

PEOPLE
ARE
TALKING
ABOUT

MUSIC



IN THE SAME KEY
YUKAWA (LEFT, IN
MARCHESA) WITH
CHAN (IN BURBERRY
PRORSUM).

keeping score

Former rivals *Rosey Chan*
and *Cassie Yukawa*
are classical music's most
exciting new duo.

he electrifying telepathy between British pianists **Rosey Chan** and **Cassie Yukawa** has enthralled audiences since 2005, when the duo came together for their first joint public performance. But while the chemistry between the two seems innate, for many years rivalry defined their relationship.

"We first became very aware of each other when we were seven or eight years old, on the competition circuit," says Chan, now 28. "After that, we were always competing against each other for the top prize."

"Rosey was always in my consciousness, as the fantastic pianist I wanted to beat," adds Yukawa, 27. Video footage of an early awards

ceremony shows the young girls standing side by side onstage. As Chan notes, "It didn't look exactly friendly." Their paths crossed throughout childhood, yet the girls never exchanged a word.

In person, the women are petite and soft-spoken, starkly contrasting with their bold onstage personae. As they sip rosé at a Notting Hill café in London, they speak together much as they play: never interrupting, seamlessly overlapping. They recall how the uncanny parallels in their lives continued as both enrolled at the Royal College of Music and were assigned to the same instructor, Yonty Solomon. "He would say to me, 'You interpret this étude in the same

way as Cassie,'" says Chan. "As a musician, you think that you have your own individual style. It's strange when someone who shares that style is your archrival."

After the women graduated, Chan finally ended the more than fifteen-year silent cold war with a text message. "I thought, What the hell—why not?" says Chan, who tracked down Yukawa's number through a classmate. "I invited her to play in a one-off gig." The success of that collaboration led to gala performances from London to Dubai to Malaysia, in which the duo continues to energize the classical-music world and impress critics ("the yin and yang of perfection," proclaimed Ireland's *Sunday Independent*).

While both artists were classically trained, their range is strikingly diverse. Yukawa-Chan's Carnegie Hall debut earlier this year showcased works by Rachmaninoff, Debussy, and the unusual compositions of contemporary composers David Lang and Victoria Bond. Projects with DJ Spooky are in the works, and this month they will release an album of material written for them by Michael Nyman, who scored the film *The Piano*.

Much of their repertoire is physically demanding, and the women have turned to yoga to help them make seemingly impossible leaps and stretches at the keyboard. "Because I have small hands, I have to be inventive with alternative solutions," explains Yukawa.

They also bring their love of fashion to performances, wearing their waist-length hair twisted into elaborate coifs, with fashionably tattered gowns and four-inch stilettos personally designed by Jimmy Choo.

Of course, the first question that comes to mind when

EXHIBITION

ETERNAL FLAME

Elizabeth Peyton wears her heart on her sleeve, never hiding her passion for the wistful pop stars and tragic-romantic bohemians she has painted since her fabled 1993 show in a room at the Chelsea Hotel. But while Peyton's earnest fandom and the unabashed beauty of her portraits of Kurt Cobain built her reputation, "**Live Forever: Elizabeth Peyton**," a major exhibition at New York's New Museum—and the accompanying monograph by Phaidon—promises to challenge all the easy assumptions about the artist and her work. The show, her first large-scale American retrospective, will include drawings, watercolors, and less well known portraits—those of Peyton's friends and a series imagining Eminem, John Kennedy, Jr., and Sid Vicious as fresh-faced little boys.—**JESSICA KERWIN**



OBJECTS OF AFFECTION
A RARE PEYTON STILL
LIFE, PATI, 2007.

the women hit the stage: How can they pedal in those teetering heels? "I find it easier," says Chan, laughing. "They give you leverage." —**LESLEY M.M. BLUME** *pata* >278

Yukawa and Chan: EMMA HARDY. Stings Editor: Caroline Sieber; hair: Tracie Cant at Premier; makeup: Liz Daxauer at Bill Charles; Pati, 2007: ELIZABETH PEYTON, oil on board/Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise and the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Details, see In This Issue.