

VICTO cd055

DONEDA / ACHIARY / SAWAÏ

«TEMPS COUCHÉ»

1. T...9'40"
2. E...9'39"
3. M...5'27"
4. P...16'43"
5. S...6'22"

MICHEL DONEDA : saxophone soprano
BEÑAT ACHIARY : chant, percussion
KAZUE SAWAÏ : kotos

Enregistré en public à la Collégiale St-Pierre La Cour
 le 13 mai 1997.



Born in the French part of the Basque provinces, Achiary brings into his improvising the specific vocal texture of his region's folk tradition. "It is in the throat," wrote Roland Barthes in "The Grain of the Voice," "place where the phonic metal hardens and is segmented, in the mask that signifiante explodes, bringing not the soul but jouissance." But Achiary's ecstatic, at times explosive vocal grain is brought into close contact with the various techniques of European and American vanguard voice, from instant composers Phil Minton and Jaap Blonk to classical interpreters Roy Hart and Cathy Berberian. But where some contemporary vocalists abjure open, clear singing, Achiary often uses startlingly pretty tone, allowing his powerful vox to soar resoundingly, or bringing the dynamic down to a subdued coo. Approaches from other traditions, such as Noh theater, have also clearly not escaped his careful study.

From France comes saxophonist Michel Doneda, an improviser at once integrative and highly tolerant of independence. When he, Sawai and Achiary move apart, there's no scramble to hold the group in check; instead, mutual trust allows them to build simultaneous sound-worlds, creating an impression that has a cumulative effect without relying on mimicry or overt cohesion.

Japanese koto-player Sawai pools musical resources at once startlingly new and extremely ancient. More than 1300 years old, the koto is one of the great tools of musical reflection; its movable bridges can be arranged in any tuning configuration. She can turn it into a harp or a guitar, pound bottom-end rhythms on it or pick spiky high notes like a delicate music box. Like North Indian classical music, the koto tradition is open to a certain amount of innovation – for instance, koto master Michio Miyagi, with whom Sawai studied starting at age eight, created an 80-string koto (the conventional instrument has only 13 strings). As an improviser, Sawai capitalizes on such openness. A superb listener, she is sensitive and daring, utilizing the vast timbral and microtonal possibilities of her instrument, working in tandem with her European partners to produce a music never before heard, but a music that still somehow fits into the grand scheme of koto invention.

A simultaneous embrace and refusal of tradition. Cultural difference at once disavowed and celebrated. The search for something startlingly new as a link to something unspeakably old. Music sounded that keeps on sounding.

– John Corbett, Chicago, November 1997

