ago in Vienna, the classical center at the time. Today, America is that center," she says.

"I hope listeners experience this as new music for

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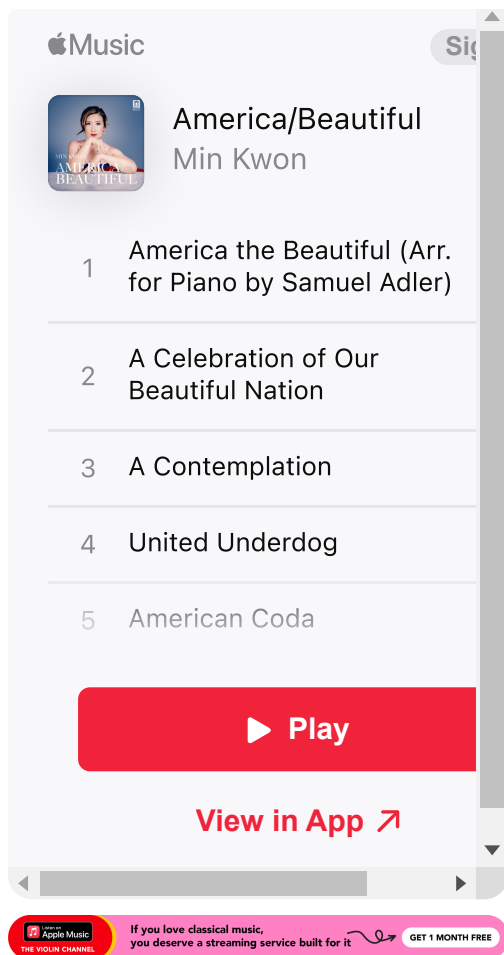
Americans, about Americans, created by Americans during a crucial and often contentious time in our history," Kwon continues. "More than anything, I hope it offers a space for reflection and for deep listening—not only to the music, but to the many perspectives and identities it represents. The album is a portrait of our country's rich and complex cultural tapestry in sound. If listeners walk away with a renewed sense of curiosity, empathy, and even a pride in that complexity and richness, I think my hard work over the past several years was worth it."

In the album's liner notes, clarinetist and curator Graeme Steele Johnson described *America/Beautiful* as a "project [that] embraces America's diverse cultural heritage" and spotlights underrepresented musical voices as "integral fibers of the American musical tapestry."

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Korean-born American pianist Min Kwon has performed as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician in over sixty countries, including appearances with the Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras, the Aspen Festival Orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica Venezuela, the Wiener Residenz Orchester, and others. Her album *Schubert and Liszt*, a collaboration with violinist Yoon Kwon, released by MSR Classics, received a **Grammy Award**.



Also an educator, Kwon is the founder of the **Center for Musical Excellence**, a non-profit organization that has awarded \$120,000 in grants to support and mentor gifted young musicians internationally. Since 2002, she has served on the faculty of the **Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts**.

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