

Classical Music in Review

By Allan Kozinn
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Chie Sato Roden Pianist Weill Recital Hall

Chie Sato Roden, a Japanese pianist who specializes in 20th-century American and Japanese works, proved an energetic, compelling advocate for her trans-Pacific repertory on Sunday afternoon. She was at her most persuasive in Frederic Rzewski's "North American Ballads," a set of pointed, densely textured variations on American folk songs in which she showed a firm command of the American musical vernacular. She played the central section of "Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues" with a perfectly bluesy elasticity, and in the opening section, she delivered Mr. Rzewski's evocation of the mill's industrial din with unabashed brutality.

Yoko Kurimoto's "Imitation," in its world premiere, played with the contrasts between the piano and the koto. Its language was angular but never harsh, and there was some arresting cat-and-mouse interaction between the instruments. Reiko Kamata gamely met the composer's demand for unusual timbres that were sometimes gained by striking or scratching the koto's strings.

Toshiya Sukegawa's "Landscape," an attractive, tonal work, benefited from a firm, athletic performance. And Ms. Roden made reasonable cases for Shigenobu Nakamura's "White," a piece of New Age ear candy tempered with strains of Debussian ambiguity, and David Del Tredici's "Virtuoso Alice," a sometimes Chopinesque, sometimes Brahmsian fantasy on a theme from his "Final Alice." ALLAN KOZINN

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