
Ya-Fei Chuang

Selected Reviews

Jordan Hall Recital Boston (March 2015)

"Through a universe of color, dynamics and articulations that were entirely her own, Chuang gave us a world of feelings, visions and memories... We were guided through a landscape of shifting emotions, light and airy, passionate and turbulent, pulsing and prayerful." – **Leon Golub, *The Boston Musical Intelligencer***

Repertoire: Chopin's 24 Preludes, Op. 28, Liszt Sonata in B Minor and Ravel's *La Valse*

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Queen Elizabeth Hall (November 2013)

"Levin and Chuang brought an admirable sense of cohesion to Schubert's Fantasy in F minor, joining the disparate sections skilfully." – **George Hall, *The Guardian* *****

"All these distractions were banished in Schubert's great F minor Fantasy for piano duet, where both pianists were seated at the same piano. In the mysterious dusky colours of the first movement's central section, and the tender give and take of the slow movement, they were absolutely as one. Sound and sense came satisfyingly together." – **Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph* ******

"We got a fine sense of complicity between soloists and orchestra, because their respective timbres were so evenly balanced. The pair then returned to give a beautifully-calibrated account of Schubert's majestic "Fantasy in F minor"" – **Michael Church, *The Independent* ******

"The main appeal is the vigorous and acrobatic piano scoring, here played by Ya-Fei Chuang and Robert Levin on two forte-pianos, which produced a very bright, emphatic sound." – **The Bristol Post**

Recital – Boston Conservatory (February 2013)

Rachmaninoff's Allegretto in E-flat Minor: "Chuang handled the bristling difficulties of this piece as though they didn't exist, all the while maintaining a smooth lyrical cantabile."

Chopin's B Minor Sonata, Op. 58: "Chuang's superb control and fine expression made it certain that we knew where we were at every moment. The Scherzo movement: Chuang moved effortlessly from this to the ineffable sadness of the slow movement in B major, and I have rarely heard such sensitive control of pianissimo as she demonstrated in this piece that almost never rises above a hushed level.

The famous Presto non tanto finale: Chuang made sure that the rhythm breathed with energy at every point, instead of racing breathlessly as though nothing else mattered, and this made the climactic moments of the last two pages all the more confident. This triumphant performance was one more testimony, to one who hardly needed convincing, that Ya-Fei Chuang carries Chopin's banner today equally with the best of those whose names are more world-famous — I think of Vladimir Ashkenazy, Garrick Ohlsson, and Idil Biret."

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Schubert's Moment Musicaux: "Chuang did all four of the pieces full justice, reminding me of Schnabel's recording that I remembered so well from decades ago."

Liszt's transcription of Wagner's Tannhäuser Overture: "Seemingly impossible to play because of the challenge to the performer's endurance but it didn't faze Chuang in the least, and the entire audience rose in a cheer after the brilliant ending." – **Mark DeVoto, *The Boston Musical Intelligencer***

Recital – Oregon Bach Festival 2012

"Chuang, who normally plays on Steinways, clearly relished the opportunity to play the [Fazioli]. Its magnificent deep, sonorous tone, especially in the lower bass, immediately became apparent under Chuang's majestic playing.

Her recital commenced with six of the 24 preludes by French composer Claude-Achille Debussy. The composer's impressionistic yet symbolic compositional style was drawn dramatically by Chuang's playing, dreamily dissonant in "Ondine," delicate but positive staccato in "La Sérénade interrompue," and perhaps most demonstratively in "Ce qu'a cue le vent d'ouest" (What the west wind saw), building to a series of climaxes, very intense music and playing, strong emotional content, perhaps even some anger. All of the preludes were beautifully, deeply interpretively played.

Earl Wild's *Seven Etudes* on popular Gershwin songs came next, showpieces of virtuosic, jazz-imbued pyrotechnics. Chuang demonstrated her utter proficiency and command of the keyboard in these short pieces, ending the seventh one, "Fascinatin' Rhythm," by banging out the final chord with her right elbow! A great crowd-pleaser.

After intermission came George Gershwin's *Three Preludes*, the two outer movements filled with stunning, showy, rhythmic progressions, the inner movement a languid Andante. All were executed masterfully.

The final offering was the meat and potatoes of the recital, Frederic Chopin's glorious *Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor*...her interpretation was deep and thoughtful. The short Scherzo was polished off with much brio, while the lengthy Largo was rendered with an achingly beautiful tenderness. The last movement, Finale: Presto non tanto, featured Chuang's stunning virtuosity, her runs and trills quite breathtaking and, for the first time in the evening, a marvelously effective use of rubato. Her finish was greeted by deafening, well-deserved applause and yells of appreciation. An encore of Wild/Gershwin's

"Embraceable You" brought the brilliant recital to a close." - **John Farnworth, *The Register-Guard***

"The unmistakable highlight of the evening was the flawless technique and expressive mastery of pianist Ya-Fei Chuang...her impeccable portrayal of Claude Debussy's poetic musical lines are themselves a lesson in superb legato and a perfect French salon style.

Opening the program with the well known *Suite bergamasque*, Chuang's *Prélude and Menuet* varied between luxurious legato and a sparseness that resulted in an enlivened clarity. Later, in *L'Isle joyeuse*, her cadenza-like trills truly transported listeners to a place as beautiful as the title implies." - **Catherine Olson, *The Register-Guard***