



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Meet the Entrepreneur: Jeeyoon Kim

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Hi! I'm pianist Jeeyoon Kim. My mission as a pianist is to create a bridge between me as a performer and the audiences so this beautiful and magical power of classical music is more accessible to the 21st-century audience.

In my concert, there is always a microphone on stage as I guide what each piece means to me personally, the emotions and images that come to my mind, and my life stories related to the piece.

I have collaborated with visual artists to create a multimedia concert. In my most recent concert project called 시음 /si-úm/, which means "poetry in music" in Korean, I collaborated with various poets and black-and-white film photographer Allen T. Brown to create a unique concert presentation by matching one poem and photograph per piece of music.

From the core mission of being a classical pianist, my career is composed of many other aspects that include teaching piano in my studio in San Diego, online courses, being a host of my podcast called "Journey through Classical Piano," and as an author I published two books in America and Korea, titled *Whenever You're Ready* and *Millions of Dreams*. I have speaking engagements, coaching other musicians to help them to find their paths, creating online content, marketing, presenting concerts, representing myself as an artist from my own agency called Namus Classics, recording albums, and creating other concert projects.



I find that having to go back to master's degree in piano pedagogy at Butler University after getting DMA in piano performance at Indiana University gave me a unique perspective on *everything* I do, especially in performances and teaching. I was able to learn how to distill more complicated ideas to be more tangible and accessible from an educator's perspective. I found that teaching 5-year-olds a concept of beautiful musical phrasing might be harder than advanced piano majors.

From crowdfunding my first album *10 More Minutes* through Kickstarter seven years ago and presenting my own concerts in a bigger scale hall (like about 600 people), I've learned the general public needs a lot more context in classical performances, and I've learned how to share myself authentically yet professionally. After all, those general audiences are not piano majors who know Beethoven sonatas by heart by opus numbers!

Also, by creating my own content such as podcasting, YouTube channel, publishing books, writing blogs, newsletters, I found that there are many other ways to connect with people, creatively, other than giving a live performance in person, with the same mission that I have as a pianist.

If you are someone who has a mindset of becoming an entrepreneurial performer, there are three key steps that I have learned that might be helpful for you.

First, don't wait for opportunities to come to you, but create your own. No one will knock on your practice room door and beg to fulfill your dreams. The more proactive you are, the better the chances that you will become lucky. After all, you create your own luck.

Second, know your "why." Just like a company, your brand—which is yourself—needs a mission statement about what you believe in and how you hope to serve others. Imagine you have everything you hope for, including money, time, and energy, right now, what would you do to express yourself and serve others? I asked myself in the past this question of "What would I do if there's no possibility of failure?" I've learned to change that question into "What is worthy of doing even if I fail?"

Lastly, build your own community. Think about the word “connection” in everything you do. Create your community using various methods, such as social media, newsletters, online content, in-person concerts, friends and family, colleagues, professional contacts, fans— whoever believes in what you do. Then nurture that connection with genuine care and love, regularly and continuously.

We need more artists in this world, like you, the way you are. No matter what you do, there is no one exactly like you. Put yourself into the world and help others to receive what you could offer to the world. Just be a unique messenger through how you see the world.

Thank you!

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