

makiko hirabayashi / flemming agerskov binocular

Pianist Makiko Hirabayashi and trumpeter and french horn-player Flemming Agerskov share common backgrounds in jazz as well as classical music, and the cultural differences between Japan and Scandinavia are an important factor in the music they create together. They have worked together before in several projects, and now, back in the duo format, they have recorded BINOCULAR with Italian accordionist Francesco Cali as a featured guest on some selections. The music – all originals by Hirabayashi and Agerskov – is poetic, translucent and abstract. For maximum intensity, they recorded in Norway's famous Rainbow Studio in Oslo with legendary engineer Jan Erik Kongshaug, whose sensitive and uncompromising approach completes the picture.

The labyrinthine simplicity of this magical music hits where sensibilities run deepest with the exquisite aesthetics that draw attention at home and abroad, where Scandinavian jazz is so appreciated.

Binocular vision is the term used for what we see when using both eyes. Binocular vision provides more depth than monocular vision. In a musical sense: Here we have two instruments and two musicians with very different voices merging into one musical landscape. Writing short pieces in a kind of chamber-musical format with elements of improvisation is another step towards the binocular set of mind: an equality between composition and improvisation suspending the boundaries between soloist and accompanist, the prepared and the intuitive, and the balance between form and freedom. It means focusing holistically while zooming in on details. This what Makiko Hirabayashi's and Flemming Agerskov's music is about: enabling the listener to close her eyes, see her own movie and zoom in on colors, landscapes, movements, various moods and enticing themes and motifs.

A naturalized Dane, Makiko Hirabayashi was born in Japan, and her training includes Berklee College of Music in Boston. She has been active on the Danish jazz and world music scenes since moving to Copenhagen in 1990. She recorded two widely acclaimed trio albums for the German Enja label with percussionist Marilyn Mazur and bassist Klavs Hovman in



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2006 and 2009, and her latest trio release HIDE AND SEEK won awards for Best Instrumental Album and Jazz Melody Award in the respected Jazz Critique Magazine polls in 2009, opening the door for the trio to numerous international tours.

Makiko Hirabayashi's last Stunt recording was Grey To Blue in 2008, a project involving French flutist Mariane Bitran in the quintet they lead together, which also includes American saxophonist Bob Rockwell.

Danish trumpeter and french horn-player Flemming Agerskov graduated from The Royal Academy of Music. He has spent several prolonged visits in Japan performing and exploring Japanese aesthetics and culture. His "Scandinavian sound" has made him an internationally acknowledged trumpeter since the late 1980's, and his playing has graced more than 100 CDs in very different idioms spanning pop and world music to pure jazz. He has recorded and performed with a wide range of artists including Eliane Elias, Egberto Gismonti, Jon Balke, Marc Johnson, Ian Ballamy, Marilyn Mazur, Lee Konitz, Ray Charles, Bob Brookmeyer, C.V. Jørgensen (on an album which went platinum), Sanne Salomonsen, Josefine Cronholm, Randi Laubæk, Kresten Osgood and Hans Ulrik. His own group Face To Face (which includes Martin France and Julian Argüelles) received a Danish Music Award for their 2001 release TAKUAN.

Francesco Cali is a classically trained musician and composer from the Bellini Conservatory in Catania, where he was born. He has lived in Copenhagen since 2000, working as a composer, accordionist and pianist in various settings. He has released CDs with his own group, Catania Quintet, and appeared as a sideman on albums with Band Au Néon, Torben Westergaard's Oktober, Jacob Fischer's trio and quartet, Cathrine Legardh Quintet and Trio Salmodia. He has composed for and performed with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra (Human Rights Hymn for Human Rights Day 2005), and he won 1.prize at Pépinières Européennes pour Jeunes Artistes 2000 and 3.prize at the International Choral Composers' Competition 2003.

Migrating South / Dialogue #1 / Shifting Light / Jagged / Dialogue #2 / La Tourneuse De Pages / House Of Ants / Readings / When The Road Curves.

Flemming Agerskov (tp, flh), Makiko Hirabayashi (p) + Francesco Cali (acc).

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