

Only in February this year, the editors of Muzyk magazine (<https://muzyk.net/takeshi-asai-wywiad/>) talked to Japanese pianist Takeshi Asai, who has been living and performing in New York for many years. Today, after holding the long-awaited CD in our hands for a month, we can finally talk about its contents.

A versatile pianist with a solid education, diverse influences and his own unique sense and style of playing, until last year he released his albums under his own label, de Trois Cités. All of them have been distinguished by their extraordinary lyricism, unique sound, intriguing technical and stylistic solutions (let us recall that Takeshi Asai is also a teacher at the music school he founded as a Steinway&Sons Educational Partner) and also a broad, yet very attentive view of the all-encompassing beauty that the composer and instrumentalist has been able to write down meticulously in notes.

The year 2021, along with the album "The Electric Project Vol. 2", showed a completely new face of the Artist, which was closely related to the change of the label's name to - how significant in its meaning: Fono Bono Records.

Although each of the previous 9 albums released under the de Trois Cités label still fascinates, moves, and inspires indescribable respect and admiration, it is impossible not to notice the transformation in the quality of Fono Bono's music. Takeshi Asai, being both composer and arranger, pianist, sound director, and producer of the album, has come a long way in each of these respects, giving us with the Fono Bono label not only wonderful compositions with fantastic structures and meters and amazing concepts. For Fono Bono also brings with it stunning piano technique and a polished sound that will delight the greatest music lovers.



2022 Fono Bono Records

In mid-April this year, Fono Bono label released his second album, entitled "Trio Vol. VI". The New York trio, with whom Takeshi met at his DTC studio, consists of musicians whom the pianist chose not only for their excellent technical skills and perfect sound. Bob Gingery (bass) and Brian Woodruff (drums) are the pianist's regular collaborators, with whom he has played numerous projects during his residency in Lower Manhattan, and whose sensitivity and shared joy in playing, resulting in an immediate chemistry between the trio, perfectly reflected what the artist wanted to portray through his compositions. Shortly after recording the material, Bob Gingery told TopBass magazine (<https://topbass.pl/dobrze-wkomponowane-melodyjne-solo-basowe-jest-swietne-ale-to->

nie-dlatego-gram-na-basie-wywiad-z-bobem-gingery/) about his impressions, while Brian Woodruff spoke to TopDrummer (<https://topdrummer.pl/brian-woodruff-wywiad/>).

But back to the "Trio Vol. VI" album itself: It contains, apart from the last piece (an arrangement of a James Taylor song), 9 original compositions by the pianist, that - which is a typical procedure for a musician full of charisma - each time have a second bottom, carry the beauty of a deeply hidden mystery, often also being a dedication to important people and events. The programme of the album consists of works: "WI"/ 2. "Yonder"/ 3. "(I didn't know that it was) Bacon"/ 4. "Iota"/ 5. "Air on the White Keys"/ 6. "Ave Marta"/ 7. "Mes Demoiselles"/ 8. "Blue Brain"/ 9. "CΔ/Db"/ 10. "Fire and Rain".

Although each of the captivating compositions is set in the broad style of improvised music, the source of inspiration is not only jazz. For example - "(I didn't know it wa) Bacon" was taken from the EDM (Electric Dance Music) that Takeshi was working on prior to the release of this album. This track is built on a simple loop built wonderfully by the double bass, with marvelous drumming by Brian becoming an almost acoustic human version of a drum machine.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ue\\_FnN4TIJ4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ue_FnN4TIJ4)

In the format of a traditional piano trio, Takeshi Asai has included the most cutting-edge musical concepts on the album. For example, in the opening track "WI," the 5/4 meter switches to 6/4 metre halfway through the song, and that 6/4 is divided by 4, so the dotted quarter note becomes a bar. Praise to the composer and praise to the musicians! This is a perfect example of Takeshi's concept: easy, clear, and alluring to the casual listener, but at the same time very interesting to advanced listeners and musicians; traditional for some to hear, but super-advanced for discerning listeners. Here we come to the heart of what has always distinguished this composer's works: Takeshi's music is always easy and enjoyable to listen to for everyone, even those who are not necessarily jazz fans, but at the same time it always captures the attention of serious jazz listeners and musicians. This balance comes together in such beautiful harmony!

There are no similar songs on this album. Each composition has its place, each - charms in its own way. The album covers 2/2, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4 and 12/8 meter and takes us through swing, straight, shuffle, waltz and rubato.

Not only the rhythm, but also the harmonic concepts and the way the voicings are conducted are very sophisticated. For example, "Air on the White Keys" sounds like a light and easy ballad, while the way of conducting voices on the piano is derived from advanced classical music.

As many compositions - as many wonderful stories to tell, as many opportunities to take fascinating journeys through the mysterious recesses of beauty of the mind of an amazing composer, piano virtuoso and sound director who cares about the highest level of sound. "Trio Vol. VI" is an album that has delighted all of Europe and the United States within a month, so let's delight ourselves too!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtXTzTgQhwU>