



## AKI TAKASE LA PLANETE FLYING SOUL

<b>AKI TAKASE</b>	Piano
<b>LOUIS SCLAVIS</b>	Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Soprano
<b>DOMINIQUE PIFARÉLY</b>	Violin
<b>VINCENT COURTOIS</b>	Cello

Recorded September 6, 7, 8, 2012 at Hans Rosbaud-Studio SWR Baden-Baden.  
Recording engineer: Ute Hesse. Sound engineer: Manfred Seiler. Mixed February 12, 13, 14, 2013 at SWR Baden-Baden by Manfred Seiler, Aki Takase und Patrik Landolt.  
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### YOKO TAWADA. AKI TAKASE LA PLANÈTE FLYING SOUL

*I don't know which way is up. Aki Takase takes me to a place which looks new and exciting, but at the same time feels very familiar to me. There are constant twists of perspective. I become dizzy, as if I were riding a roller coaster through a primeval forest. There are trees standing there like musicians, and each of their green sheets of music resembles a painting or a book. I want to stay still to study them, but it doesn't work, and right now it's exciting to keep pace with the music. Life doesn't wait for us, nor does music. We still don't miss anything.*

*Hundreds of ghosts and monsters are hiding in these woods. They aren't malicious, more humorous, but still so energetic that their strength can frighten a civilised human being. The figure "Oni" from Japanese folklore is more comparable to Dionysus than to a devil. She organises a festival of musical and theatrical pleasures. She drinks and dances, intoxicated. Her footprints make the hearts of the dead beat again.*

*There are precious moments of reflection in these woods however. We gaze silently into the transparent water. Each of us sees something else in this "Water Mirror". I meet women with names like "Rouge Stone" and "Morning Bell" again. They come from my novel Flying Soul, but now they have a new, musical home in this CD. Their names have become sounds. The magical moment when the forms of language were changed to music has been captured in them.*

Yoko Tawada

### LINER NOTES BY JULIA NEUPERT

If the rallying call 'Defy gravity!' was Aki Takase's advance musical direction for the recording of Flying Soul the album, the novel Flying Soul, by Yoko Tawada, was the literary gauntlet she threw down. The pianist and author have known each other since 1999. Two Japanese women both living in Germany, they first met in Hamburg and have worked together regularly ever since. Takase is fascinated by the musical quality of Tawada's texts. As well as its vivid images and expressive power, she is repeatedly inspired by the idiosyncrasy and originality of Tawada's language, which often enters unreal, invisible, ultimately indescribable worlds.

Flying Soul is one such novel, a symbolic story about a mythical place, an imaginary academy in which the wise old woman Kikyo (Turtle Mirror) hands down her knowledge and experience of life to younger women with mysterious names such as Yubihime (Finger Princess), Risui (Water Mirror) or Beniishi (Rouge Stone). The fairy-tale plot seems incidental however; what Tawada's narrative style reflects is the potential of language to release a range of different associations, irrespective of the purely functional use of words for transmitting meaning.

Aki Takase takes this idea further, transforming the characters of the Japanese language into sounds instead of setting the 'meaning' to music. Takase is working on a piece of musical theatre with the title *The Flying Soul*. This album constitutes its compositional core. She has taken a poetic tone, heard in her previous work certainly, yet seldom deployed so consistently as here. Simultaneously gentle and energetic she has generated powerful atmospheric images, brief character studies and sonic scenes full of contrast, scored for a chamber-music line-up untypical in jazz.

*La Planète Quartet* is one of her newest ensembles, arising from her partnership with the French clarinetist Louis Sclavis. Takase and Sclavis recorded their first album as a duo in the Rosbaud Studio in Baden-Baden, Germany, and it was clear from the outset that they represented two musical poles complementing each other perfectly. Right from the start Aki Takase envisaged realising *Flying Soul* with an instrumental palette comprised of strings and Louis Sclavis recommended two of his long-term colleagues to her, the violinist Dominique Pifarély and the cellist Vincent Courtois.

Takase had thus recruited three French musicians to join her in *La Planète*. Coincidence! she claims, but a sense of the French chamber music tradition, from Maurice Ravel to Olivier Messiaen, can be felt more than once in her compositions. Clear lines, fluid melodies, sweeping harmonies – pieces such as 'Into the Woods', 'Wasserspiegel' or 'Intoxication' possess an almost reticent, pared-down noblesse, which is transmitted with wonderful lightness thanks to the dynamics within the quartet. 'Rouge Stone' on the other hand is a miniature, full of sudden impulses; 'Onigawarau' is an elfish dance; the noise-like moments of sonic intensity in 'Turtle Mirror' create a dark, disturbing mood. Aki Takase's fellow musicians here have also proved to be kindred spirits when it comes to such harsher tones: Sclavis, Pifarély and Courtois are all musicians who can switch from balanced, 'cultivated' playing to raw expression and know how to use the often very brief freedom for improvisation afforded them in highly original ways.

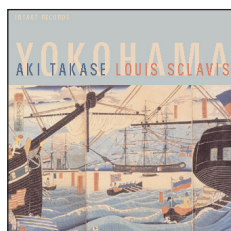
For the second part of this album Aki Takase chose four pieces with reference points other than Yoko Tawada's novel, but which still fit effortlessly with its atmosphere of ambiguity: we hear a new colouration to Alexander von Schlippenbach's 'Twelve Tone Tales'; the 'Tarantella' is a dance driving itself mad; in 'Moon Cake' Louis Sclavis gets to be play a cheeky Till Eulenspiegel; finally, with the melancholic 'Piece For La Planete' the quartet demonstrate their entire spectrum of aural nuances once more.

This album can be listened to like a fascinating train journey, Aki Takase says. Looking out of the window in your compartment, you see things appear and disappear again; you are surprised by the sudden changes to the landscape, retain snapshots in your memory but are forced to abandon much to uncertainty, because everything constantly moves on, because you are in movement yourself. On *Flying Soul* Aki Takase manages to shape the proportions in her music – of time, space and sound – with impressive ingenuity, without restraining the sounds. Defying gravity, breathing freely, transforming yourself constantly: this aim has undoubtedly been achieved.

Julia Neupert

Translation: Steph Morris

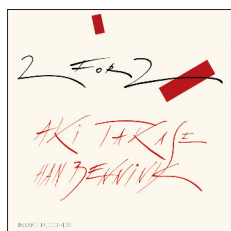
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