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Connecting the Ancient to the Computerized

By [ALLAN KOZINN](#)

Mari Kimura had planned to follow the traditional career trajectory for violinists - performances of standard repertory and some new music - when a chance conversation made her reconsider. Her interlocutor, on hearing that she was a violinist, asked Ms. Kimura whether she composed, and when the answer was no, he asked her why not. For Ms. Kimura, it was a good question, so she started writing music, including works for violin and computer. And she began collaborating with like-minded performer-composers.

Her latest endeavor, a collaboration with Yoshihiro Kanno, a Japanese composer, is Project RITE - the name is an acronym, of sorts, for Reinventing Tradition and Environment - in which she is joined by performers who play ancient Asian instruments and also compose and use computers. She is presenting two installments of Project RITE this week, and the first, on Thursday evening at the Chelsea Art Museum, explored the interaction among the violin, the koto (a lute), the shakuhachi (a bamboo flute), the sho (a mouth organ) and a handful of Apple laptops.

Bruce Gremo opened the program with "New Old Song 2," a solo work for shakuhachi and computer in which the boundaries between the flute and the electronics were blurred at first. The shakuhachi can produce some surprisingly textured and eerie sounds, even without electronic support. Mr. Gremo's computer line used these timbres (and plenty of atmospheric reverberation) as starting points and ran with them, exaggerating the textures until they sounded like electronic feedback, and using electronic delays to create a spacey polyphony.

Tamami Tono, a sho player and composer, followed similar lines in "Arc for the Breath of Life," for sho, computer and Ms. Kimura's violin. Miya Masaoka did, too, in "Something Comes Then Sails Away," for koto - which Ms. Masaoka sometimes played with a bow - computer and sho. In both, ancient timbres were explored and extended, on their own and through their interaction with the computer. And both, like Mr. Gremo's work, had a meandering, New Age quality.

Ms. Kimura's "Pluck-Ring," for violin, computer and TibetBot - an electronic device that, among other things, rings temple bells - had a slightly tougher edge, as well as the benefit of computer graphics, a stream of constantly shifting geometric shapes that she produced with Liubomir Borissov.

The most imaginative work on the program was Mr. Kanno's "City of Wind," a haunting, melancholy work that brought together all the musicians as well as Mr. Kanno on keyboards. In it, Mr. Kanno probed a variety of wind sounds, ranging from those that drive the shakuhachi and the sho to a desolate, distant, hollow howl produced by the computer.

Ms. Kimura and company closed the concert with a vigorous, concise improvisation that she said was called "Dessert."

A second Project RITE concert will be given tonight at the Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A West 13th Street, Greenwich Village.

