

AKEMI NAITO

(b. 1956)

1 Memory of the Woods (2000) (9:29)

(*marimba solo*)

William Moersch, marimba

Voyage (2000) (11:55)

(*flute, viola, harp*)

2 Movement I (4:09)

3 Movement II (3:29)

4 Movement III (4:17)

Tara Helen O'Connor, flute

Richard O'Neill, viola

June Han, harp

5 Sanctuary (1998) (10:56)

(*accordion solo*)

Claudio Jacomucci, accordion

Mindscape - Four Poetic Images (2002) (13:01)

(*two guitars, flute, oboe, violin, cello*)

6 I Pilgrimage (2:17)

7 II Wind of Ruin (2:36)

8 III A Starlight Night (3:14)

9 IV Perception (4:54)

Cygnus Ensemble

Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; Robert Ingliss, oboe; William Anderson, guitar

Oren Fader, guitar; Calvin Wiersma, violin; Susanna Chapman, cello

Months - Spaceship for Zodiac (2005) (22:19)

(*Satsuma Biwa and Electronics*)

10 I Introduction (1:17)

11 II Aries (1:18)

12 III Taurus (1:25)

13 IV Gemini (0:59)

14 V Cancer (1:49)

15 VI Manyōka 1 (0:49)

16 VII Leo (1:36)

17 VIII Virgo (1:44)

18 IX Manyōka 2 (0:47)

19 X Libra (1:16)

20 XI Scorpio (1:14)

21 XII Sagittarius (1:59)

22 XIII Capricorn (1:20)

23 XIV Aquarius (2:17)

24 XV Manyōka 3 (0:57)

25 XVI Pisces (1:24)

Junko Ueda, Satsuma biwa

Akemi Naito's music is the art of a sound-poet—a sensitive shaper of images that touch upon memory, distance and a deep sense of longing. Naito's musical language embraces a wide range of materials, frequently delighting in subverting our expectations through both the inclusiveness of her vocabulary and the unpredictably lyrical manner in which her pieces unfold. As we listen into the world of Akemi Naito's intimate music, lush melodies and harmonies sometimes dissolve into the gritty noises of woodwind multiphonics, harp pedal glissandi, or the harsh percussive attack of the Satsuma biwa, reminding us that her sublime journey is not without its occasional reference to private and profoundly felt inquietude.

In *Memory of the Woods*, the deep voice of the Marimba seems the perfect vehicle for Naito's soulful and passionate inner murmurings. In *Voyage*, the dreamy combination of flute, viola and harp, first used so brilliantly by Debussy, provides Naito with a palette that initially seems familiar, but later provides colorful surprises and a poignant melodic culmination bringing the triptych to its emotionally satisfying conclusion. *Sanctuary* provides the disc's most meditative music, with the accordion functioning as a small and solemn organ. The four short movements of *Mindscape* utilize the vast textural possibilities offered by the mixed sextet of strings and winds, the colors of the piece changing rapidly and constantly in the most physical music on this disc.

Akemi Naito's musical world is also a tale of intermingling cultures and eras. Though her Japanese heritage is never far from the heart of her music, her art has also been greatly affected by encounters with composers and performers in America, Europe and the East. *Months, Spaceship for Zodiac*, in 16 movements, is the longest work on this collection, and combines the most disparate influences, incorporating the traditional Japanese plucked instrument,

biwa, vocal settings of sections of the oldest Japanese poem, *Manyōshū*, and a modern electronic sound track. Naito's vision of the biwa as "a spaceship sailing through the cosmos" is an apt metaphor for this fascinating composer's own path — a voyager charting unknown sounds through spiritual worlds both distant and elusive.

David Starobin
New York, June, 2006

Notes on the compositions by Akemi Naito

Memory of the Woods FOR MARIMBA

When I was asked to write a new piece for solo marimba, my thoughts and imagination turned first to the instrument itself. In order to write what I hoped would be a deep and spiritual work for this beautiful instrument — the marimba, I drew upon inspiration from a symbol and image of timelessness, the woods. *Memory of the Woods* is scored for a five octave marimba.

The piece was commissioned by New Music Marimba and was premiered by William Moersch in Uruguay during his South American Tour in May 2000. The score was published by HoneyRock in January 2001.

Voyage FOR FLUTE, VIOLA AND HARP

Writing for the trio of flute, viola and harp was a fascinating instrumentation for me. The colors stimulated my imagination and lead me to a dream time of my inner world. Thus, the title emerged naturally as my intention for this work — a voyage to a nostalgic yet personal time space. The piece consists of

three movements. Each movement has an organic structure which is my breathing of my musical creation.

I started composition while I had a residency at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs in early summer of 2000. *Voyage* was commissioned by Azure Ensemble and premiered at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, December 2000.

Sanctuary FOR ACCORDION

Because of the similarities of its timbre to that of the sho (mouth organ) and the pipe organ, the sound of the accordion, for me, evokes a certain spirituality, a religious sublimity. I wanted to capture that image in a serene space and time. The longing for the sound is always backed by purity. That is the first step into the sacred precincts.

The piece was composed between December of 1997 and May of 1998, and was first performed at the the Tenri Gallery in New York City in August 1998 by William Schimmel. Claudio Jacomucci gave European premiere at Gaudeamus New Music Week in Amsterdam in September 1999. The score was published by the German publisher AUGEMUS in March 2006.

Mindscape – Four Poetic Images FOR SEXTET

Mindscape was composed for Cygnus Ensemble, and scored for two guitars, flute, oboe, violin and cello. I began work on the first movement, "Pilgrimage", at the MacDowell Colony during a residency in May 2001. I was thinking about "time", and became captivated by the image of Ruin as a symbolic message from a distant past. This image became an idea for this composition. I followed an imaginary journey to my inner landscape. The second movement, "Wind of Ruin", was composed at the Millay Colony that summer. While

at Millay, I saw a magnificent shooting star in the midnight sky. The experience is reflected in the third movement, "A Starlight Night". The image and soul I received from the sky is heard in the oboe's beautiful quiet high tone. The piece concludes with the fourth movement, "Perception", where the metallic effect of multiphonics and the striking effect of strings are utilized to create non-musical sound. The piece dies away to a static landscape, as if make a circulation.

The work was commissioned for Cygnus by Chamber Music America. Funds for this commission have been provided by Chamber Music America's Commissioning Program, supported by The National Endowment for the Arts, The Helen F. Whitaker Fund and The Chamber Music America.

Months – Spaceship for Zodiac FOR SATSUMA BIWA AND ELECTRONICS

Months – Spaceship for Zodiac was composed for a Japanese traditional instrument, the Satsuma biwa, around the idea of the Zodiac. For the performance, reverberation should be added to the biwa, and the score is accompanied by an electronic tape part. The piece consists of 16 movements; in addition to the 12 zodiac sections, there is an introduction and three poems which I chose from the oldest Japanese poem, *Manyōshū*. When I was contemplating an idea for this composition, I was inspired by a picture of the fresco at Il Salone dei Mesi (the Salon of the Months) at Il Palazzo di Schifanoia (the Schifanoia Palace) which means literally "keeping annoyance away", in Ferrara, which is one of the very few existing works by the Italian Renaissance painter, Francesco del Cossa. When I saw the work of Cossa with its use of the Zodiac, it connected me to the distant past, and when I later thought of using the *Manyōshū*, I realized I could combine the two as a symbol of eternal spirit. Much later, I learned from Junko Ueda that the origin of the biwa instrument comes from the image

of the cosmos. As a result, without even planning it, my composition echoed the history of the biwa. With added reverberation I almost imagined the biwa as a spaceship sailing in the cosmos. I wanted to release it from the usual connotations of its use as a traditional Japanese instrument, but wanted to hear it in a new context, almost like watching a starry night or listening to it an Arabian oud. This is the concept of the piece.

Throughout my residencies in late Autumn in Yaddo in Saratoga Springs in 2002, and Bellagio in Lake Como in Italy in 2003, hearing about Junko Ueda's artistry in August 2004 gave life to this new work, and with her collaboration, it was completed in July 2005. This recording is a premiere performance.

THE MANYŌSHŪ

Volume VII

On the Sky

- [1068] On the sea of the heavens
Cloud waves grow high
The moon's ship
Appears and departs
Among the starry trees.

Track 15

Kakinomotono-Hitomaro Collection

Volume VII

On the Moon

- [1080] Heavenly moon, forever bright
For ever in the heaven
Shining since the time of gods, perchance
Renewed and refreshed.

Track 18

Unknown

Volume XX

- [4483] Whenever I think of
Time is changing
My heart feels deep sympathy
To men in olden days.

Track 24

Ōtomo-no Yakamochi

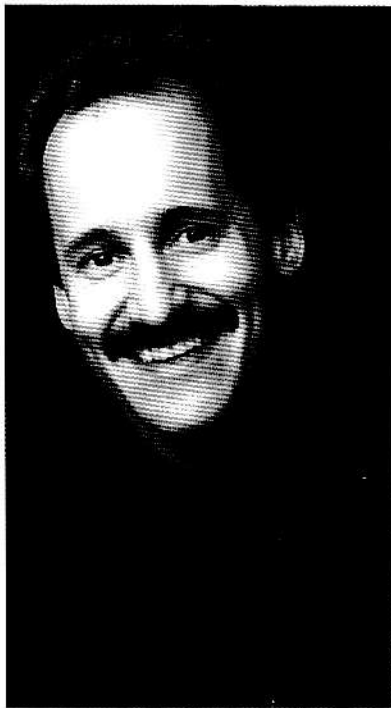
AKEMI NAITO

Born in Tokyo in 1956, Akemi Naito began studying piano at the age of five and composition at the age of fourteen. In 1978, she received B.A. in Music Composition from the University Division at the Toho Gakuen School of Music and graduate degree from the same university in 1980, and was a member of school's faculty from 1980 until 1991. She was awarded the Takei Prize in 1982 and a finalist of the Music Today Composition Award in 1982 and 1988. Following her earlier activity as a composer in Tokyo, a grant from the Asian Cultural Council allowed her to move to New York City in 1991 and continue her career in the United States.

Ms. Naito's works have been featured in music festivals around the world such as International Bayan Festival in Moscow, PASIC in Dallas, Gaudeamus Music Festival, Melbourne Festival, Musica Scienza Roma, Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, Japan Society Spring Festival, Music from Japan Festival, Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva in Mexico and Music Today International Festival in Tokyo. Her Marimba piece, *Memory of the Woods*, which was written in 2000 for William Moersch has been widely performed throughout U.S. and Uruguay, Argentina, Spain, Belgium, England, Canada, Japan and Korea.

Naito is a recipient of awards and grants from organizations including the Bellagio residency from the Rockefeller Foundation, Chamber Music America, the New York Foundation for the Arts, consecutive ASCAP Standard Awards since 1998, Meet the Composer, the first Aaron Copland Award from the Copland House residence, and resident fellowships from Yaddo, MacDowell Colony and Millay Colony for the Arts. Her music has been recorded on CRI, EMI and ALM.





William Moersch is internationally renowned as a marimba virtuoso, chamber and symphonic percussionist, recording artist, and educator. He has appeared as soloist with symphonic orchestras and in recital throughout North and South America, Europe, the Far East, and Australia. A regularly featured artist at international percussion festivals, he is perhaps best known for his solo compact disc "The Modern Marimba" and for commissioning over the past twenty-five years much of the prominent modern American repertoire for solo marimba. Professor and Chair of the Percussion Division at the University of Illinois since 1998, Mr. Moersch also created graduate degree programs in marimba performance at the Peabody Conservatory and Rutgers University. A graduate of the University of Michigan, where he was a scholarship student of Charles Owen, Mr. Moersch has performed with the New Jersey Symphony,

American Symphony, New York Chamber Symphony, New York City Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Currently, he is Principal Timpanist/Percussionist of Sinfonia da Camera.

Violist **Richard O'Neill**, is a member of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society Two, and has performed as chamber musician and soloist through the United States, France, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. He has performed at the Marlboro Festival for the past three summers and has been a guest artist for the Da Camera Society of Los Angeles, the Chamber Music Society of Fort Worth, the CooperArts Series at the Cooper Union, and Bargemusic. He has also toured extensively with Musicians from Marlboro, the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, and the International Sejong Soloists. O'Neill holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Southern California where he graduated magna cum laude, and is currently pursuing his Masters degree at the Juilliard School. He has studied with Paul Neubauer, Karen Tuttle, Donald McInnes, and Sally Peck. In 2006 he was the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

June Han holds a Premier Prix for Harp and Chamber Music from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, a Master of Music and Artist Diploma degree from the Yale School of Music, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the Juilliard School. An active proponent of chamber and contemporary music, she performs with Ensemble Sospeso, Sequitur Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, Ensemble 21, and the Columbia Sinfonietta. She has also appeared with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Azure Ensemble and Bronx Art Ensemble. Ms. Han is also an active orchestral player and has performed with the Orchestre de Paris, the Kirov Opera Orchestra; Sinfonieorchester Basel; the New York City Opera; and the New York Philharmonic. Ms. Han's appearances at summer festival appearances include the Aspen and Tanglewood festivals in the United States, and the Bowdoin International Music Festival. Her recordings include works by Webern, Schoenberg, Carter, Musgrave, Zorn, and she has premiered works by her mother, Young-Ja Lee. Ms. Han is currently on faculty at Columbia University and Yale School of Music, and is joining the Pre-College Faculty at the Juilliard School this fall.

Flutist **Tara Helen O'Connor** is a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning New Millennium Ensemble, a member of the innovative woodwind ensemble, Windscape, flute soloist of the Bach Aria Group, and the first wind player chosen to

participate in the Chamber Music Society Two program. Today she performs regularly with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Bargemusic, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, and Music from Angel Fire. She has collaborated with the Orion, Borromeo, and St. Lawrence string quartets, and, in the summer of 1999, made her concerto debut at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Last season's highlights include appearances with Jaime Laredo and Peter Serkin, as well as collaborations with Paula Robison and the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. Ms. O'Connor, who has recorded for the Arcadia, CRI, Koch International, and Bridge Records labels, received a Doctorate from SUNY Stony Brook and is professor of flute at the Purchase College Conservatory of Music. An avid photographer, she has credits in Time Out, Strad, and Chamber Music America magazines. Ms. O'Connor lives with her husband, violinist Daniel Phillips, in New York City. She was the winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant.



June Han, Akemi Naito, Richard O'Neill, Tara Helen O'Connor

Accordionist **Claudio Jacomucci** graduated from Conservatoire Nationale de Grenoble in 1992, where he received the *Médaille d'Or à l'unanimité*. He has studied accordion with Jean Luc Manca, Vladimir Zubitsky and Mogens Ellegaard. In 2000 he finished the Alexander Technique course, a three year program led by Paul Versteeg and Tessa Marwick in the ATCA in Amsterdam, graduating as a STAT certified teacher. While In Amsterdam he also studied South Indian Music (carnatic) at the Sweelick Conservatory. Mr. Jacomucci has won several international competitions including Grand Prix International d'Accordeón in St. Etienne (France 1988), Trofeo Mundial C.M.A. in Cuenca (Spain 1990), Premio Città di Castelfidardo (Italy 1990) and Arrasate Hiria (Basque Country 1994). He has collaborated with many



composers including Luciano Berio, Franco Donatoni, Gyorgy Kurtag, Luis De Pablo, Boris Porena, Mario Pagliarani, Lucio Garau, Gabriele Manca, Dimitri Nicolau, Fernando Mencherini, Giorgio Tedde, Carlo Crivelli, Francesco Lalicata, Nicola Sani, Akemi Naito, presenting premieres of works for the accordion which are often dedicated to him.

He has recorded CDs for Schott Wergo, W & B Music, Rivoalto, Bridge Records, Stile Libero, Musica & Poesia, and Ema Records, and his book "TECNICA I" on modern accordion technique is published by Bèrben. He teaches accordion and Alexander Technique at the "G Lettimi" Conservatory in Rimini.

Paul Griffiths, in the *New York Times*, describes the **Cygnus Ensemble** as an "enterprising and supple group, featuring guitars, strings and woodwinds in pairs, an instrumentation that has its precedent in the Elizabethan broken consort." Cygnus was founded in 1985 by guitarist William Anderson. Over the course of its 20 years, Cygnus has commissioned, performed and recorded a unique body of chamber music for combinations of instruments that are distinct from the ubiquitous 'Pierrot' formation that has so dominated the last century's chamber music. Cygnus performs this repertoire in an annual series of concerts at major halls in New York City. Last season the group was featured at the Guggenheim Museum, performing a full-length chamber opera, *Prometheus*, by Jonathan Dawe.

Cygnus has toured Europe, performing in Holland, Denmark, Russia, and Poland, and has made tours of the West Coast and Mexico.

Cygnus has been Ensemble in residence at the City University of New York's Graduate Center since 2000, and at Sarah Lawrence College since 2001. These relationships were expanded by a Chamber Music America residency award given to Cygnus in 2004.



Left to Right: Tara Helen O'Connor, Robert Ingliss, William Anderson
Oren Fader, Calvin Wiersma, Susannah Chapman

Junko Ueda (born in Tokyo, Japan) is a Japanese singer and Satsuma-biwa player, presenting Japanese traditional biwa music (story-telling) and shōmyō Buddhist chanting. She also specializes in the performance of pieces by the late Japanese composer Tōru Takemitsu. Ueda studied satsuma-biwa with the famous Kinshi Tsuruta and Buddhist shōmyō-chanting with Kōshin Ebihara. She studied piano and composition (under Jōji Yuasa) at the Tokyo College of Music. Since 1988, Ueda has been based in Europe (Amsterdam, Holland and Granada, Spain) and has been giving biwa/voice solo concerts and shōmyō (Japanese Buddhist chanting) vocal workshops in numerous venues and music festivals. Her traditional biwa CDs "Heike Monogatari" (CD650 VDE/AIMP Geneva) and "Satsuma Biwa" (ARN64577 Arion, Paris / Ethnomad, Geneva) received prizes including the Grand Prix du Disque, Academie Charles Cros, Paris and Choc Le Monde de la Musique, Paris. Junko Ueda has collaborated with composers including Jean-Claude Eloy, Qu Xiaosong, Akemi Naito, Keiko Harada and has performed with cellist Yo Yo Ma. Since 1988 she has been presenting duo performances with Dutch flutist Wil Offermans, and they recorded the CD "How to Survive in Paradise" (CD732 VDE-Gallo Swiss).



Producers: David Starobin (*Mindscape, Voyage, Sanctuary, Months - Spaceship for Zodiac*)

Charlotte Mattax Moersch (*Memory of the Woods*)

Engineers: David Merrill (*Mindscape, Voyage, Sanctuary, Months - Spaceship for Zodiac*)

Jon Schoenoff (*Memory of the Woods*)

Editors: David Merrill, Silas Brown

Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Notes on the compositions: Akemi Naito

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