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Chee-Yun Kim

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It is always difficult to appraise young concert artists at the beginning of their careers. The emotional maturity that comes with age is not always apparent in the music-making, even though the technical assurance may be there. Such was the case with 17-year-old violinist Chee-Yun Kim in her recital Saturday night at the Terrace Theater. Although her playing was for the most part precise, it was not always musically insightful.

Admittedly, Beethoven's Sonata No. 4 for Violin and Piano, Op. 23, with its many attitude changes, daunts even the most mature veterans, but Kim seemed to miss some of the inner conflicts, and her playing only came alive in the more assertive virtuoso passages. Her aggressive, energetic style was more appropriate for the grand lushness of the Sonata No. 1 in A Minor by Faure'. Despite the fact that the soulful melancholy of the second movement eluded her, she was delightfully nimble in the third and fourth movements.

Kim hit her stride with a performance of the demanding Sonata No. 2 by Charles Ives that was a tour de force. She did not bring to light the familiar tune, nor was her tongue in her cheek for the "barnyard" movement. But her command of the part in this and two concert pieces by Tchaikovsky earned top honors. Pianist Stephen Lazarus accompanied brilliantly throughout.