

# NEW YORK

## CONCERT REVIEW INC.

### Reviews

**Young-Ah Tak**, piano  
Yamaha Piano Salon  
May 2, 2007

Prizewinning pianist Young-Ah Tak has some impressive credentials behind her, but judging by an outstanding recital recently, one expects her future to be even brighter. Having studied with an illustrious group of teachers including Russell Sherman (New England Conservatory), Martin Canin (Juilliard), and Leon Fleisher (Peabody), she naturally possesses a high-gloss polish; what is most striking, though, is her winning combination of passion, imagination, and integrity. Young pianists tend to blend together in a blitz of credentials and press quotes, but in this case the kudos seem justified.

Haydn's Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 50, was played with excellent precision and detail. While there is great thoughtfulness in her approach (not surprisingly, as she handles the rigors of doctoral work at Peabody), her fidelity to the score was never dryly academic, but always enlivened by a seasoned performer's sense of timing and proportion. The famous "open pedal" was perfectly delivered (so not to resemble accidental over-pedaling). In her Scarlatti-like lightness, she occasionally underplayed fortes that give this work robustness; she was perhaps being cautious, though, as the piano was quite bright. In any case, it was a marvelous performance.

Debussy's Images, Book I, showed Ms. Tak to be skilled in



color and nuance in a totally different vein. *Reflets dans l'eau* positively shimmered. *Hommage a Rameau* was stately and measured, and *Mouvement*, wonderfully light.

Still more brilliant was Judith Zaimont's *Wizards* (2003), given a magical, virtuosic account. Ms. Tak, who first recorded the work, spoke briefly about it, as one wishes more artists would do. Along with a lovely but unassuming stage presence, Tak's communicativeness will help in expanding the audience for new music. One looks forward to hearing more new works from her, as she interpreted this one with intelligence and hair-raising intensity. Brava!

Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9 was the richly satisfying second half. *Florestan*, *Eusebius*, and the entire cast of characters came to life. Noteworthy was special attention to inner lines in the *Valse Noble's* repeat; Ms. Tak may find more such spots as she lives with the work. One small reservation was some heaviness in *Coquette*. Extreme dynamics are marked, but unless one is careful this coquette is batting ten-pound lashes! The rest of the Schumann was superb, prompting an encore of Liszt's *Sonnetto del Petrarca* No. 104.

—Rorianne Schrade