

EMISFÉRICA

Yoshihara, Mari. *Musicians From a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007. 288 pages. \$31.50 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

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It is beyond doubt that Asians, especially Asian Americans, are currently a dominant force in classical music, and a glance at the repertoire validates this point. Prominent Asian soloists—Yo Yo Ma, Lang Lang, Sarah Chang, and others—have contributed to classical music with their virtuoso skills while also attracting a younger audience. *Musicians From a Different Shore* delves into this phenomenon with an emphasis on the performers and how identity impacts their creation of music. Mari Yoshihara, a trained pianist herself, crafts a fluid investigation of the history of Asian and Asian American classical musicians while exploring the intricate identities of such artists as musicians, Asians, and Americans.

Musicians From a Different Shore begins with a description from the documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* in order to showcase the dichotomy between Western and Eastern practitioners of classical music in the 1980s. According to Yoshihara, commentary between the conductor of the Beijing Central Philharmonic and Stern reveals two separate viewpoints in regard to the social importance of music; Li, the conductor, understands Western music as one linked to sociopolitical issues from the time of its inception while Stern believes it originates entirely from the composer's artistic genius. While Yoshihara's description is concise, the oppositional viewpoints expressed by representatives from both the East and West are echoed not only throughout the remainder of the first chapter, but also the entire book.

One of the more distinctive elements of *Musicians From a Different Shore* arises in the voice of the performers, which Yoshihara never fails to incorporate. Two notable chapters, both entitled *Voices*, consist of interviews between the author and various musicians. The inclusion of the musician's voice not only gives validity to Yoshihara's analysis on identity, but it also allows the reader to acknowledge the persona of both the musician and the scholar. Moreover, the juxtaposition of varying thoughts on identity from the musician's perspective adds a distinct facet of humanity to the research which discernibly attempts to reveal as many opinions as possible.

The earlier chapters on the history of Western music in Asia contribute to the understanding of contemporary Asian American identity and the necessity of negotiating this identification in order to have a prosperous career. The majority of musicians interviewed by Yoshihara identified themselves first as musicians, but many understood the role of their race and how it affects their music. For some, linkage to an ancestral homeland became an important factor in their career even though many born in the United States never stepped foot in Asia.

Yoshihara's study of gender among Asian musicians is both prolific and insightful, especially her examination of the visual marketing of "Asian-ness." She focuses on the semiotics used within classical music advertising to highlight and contrast various Asian stereotypes as well as to heighten sex appeal in accordance to both Asian and Western standards. An analysis of these visual clues occurs in numerous photographs, aptly placed in the book for readers to form their own conclusion.

Whereas previous chapters examine the role of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, the later part of the book explores the use of cultural capital, class, and authenticity. Yoshihara argues against a Marxist analysis that musicians be categorized as "unproductive," solely for the fact that the capital they produce is not tangible. Instead she concurs with Bourdieu when stating that classical music does incur some form of "cultural capital." It is with this capital that the Asian musician negotiates class since the majority of musicians maintain a high level of "cultural capital" without leading luxurious lifestyles.

While thoughts differ on the authenticity of their performances, these artists agree that one must find a unique voice to express oneself while remaining true to the score. At times, identity becomes an obstacle that demands negotiation, especially when classical music, traditionally a Western form, is performed by an Asian body. Many manage this task by attempting to find authenticity within themselves as musicians and it is this passion to find and express themselves through the language and culture of music that is communicated in *Musicians From a Different Shore*.

In her conclusion, Yoshihara summarizes her work by stressing the importance of conveying the performer's voice when most scholarly work within a classical music discourse focuses on the composer. In addition to a thorough history of the spread of classical music in the East, her explorations of the identities of these performers reveal the complex lives of Asian-American musicians. This complexity initiates a dialogue with respect to cultural identity making *Musicians From a Different Shore* an interesting and insightful read to both the performance scholar and the avid classical music fan.