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LOCAL NEWS

Rutgers Professor Commissions 76 Composers for 'America the Beautiful' Project

Min Kwon teaches music at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. She asked 76 composers to create new versions of "America the Beautiful" for her America/Beautiful project.

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MIN KWON, A MUSIC PROFESSOR AT THE MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, IS THE SECOND RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK LAUREATE.

IMAGE COURTESY RUTGERS UNIVERSITY NEWARK

Min Kwon teaches music at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. She asked 76 composers to create new versions of "America the Beautiful" [for her America/Beautiful project](#). The concert pianist holds the position of second Rutgers University-New Brunswick Laureate.

Kwon began building this work during the COVID-19 pandemic. She wanted to spark new musical creation and give people hope. She plays the versions on solo piano. Some shows add visual displays of American scenery and dances by performers.

Have you seen this?



"We were all isolated as Americans and experiencing a true crisis together," said Kwon, [according to a Rutgers press release](#). "As an artist, my job is to connect people and bring people together and encourage people to express themselves in a safe space."

The roster contains more than a dozen Pulitzer Prize winners. It also features multiple GRAMMY winners and MacArthur Fellows. Stewart Copeland joined in — he used to drum for the Police and now writes operas and film scores. Two Rutgers alumni contributed as well: Andrew Bambridge, who plays percussion and composes, and Patricio Molina, a pianist born in Chile who studied under Kwon.

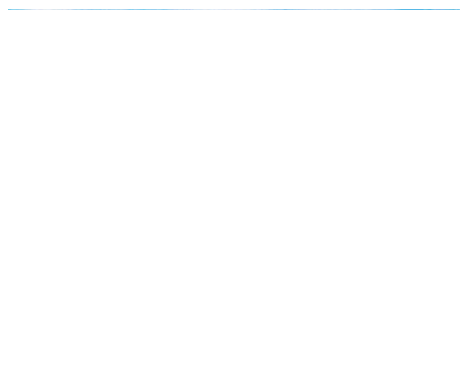
"They are really America's who's who of living contemporary composers," said Kwon, noting that the composers represent the heritage of 33 different countries.

Kwon has taught at the institution for almost 24 years. She has performed across the nation and around the world. She released 12 CDs, which includes a five-CD set of *America/Beautiful* in early May on Delos Productions/Outhere Music.

The Rutgers-New Brunswick Laureate program was established in 2025. It supports faculty in the arts and humanities. Her Laureate project, titled *America/Beautiful – Reimagining our Nation, Its Democracy and Civic Engagement through the Arts*, aims to expand the work.

"Professor Kwon's proposal stood out for its compelling integration of the arts and civic dialogue, reflecting the kind of interdisciplinary collaboration we seek to foster at Rutgers-New Brunswick," said Jason Geary, provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs.

The plan links dance, music, literature, history, film, and women's gender studies departments. Shows will take place during film screenings, photography exhibits, poetry readings, and panel talks on campus and at New Brunswick venues.



Kwon performs *America/Beautiful 250* at the Green-Wood Cemetery Catacombs in Brooklyn. She plays twice nightly from Thursday through Saturday as part of the *Death of Classical* concert series.