

By **Anthony Tommasini**

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In writing his 1996 work “Tao,” the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen says he made no attempt “to relate to what is known as ‘music from the Far East’ or, even worse, ‘world music.’”

I can understand his reluctance. There have probably been too many glib generalizations about what Asian music is, and too many attempts to appropriate it.

Still, listening to the New York Philharmonic’s performance of “Tao” on Wednesday at David Geffen Hall, with David Robertson conducting, it was hard not to hear the piercing, high-pitched chords and tart melodic fragments of this 18-minute work as evocative of Asian styles and sonorities. And the scoring for “Tao” does include two traditional Japanese instruments; in the second half, four female vocalists sing settings of Chinese and Japanese texts.

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