

CRUMB: *Celestial Mechanics: Makrokosmos IV; Zeitgeist; Otherworldly Resonances*
Yoshiku Shimizu, p

Kairos 22012—69 minutes

Readers who enjoy the enchanting minimalism of George Crumb will want to investigate this piano program, well recorded and played with shimmering delicacy and apocalyptic fury by Japanese pianist Yoshiku Shimizu. I particularly like her playing from inside the piano, producing otherworldly glissandos and harmonics, especially in *Celestial Mechanics*, which is for 6 hands. The opening movement of *Zeitgeist* has fascinating sounds produced, for example, by having a glass tumbler slide along the strings as they are struck. Not everything is produced inside the piano: the second movement of the latter piece, which Crumb calls “vivacious and whimsical”, is performed entirely on the keyboard. Here Shimizu shows her superb musicianship and virtuosity in a more traditional but just as impressive manner. The most novel movement, ‘Monotone’, is based entirely on overtones of a very low note, which Crumb calls “a rainbow of partial tones”. This is Crumb at his most radical, yet the piece is strangely inviting and seductive.

Some of the most remarkable moments are the movements in *Otherworldly Resonances*, which could serve as a title for any of any of the works on this album. These include ‘Double Helix’, to be played “very slowly with a Zen-like intensity of concentration”, ‘Celebration and Ritual’ (demonstrating that Crumb has a jubilant side), and ‘Plamimpsest’, an evocation of the visual effect of old parchment manuscripts, which Crumb says “should produce an almost subliminal effect”. Here Shimizu produces the most remote and otherworldly sounds of all.

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