

Bożena, Ave Marta and the Castle
JazZamek Japanese version. Takeshi Asai smiling genius

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Takeshi Asai played in the Poznań Castle. It was the 42nd meeting in the JazZamek series. The concert of the Japanese virtuoso was recorded and it is intended to be the basis of the album being prepared. Takeshi Asai himself, an extremely cheerful musician, flew to Poland from New York, where he plays and produces sound in his studio. The musician himself began to take the piano seriously only when he turned 40.

Of course, even if it was a revelation, Takeshi Asai had learned to play other instruments before, and it was not his first contact with the piano either. Despite his musical education, he did not associate his career with the stage. Still in Japan, he was not professionally engaged in music. After arriving in the US, he did not immediately take up music, as he admitted in an interview with Marta Ratajczak, he was mainly thinking about earning a living in the US.

His musical path, despite the fact that it started relatively late, went extremely quickly. Today, Takeshi Asai has released 11 albums. His fascinating piano technique intersects an open jazz-improvisational approach with respect for the classical understanding of harmony. He plays the chords very interestingly. It makes his compositions often break in an extremely humorous - subtle but surprising way. We heard these volts in Poznań mainly in the second part of the concert.

It must be admitted that the Great Hall of C.K. The castle is a very acoustically friendly space. Exotic wood adds softness to the sounds, which allows you to listen comfortably. Apart from the constantly falling cells of that part of the listeners who came to record a video and shoot a photo, and not listen, perfect conditions for a solo piano concert. In the case of Asai, the sound is, apart from technique and harmony, an extremely important asset. As a sound engineer, he pays a lot of attention to the sounds already at the composition stage.

The magnetic beginning of the concert, "Improvisation", in which the tracking of an open hand suspended above the keyboard - aroused curiosity and this specific kind of focus so necessary to notice the novelty - the transfer of the composer's reflection from the head to the left hand. A concentrated pianist, in a truly understood improvisation, if it wasn't a solo concert, we could talk about intuitive music. However, there was also a specific kind of listening to one's own playing, the piece was devoid of calculation. The Japanese's attention to the harmony of the composition and the playing itself will appear in the next works. "Autumn Leaves" brought to mind Michel Petrucciani's Kalisz concert from the 1980s. century, although there are more echoes of the classics here. Takeshi Asai also proved to be an extremely cheerful compere. You can say that he adopted the concept of a tour guide around the concert. Simple announcements and clear anecdotes, and above all a smile, added lightness to this evening. "Dark Rain" a track that preceded Asai's dynamic track titled "Bożena". The composition dedicated to Bożena Szota,

who hosts the series of JazZamek concerts, was a great introduction to "Ave Marta" with a clear reference to the classic Bach standard. In the game of the Japanese, apart from the amazing technique betraying the fascination with the legendary concerts of Jarrett, the weather and lightness of the right hand prevailed. If maestro Keith Jarrett has already been compared to him, Asai is definitely the closest to a master playing the harpsichord. Then Jarrett, sounds lighter more classic. The pianist's next composition sounded extremely epic. "Twilight" - Satie, at times close to minimalism, revealed a conscious layout of the concert. Dramaturgy from this piece, or rather after it accelerated.

"Lotus Blossoms" began with extraordinary virtuoso tempos and beats. However, Asai's illustrative, plastic piano still dominates. Most of the songs seem to resonate with Chopin, even though we listen to jazz. Takeshi Asai is far from the game style of the Japanese avant-garde Satoko Fuji. Another turning point of the concert was probably the song "Rozmowa z J.S. Bachem", in which non-literal quotations of the master J.S. sounded beautifully again, carrying a classic element. Although it cannot be denied that it is not an abuse to say that without Bach there would be no jazz. In a way, following the punch, we can call the clear play with Pachelbel in the composition "Wa no Canon". The unusual dynamics of the event at the end of the concert were added by Zamek. The composition based on the blues scheme allowed for the unusual work of the left hand. Here Takeshi Asai made himself known for his less frugal, less lyrical performance. And it was a beautiful end to the concert. Cheerful, with funny harmonies and sounds, a nice nod to the Castle and Poznań. In the first encore number, an astute listener could pick up an almost Jarrett take on the theme of "Over the Rainbow", including Jarrett's characteristic Tokyo rendition of floating off the bench. Beautiful. slightly liberated from the frame, Asai showed another good portion of almost Monk playing as he went on to the next encore. He did it by playing the phenomenal "I Mean You". The fantastic reception prompted the artist to close the evening with an extremely picturesque song by the forgotten Hoagland Howard Carmichael - "The Nearness of You".

Extremely illustrative playing, smooth transitions from his own compositions to standards and fun on the borderline of jazz and classical playing, allowed Takeshi Asai to show the universal beauty of music beyond genres. This year's penultimate JazZamek was undoubtedly an important event. There was nothing left but to wait for the release of the album with the recording of this concert.

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https://popcentrala.com/jazzamek-wersja-japonska-takeshi-asai-usmiechniety-geniusz/?fbclid=IwAR0LzpaXVOFm9jPZ12D6gKR_R-GDlCbrckfnSLhiUUG-p9n_vskexxvCjw