

# Maturity fits well on violinist

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Violinist Alyssa Park isn't going to color her hair green.

Bronze medalist at the International Tchaikovsky Competition when she was 16 - the youngest medalist in its history - Ms. Park, now 26, is making the transition from prodigy to mature artist.

"People say I look like I'm 16, but I'm sort of over the 16-year-old talent thing," she said in a phone interview from her Los Angeles apartment.

A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music who grew up in Lexington, Ky., Ms. Park returns to the tri-state this weekend to perform Philip Glass' Violin Concerto with the Northern Kentucky Symphony.

She says she isn't interested in gimmicks.

"I'm a Midwest person. I mean, there are certain things I wasn't interested in doing throughout my career. I didn't have a sort of strange gimmick to go along with myself and my personality. I'm hoping who I am is enough."

Born into a family of doctors, Ms. Park began commuting to Cincinnati at 8 to study with Kurt Sassmannshaus of CCM's Starling String Program. In 1995, she performed with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on its tour of Europe.

Until recently, Ms. Park spent several months a year in Europe, with only weekend dates in the U.S. She has earned an enviable

reputation in Europe, winning plaudits from critics there.

Last year, however, she began teaching and working on a doctorate at the University of California at Los Angeles.

"It's a three-year program, but I'm squeezing it into two," she said. "It's been a lot of Internet and e-mail. I'm frantically putting my dissertation together."

Ms. Park, whose fiancé lives in Cincinnati, is keeping all options open. Her stint at UCLA has given her an outlook on teaching, and she is also looking at opportunities to perform chamber music.

She says her return to Cincinnati will be a reunion of sorts, with a friend getting married, UC's homecoming and another friend introducing his rock band on Main Street.

*The Northern Kentucky Symphony concerts featuring Alyssa Park are at 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday in NKU's Greaves Hall (\$10-\$15, \$7 seniors/students; 606-431-6216).*

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