

# Review of Monday's concerts in the Stockholm Cultural Centre at 12.00 and the Concert Hall at 7.30 pm

Svenska Dagbladet, Wednesday the 5th October: Lars Hedblad

**Karen Tanaka**  
**Yiu-Kwong Chung**  
**Asbjörn Schaathun**  
**György Kurtág**

New tones from old cultures: shy Japanese Karen Tanaka receives the warmest applause

Luca Francesconi has written an interesting article in Nutida Musik about a global village. And in all probability the interaction that has always existed between remote cultures and life-styles will accelerate in this media and information society. And equally certainly our awareness of our own uniqueness will provide a barrier against featureless, grey integration.

In the contemporary music olympics which the ISCM festival is said to represent, Eurocentricity has decreased over the years. Above all it is composers from the ancient high cultures of China and Japan that have enriched the palette - the Japanese Karen Tanaka, for example, born in 1961, who was represented at Monday's lunch concert with the work "Hommage en Cristal" for piano and strings, premiered in Oslo in 1991. She has studied composition in Tokyo and with Luciano Berio, as well as at IRCAM in Paris from 1986. Hommage en Cristal is serial in construction but anchored in Japanese aesthetics. The music's delicate veils of sound seem to whisper the secrets that nature contains. It becomes a "mediator between the world of logical structure (culture) and the world of sensory experiences (nature)" (Francesconi on Lévi-Strauss).

Mats Widlund at the piano and Örebro Chamber Orchestra under B Tommy Andersson gave a sensitive performance of the composition and the somewhat shy composer received the warmest applause of the concert.

The opening work at the evening concert, "Bihua" (Fresco) by the Chinese composer Yiu-Kwong Chung, was a large-scale, colourful piece, based on Westernized yin-yang philosophy, popular idiom and so on, all for the benefit of a "nationalistic pathos". The ambition of the festival organisers to let different compositions illuminate each other was expressed here by a fine performance of Stravinsky's Symphonies of Winds which preceded the Norwegian composer Asbjörn Schaathun's "Actions, Interpolations and Analyses". In this searching work, full of individual processes, Scaathun goes straight out into unexplored territory as it were, without the slightest vestige of map or compass, but with a few bars from the Symphonies of Winds in his backpack. It is an adventurously questioning and experimental attitude which demands all due respect. A truly magnificent solo for bass clarinet was skillfully performed by Terje Lerstad.

The most suggestive piece during the evening, however, was the Hungarian composer György Kurtág's "Samuel Beckett: What is the word?". With dimmed lights in the auditorium and spotlights on the singers and musicians spread out around the hall, the laconic desolation of the work became even more palpable. The intervals, the music itself, grows out of these few words, a music which in its total stagnation expresses the thought behind Beckett's What is the word? - to find one last conclusive word which says everything and nothing, but which never succeeds.

The performance with the reciter Ildakó Monyók, the Budapest Tomkins Vocal Ensemble and other musicians felt completely right.