

Sojung Lee Hong, D.M.A.

Professor of Music

Director of the Master of Arts in Community Music

Demoss Center for Worship in the Performing Arts

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An active pianist, dedicated educator, and ardent advocator of community outreach in music, Sojung Lee Hong has performed extensively in the Chicagoland area and has taught at summer music festivals and workshops in South Korea since her appointment as music faculty at Judson University in Elgin, Illinois in 1998. With her enthusiastic servant leadership, she has organized numerous community concerts, from scholarship fundraisers for schools and alumni associations, to benefit concerts for charity organizations and churches. As a quintessential artist-teacher, Hong has presented multiple lecture-recitals for conferences of the College Music Society and the Illinois Music Teachers Association. Her former students have secured teaching positions at institutions in the U.S., South Korea, China, and Myanmar. In addition to appearing on such prestigious concert stages as the Seoul Arts Center and the Hoam Arts Center, she has brought the joy of music to more than a dozen senior communities and libraries in the suburbs of Chicago with the late violinist Oliver Colbentson, the former concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and professor at Meistersinger Conservatory in Germany. As the founding director of the Performance Certificate program at Judson University, for many years she has organized annual scholarship fundraising concerts featuring exceptionally talented musicians to support gifted music students from Korea. These successful fundraising concerts, known as the “Open Future Concerts,” have been held at prominent venues in Chicago such as the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, the Prairie Center for the Arts, and the Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall at Northwestern University, and are known for their exceptional quality and noble cause. In 2017, the YWCA Elgin honored her with the Margaret Hillis Award for the Arts, given to an individual who has advanced the arts in the communities of the northwest suburbs of Chicago.

For the Korean American community, Hong started a monthly community concert series, entitled “Mozart in the Morning” at the Korean Cultural Center of Chicago,

which continued virtually during the pandemic. One of the virtual concerts, “Yun Dong-Ju’s Poems in Song” brought enthusiastic responses from YouTube channel watchers. She has performed Korean-themed piano compositions at diverse venues in seven Midwestern states, in collaboration with the Korean Performing Arts Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Korean Dance Company under the full sponsorship of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Chicago. In her tireless effort to blend two cultures, she released a solo album, “From East to West: Twenty-four Piano Solos Based on Korean Folk Songs,” through a grant awarded by the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Hong’s Christian music albums released in the past decade include “Whispers from Heaven,” “Tranquility,” “Christmas Kaleidoscope,” and “Garden of Grace.” These well-received CDs include not only piano performances of classical repertoire and favorite hymns, but also a variety of collaborative selections featuring cello, voice, and piano ensemble.

Hong’s musical gifts and influence have spanned the globe. She has given a concert and church music workshop at Life University in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, as well as in her native South Korea. With the support of Music from Above, a Christian mission organization based in New York, she performed at the Izamal Community Center, Teatro Mérida in Mexico, Manuel Seoane Corrales School (Lima), and the Civic Convention Center (Cusco) in Peru in collaboration with other Christian musicians. Attendees at the concert, which was held in the poorest suburb of Lima, experienced live classical music for the first time in their lives. She also has extensive experience as a church musician/conductor and received intensive training at the Westminster Conducting Institute under the tutelage of Sabine Horstman, a renowned community choir conductor in Germany. Hong served as a choir conductor at West Alliance Church (Warrenville, IL) for fifteen years and currently serves as a pianist/organist at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (Winfield, IL).

Hong received the President’s Award at graduation from Seoul National University (B.M. and M.M.) and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance and literature at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign. Her piano teacher at the

UIUC was Prof. Ian Hobson, and her chamber music coaches were Peter Schaffer (violin), Suren Bagratuni (cello), and Eric Dalheim (vocal accompanying). Currently, she is Professor of Music at Judson University. She and her husband reside in a western suburb of Chicago, and have two adult children who live in New York City.