



Artist Management • Record Label

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MISUZU TANAKA • Pianist

Quotes/Reviews

Quotes

"The exceptionally high technical level [of Misuzu Tanaka] was as convincing in Bach as it was in the Beethoven, likewise in the tempestuous Polonaise, Op. 89."

Kristina Pott,
General-Anzeiger Bonn (Germany)

"[Misuzu Tanaka] performed with very high precision and enthusiasm."

Carolin Schneider
Deutsche Welle (Germany)

"A very mature, sure performer . . . Misuzu Tanaka is definitely a Distinguished Artist we'd like to hear again."

Richard Lynde
Peninsula Reviews (Santa Cruz, CA)

Testimonials

"Ms. Tanaka's recital was another fine offering by a most worthy international pianist . . . Beethoven's Sonata Op. 30 (of the composer's 32) is a 25-minute work harking back to Beethoven's interest in the music of J.S. Bach . . . played expertly with passion, fire, and loving finesse . . . Ms. Tanaka received a standing ovation twice, and returned to play another showpiece"

Heidi Bloch
Artistic Director, Sundays at Four Concert Series. Smithfield, Virginia

"Ms. Tanaka is an absolutely amazing artist who combines her phenomenal technical skills with her magnificent heart and soul to let the full glory of the music to shine through every note that she plays. She possesses a vast repertoire in many periods and styles, along with the kind of special musicianship that searches out the very essence of the work at hand, enabling her to bring it forth in all its splendor to her delighted listeners."

Norman Scribner
*The Choral Arts Society of Washington
Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus*

"My opinion of Ms. Tanaka is based upon what I was privileged to see and hear at a remarkable recital that she gave at Virginia Military Institute . . . She delivered a truly magnificent performance. Her program, consisting of J.S. Bach's sixth Partita, *Leoš Janáček's* Piano Sonata 1.X.1905 and Robert Schumann's *Fantasie in C Major*, was beautifully balanced, and her playing was nothing short of superb. Her phrasing, finger-work, dynamic shadings and calculation of tempos were flawless."

William D. Badgett
Professor of English and Fine Arts
Dept. of English and Fine Arts
Virginia Military Institute

Reviews

On Sunday November 15th, 2015, the Rappahannock Concert Association, now celebrating its 33rd season, presented Misuzu Tanaka in an all-Beethoven and Prokofiev solo piano recital. Ms. Tanaka studied at the Juilliard School and holds both MM and DMA degrees from the University of Michigan School of Music, and, is the recipient of the First Prize at the Poland Music Festival Competition. As pianist in the highly acclaimed clarinet/piano duo with Maksim Shtrykov, she has performed extensively in the US and Europe. From start to finish, Ms. Tanaka gave an exhilarating performance revealing a mature and insightful musical mind supported by a dazzling technique. Opening the program with the early Beethoven Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2 No. 2, Ms. Tanaka brought to life all its playfulness, charm and lyricism. Especially poignant was her beautiful dynamic sensitivity and touch in the *Largo appassionato*. Concluding the first half with Beethoven's *Rondo a capriccio G Major, Op. 129*, Ms. Tanaka continued to demonstrate an exceptional sense of phrasing and clarity. Her virtuosity and imagination beautifully captured all the humor and wit of this audience favorite.

Following intermission, Ms. Tanaka treated the audience to yet more Beethoven, easily handling the technical challenges of the Sonata No.30 in E Major, Op. 109. Especially compelling was her thoughtful and reflective understanding of this late work, which provided a beautiful contrast with the early sonata on the first half. Last on the program was the Sonata No. 2 in D minor, Op. 14 by Prokofiev. Ms. Tanaka's impressive command captured the magnitude of this profound work, yet still revealed uncommon sensitivity and refinement. It was this ability that rendered her performance so powerful and thought provoking. Kudos to the Rappahannock Concert Association for bringing this fine young artist to Virginia's Northern Neck.

Carolyn Plummer
Professor Emeritus of Music
University of Notre Dame
Former Assistant Concertmaster Houston Symphony

"Foote's late 19th century romantic music was a delightful, if somewhat arch, companion to Moravec's rigorous and cleverly constructed four movements of jazz-inflected virtuosity, commissioned this year for the group. The latter was especially demanding for the pianist, the wonderful Misuzu Tanaka, who dispatched everything with both dizzying speed and sensitivity."

Today's Zaman, Istanbul, Turkey

On April 17, Misuzu Tanaka, concluding pianist in the always excellent *Distinguished Artists Concert & Lecture Series* 31st season, presented an appreciative audience with a fine final recital, much of it in quick tempo, by way of early Schumann, late Beethoven (along with his previous "Rage Over a lost Penny)," young 20th century Prokofiev with "new" music, and Rachmaninoff with his aching for old Russia even years before he fled. Tanaka is a very mature, sure performer, one who afterwards told series director John Orlando that playing at the magnificent Yamaha CFX concert grand here was like riding a sensitive race horse, lowering the reins a little, and letting the champion take over for a winning run. In preparation for our "sound ride" she has studied at Juilliard, in the Czech Republic, and with a performance degree from Michigan. And besides playing in large venues, she also graces small festivals like ours here.

The opening work, Schumann's " 'Abegg' Variations" from 1830, is one of the smitten 20 year old piano student's musical love letters to the 12 year old daughter of his severe piano teacher. (Years later, Schumann would wed Clara Wieck, and amid their many children she would perform his works, and others, in the best concert halls). The opening theme is slow, dreamy and seductive, Tanaka's sound lush; then the piece becomes intense and quick –almost like a seahorse scampering over the keys- followed by ethereal trilling. During the whole recital "Tanaka's intensity was very trance-like, as if we the audience did not exist, except for always enthusiastic approval. And during the performance, the pianist was also visible live on two large TV screens set up on the altar, so audience members sitting to the rear could see fingers flying or lingering on the keys.

Beethoven's "Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109" from 1820 is his second from last; it perfectly displays the "otherworldliness" of his late works, and our pianist made the most of this via gripping statement and nuances from the big piano, from the opening delicate "Vivace" with its single notes like butterfly wings, twice interrupted by a probing adagio. The short second movement is violent in sonata form, but with the deep spirituality not found in early efforts of sturm und stress banging, and the concluding sarabande theme and six variations, which Tanaka contrasted brilliantly, the increasing use of gossamer, effortless trills let up to a return to theme as conclusion. In great contrast was the same composer's "Rage Over a Lost Penny (Rondo a Capriccioso in G Major, Op, 129" – actually an earlier work from the 1790's, which is all delightfully showy surface. Imagine a young Beethoven out for a walk, strutting, cocky: then a bit of doubt as he looks into his pocket for the coin; then disbelief and confusion as he almost stops; followed by despair, which Tanaka might have shown more dolefully; but miraculously the penny turns up, the walker now continues, elated, as he sashays down the Ringstrasse in Vienna.

Now on to the Russians. We heard selections from Rachmaninoff's "Preludes Op. 23" from 1903-04, continuing the tradition of Tchaikovsky, with great style and aplomb by our pianist, including the very famous "No. 5 in G Minor," a quick march. Prokofiev was in his early 20's in 1912 when he wrote his "Piano Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 14," this 20th century style very new sounding at times, and at others, like leaner versions of Rachmaninoff – or even Grieg- but always veering back to new forms of expressions, sometimes percussive, then playful, as in its "Scherzo," a sleepwalking "Andante" dirge, concluded by a running dance in a sunny mood, all performed effortlessly. Misuzu Tanaka is definitely a *Distinguished Artist* we'd like to hear again.

Richard Lynde

"Pianist Misuzu Tanaka concludes Distinguished Artists Series". Peninsula Reviews (Santa Cruz, CA), April 22, 2016