

ESTHER YOO, VIOLIN

Praised for her remarkable tone, “exquisite sensitivity, and a palpable emotional rigour” (*Bachtrack*), **Esther Yoo** is unquestionably one of the world’s leading violinists. Her artistry has been recognized worldwide for her deep sense of “freedom, invention and glorious sound” (*The Arts Desk*), with *The Strad* hailing her as “the model of a violin soloist in the modern age.”

Uniquely tri-cultural among classical soloists, Esther was born in the United States, educated in Belgium, Germany, and the U.K., and proudly embraces her Korean heritage. This international background informs the versatility and breadth of expression that define her as one of the most articulate and gifted communicators.

Recent seasons have featured performances with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Toronto Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Orchestre National de Lille, Orquesta Sinfónica RTVE, Melbourne Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic and KBS Symphony Orchestra, as well as at venues and festivals such as Het Concertgebouw, Lincoln Center, Royal Albert Hall, Seoul Arts Center, Aspen Music Festival, La Folle Journée, Prague Spring Festival and the BBC Proms. Her collaborations with leading conductors include Gustavo Dudamel, Marin Alsop, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Jaap van Zweden, Tugan Sokhiev, Lahav Shani, Vasily Petrenko, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Dalia Stasevska, Myung-Whun Chung, and Karina Canellakis.

A prolific recording artist, Esther has released six critically acclaimed recordings on *Deutsche Grammophon* featuring the concertos of Sibelius, Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, Bruch, and Barber. She is also featured prominently on the soundtrack of the internationally released film *On Chesil Beach* and is a guest artist on pianist Chad Lawson’s album *breathe*, both released on Decca. Her 2026 album, *Love Symposium*, is Esther’s most personal to date and reflects on love in all its guises. Recorded with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Long Yu, the album centers on Leonard Bernstein’s *Serenade after Plato’s Symposium* and includes works by Elgar, Mahler, and Vaughan Williams.

An active chamber musician and recitalist, Esther is a founding member of the Z.E.N. Trio alongside pianist Zee Zee and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan, with whom she has toured internationally and released two albums on *Deutsche Grammophon*. Her other collaborators include Yuja Wang, Haochen Zhang, Yekwon Sunwoo, JaeHong Park, Timothy Ridout, Matthew Lipman, Peter Gregson, Lise Berthaud, Henri Demarquette, Jean-Frédéric Neuburger and principal musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Shanghai Symphony Orchestras.

Esther passionately champions new music and has premiered several works throughout her career. In addition to the recent premieres of Raymond Yiu’s Violin Concerto, she has also

premiered pieces by Xiaogang Ye, Michael Fine, Andrei Golovin, Matt Laing, and Iain Farrington, whom she commissioned to write two arrangements for her album *Love Symposium*.

Esther began playing the violin at the age of four and made her concerto debut at eight. At sixteen, she became the youngest prize-winner of the International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition and, shortly thereafter, one of the youngest ever prize-winners of the Queen Elisabeth Competition. Her career quickly flourished, highlighted by distinctions including BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, Classic FM's "Top 30 Artists under 30," the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's inaugural Artist-in-Residence, and "20 Artists to Watch" by WQXR.

In 2025, Esther joined the violin faculty at the Royal College of Music. An advocate for mental health, she is a certified Mental Health First Aider, committed to supporting young performers as they navigate the challenges of becoming professional musicians. A natural storyteller both on and off stage, she is a frequent contributor to BBC Radio 3, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone*, *The Arts Desk*, and *The Strad* and is passionate about exploring how artists think, work and create. Through writing, broadcasting, podcasts, interviews and conversations with fellow artists, she seeks to deepen the connection between classical music and its diverse global audience.

September 2026 (632 words)