Jennifer Koh's Ambitious Commissioning Project Bears Fruit
By Taylor Grant, Musical America
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In late March, acclaimed violinist Jennifer Koh inaugurated Alone Together, an online commissioning project. With support from Koh's artist-driven nonprofit ARCO Collaborative, 21 composers, most of whom occupy salaried positions, will donate a new 30-second micro-work for solo violin. At the same time, they will recommend a freelance composer to write their own 30-second solo violin work for a commission fee of $500 (the standard commission rate is $1,000 per minute).

When asked about her motivation, Koh told The Washington Post, "I thought, I could spend this period of time being scared, curled up in a ball in the corner of the apartment….Or I could spend this time and try to help as many people as I can."

"Of course, there are things like relief funds," she continued. "But for me I wanted to offer . . . these younger composers a space to do what they love to do and what they've dedicated their lives to doing."

Koh is donating her premiere performances and, in the future, will perform works from Alone Together as often as possible to ensure the composers receive visibility and royalty payments.

The first of the performances kicked off on Saturday, April 4 via Instagram TV (@jenniferkohmusic) and Facebook Live (/jenniferkohviolin). Performances are subsequently available on demand via YouTube (/jenniferkohviolin).

The series continues each week on Saturday evening, and will be accompanied by related content—insights from each composer, behind-the-scenes rehearsal footage, and each musical score posted on social media—throughout the week.

The next scheduled performance, on April 18, features: Urman, by Adelía Faizullina; There had been signs, surely, by Nina Young; Quiet City, by Inti Figgis-Vizueta; The River In My Mind, by Jen Shyu; Nocturno Lamarque, by Tomás Gueglio Saccone; and Springs Eternal, by Anthony Cheung. A complete list of the pairings of composers can be found here.

Jennifer Koh was Musical America's 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year.

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