

Tessa Brinckman & Mitsuki Dazai: "Mystic Visions"

**Elizabeth Brown – *The Secret Life of Birds* – flute,
koto**

The works of this New York City virtuoso flutist, shakuhachi player and thereminist have been described as luminous, dreamlike and hallucinatory. This work came from her koto-playing experiments, birdwatching, slowing down recordings of birdsong, and "hearing" the bird paintings of mystic Northwest School artist Morris Graves (who perceived his painting as a union of sight and sound).

Tadao Sawai - *Flying* – koto

Sawai was the Grandmaster and pedagogue of koto playing in modern Japan, who both revived koto traditions and created new contemporary techniques. Here he invokes mystery, lyricism and high drama using eerie secco "scratching" sounds, quoting traditional koto melodies and western harmonies.

Hikaru Sawai - *Dosei I and II* - alto flute, bass koto

Koto player and metal guitarist Hikaru Sawai took up where his father left off. Dosei, meaning "Voices of the Earth", is happily rooted in Western popular rhythms and harmonies. Sawai insists on his individuality and global connections, emphasising energy over restraint.

**Tessa Brinckman/Mitsuki Dazai - *Umi Sajin* –
flute/piccolo/alto flute, bass koto**

We constructed this piece together via Skype and intuition in December 2012, and premiered it at the March Music Moderne Festival, Portland in 2013. Inspired by accounts of the Dust Bowl and the Great Garbage Patches in the Pacific Ocean, this piece expresses the ambivalence of our own survival in a self-destructive world.

Toshio Hosokawa - *Snowdrops* – flute, koto

This prize-winning Japanese contemporary composer studied with dissident Korean composer Isang Yun in Berlin. *Schneeglocken* was originally written for tenor recorder and koto, and is dedicated to the players, Jeremias Schwarzer and Makiko Goto.

Chick Corea - *Children's Songs* – flute, bass koto

The famous American jazz fusionist aimed "to convey simplicity as beauty, as represented in the Spirit of a child". There are stylistic and structural parallels to the cycle, *Mikrokosmos*, by Bela Bartok. Corea dedicated it to Ron L. Hubbard, saying that, "...I no longer wanted to satisfy myself. I really want to connect with the world and make my music mean something to people."

"...one of the most fascinating concerts in the March Music Moderne festival..." - Willamette Week, March 2013

Tessa Brinckman & Mitsuki Dazai: "Out Of This World"

***Horses Heads Were Towards Eternity* - Yuji
Takahashi (1988) – alto flute, koto**

Pianist and avant-garde composer, Yuji Takahashi, studied stochastic music with Xenakis in the 1960s, later working as a composer/performer in electronic, orchestral, solo and pop settings. He collaborated with both the Asian and Western avantgarde, including John Zorn, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Musica Elettronica Viva, Ned Rothenberg, and Carl Stone. Takahashi sets Emily Dicksonson's famous poem, "Because I Could Not Stop For Death", with a minimalist hand, leaving an element of improvisation to the performers.

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school,
where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;
The dews grew quivering and chill,

For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

***5+13=Prime Number (1983) - John Kaizan Neptune -
flute & koto***

Virtuoso shakuhachi player and composer, John Kaizan Neptune, writes that "...this is the first duet that I wrote for koto and shakuhachi. Musical influences are from Japan, India, America (blues), and Africa. How did I come up with the title? I thought it was more interesting than "Duet For Koto and Shakuhachi Number 1".

***Children's Songs: #3, #4, #16 (1971) – Chick Corea -
flute, bass koto***

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Kangen Hisho (1977) - Ichiro Higo - flute & koto

Kangen hisho roughly translates as “returning to the origins”. The composer, Ichiro Higo, writes that Japan had very little purely instrumental music, most of it being vocal with occasional instrumental sections. But those instrumental sections are powerful music, and he has tapped into that cultural memory “which secretly flows through our veins” and written this work.

***Umi Sajin (2013)* – Tessa Brinckman/Mitsuki Dazai
- flute/piccolo/alto flute, bass koto**

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