



Basil ATHANASIADIS

Book of Dreams

Book of Dreams II

Five Songs

Circles

Dream of a Butterfly II

Eyes are now Dim

shonorities

Basil Athanasiadis

Book of Dreams

1	Book of Dreams II (alto flute, string quartet)	18:04
	Five Pieces (female voice, prepared piano)	14:19
2	I	2:00
3	II	2:11
4	III	4:23
5	IV	3:37
6	V	2:06
7	Circles (piano, electronics)	10:21
	Dream of a Butterfly II (Rhodes piano)	16:21
8	I	2:14
9	II	2:57
10	III	1:19
11	IV	1:40
12	V	2:12
13	VI	1:43
14	VII	4:13
15	Eyes are now Dim (female voice, shō, koto, violin, Chinese gongs)	20:06

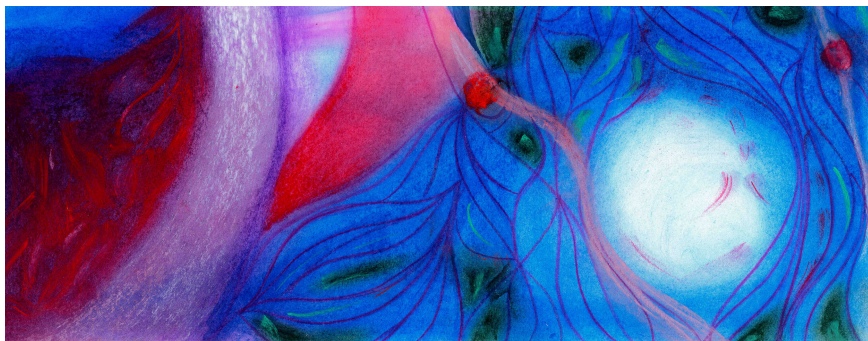
79:12

Shonorities

Shie Shoji (voice) | Lin Lin (alto flute) | Naomi Sato (shō) | Keiko Hisamoto (koto) |
Nao Tohara (violin) | Basil Athanasiadis (piano, Rhodes, percussion)

Guest Artists

Noah Max (conductor) | Elena Abad Martinez (violin) | Chloë Meade (violin) |
Daichi Yoshimura (viola) | Henry Hargreaves (cello)



The music

Notes by the composer

As suggested by the title, *Book of Dreams*, is a music collection featuring works that either directly or indirectly bear some relation to dreams, sleeping or in general, the state of subconsciousness. Despite their apparent thematic uniformity, the five compositions featured are characterised by a wide stylistic and aesthetic diversity. In terms of instrumentation, there is a fragile balance between works for Western instruments such as that for alto flute and string quartet (*Book of Dreams II*) or voice with prepared piano (*Five Pieces*), the electroacoustic timbre of the Rhodes piano (*Dream of a Butterfly II*), and more unusual combinations such as piano and electronics (*Circles*), or shō, koto, female voice, Chinese gongs and violin (*Eyes are now Dim*). In conceptual terms, the pieces amalgamate elements of Japanese and Chinese aesthetics combined with a form of Western minimalism, together with elements of modernism, electronic and ambient music, improvisation and jazz. Therefore, very much like in dreams where several seemingly antithetic elements harmoniously co-exist into a story governed by its own unique rules, this collection aims to bridge contrasting music genres by blending them into a polychromatic musical tapestry.

Book of Dreams II

Book of Dreams II was composed in 2017 at the request of the flautist Lin Lin as part of her PhD research on traditional Chinese instrumental techniques. The musical material derives from a collection of traditional and modern pieces for solo hulushi gathered during the flutist's fieldwork at a remote rural area in China, and video footage featuring daily-life scenes such as a young woman making yarn in the traditional way as well as aspects of the village and its surrounding nature. The resulting work consists of nine movements inter-connected into a single-movement structure. The melodic material derives largely from short melodic fragments and rhythms taken from the original folk tunes. As reference to the imagery of traditional weaving, the string quartet material is built almost in its entirety on repetitive melodic patterns of varied lengths, superimposed to create a polychromatic tapestry, reminiscent of the imagery of traditional Chinese textiles. The melodic material has been composed in a flexible manner to allow the flautist's interpretational input (i.e. incorporate extended techniques idiomatic to hulushi). The lack of melodic development and rational structural organisation shows an affinity to the eastern aesthetics rather than the western idea of cause and effect. The melodic simplicity, lyricism and modal harmonic character prevalent throughout the work is a reference to the folk character of hulushi.



Five Pieces

An adaption of work for shō and prepared piano, *Five Pieces* is a setting of four Japanese haiku by Matsuo Bashō and Yasuhara Teishitsu. The intimate vocal line often resonating inside the piano strings, unravels over the mostly improvised fragile sounds of the prepared piano, creating a soundworld evocative of the dreamy character of the four haiku. Unlike my other works for voice, in *Five Pieces*, the text was chosen and set after the melodic line was composed, with only minor modifications to the original instrumental part.

I, V

涼しさのかたまりなれや夜半の月

suzushisa no katamari nare ya yowa no tsuki

the bright full moon of midnight—perhaps a rounded sphere of coolness

Teishitsu

II

枯枝に烏の泊まりけり秋の暮

kare-eda ni karasu no tomari keri aki no kure

a crow is perched on a bare branch; it is an autumn eve

Bashō

III

閑さや岩にしみいる蟬の声

shizukasa ya iwa ni shimi-iru semi no koe

what stillness! the cicadas' voices penetrate the rocks

Bashō

IV

海くれて鴨の聲ほのかにしろし

umi kurete kamo no koe honokani shiroshi

night has fall'n on the sea wild ducks' voices are faint and white

Bashō



Circles

An improvisation for solo piano mixed with an electronics track created out of a single-tone recording of my voice. The piano material was inspired by the tranquil atmosphere of the narrow downtown streets of Arakawa District in Tokyo where I passed daily cycling on my way to the university and back home, whereas the electronic part alludes to both Buddhist chanting and the ambience noise of the city.



Dream of a Butterfly II

In September 2014, Daniel Biro (Sargasso Records), contacted me with a somewhat unusual suggestion. The mission was, to come up with a piece for the now discontinued Fender Rhodes piano, to be included in a unique music collection showcasing Rhodes in a solo context. Although familiar with its sound through jazz and rock, I could not quite associate it with contemporary music. However, being attracted by its unique electroacoustic chime-like timbre, I decided to take up the challenge. Indeed, in New Year's Eve of 2015, I collected the instrument from Daniel's house. However, it was not until several months later before I was able to start composing the work.

Unlike the traditional piano, I found the keyboard extremely sensitive, with a narrower dynamic range, inhomogeneous sound throughout its register and a somewhat irregular sustain pedal function. For that reason, I quickly felt that the best way to capture the instrument's character would be by improvising the work instead of trying to accurately notate it. *Dream of a Butterfly II* started as a collection of several short musical sketches. These were gradually filtered, and the few selected were organised into seven thematically unrelated movements, each highlighting different timbral aspects of the instrument. Here, repetition, contrasting textures, and focus on subtle timbral effects, replaces the traditional Western processes of thematic development. Also, instrumental peculiarities such as irregularity in timbre and sound response when playing or sustaining notes, have been organically incorporated into the composition as structural features. Although *Dream of a Butterfly II* was composed in order to demonstrate the expressive and virtuosic potential of Rhodes, its writing, limits the required virtuosity to the absolutely necessary. The various passages are bare from unnecessary frills. Here speed and brilliance are of secondary importance as they derive naturally from the inner interpretative necessity for a convincing atmosphere and imagery: that of a fragile butterfly shifting unexpectedly from one flower to the other. The work is dedicated to Daniel Biro.



Eyes are Now Dim

Despite their brevity and lack of subjective sentimentalism, the Japanese haiku are open to free interpretation through the creation of a multitude of personal associations of images, ideas and feelings. Such contradiction between the poems' diminutive outlook and their macrocosmic interpretative depictions, creates a kind of dynamic tension. A similar technique is employed in the design of Japanese gardens and landscaping where on a small scale, the elements of the natural world are cleverly used to give the illusion of a greater outdoor space. This technique of compressing a vast landscape into a small space is known as "the great within the small". Using this aesthetic idea as source of inspiration, *Eyes are Now Dim* explores the macrocosm contained in the haiku by Matsuo Bashō. The work, especially composed for the 2016 Shonorities' tour in UK and Greece, was supported by Japan Foundation (*Performing Arts Japan Programme for Europe 2015-16*), the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, the Japanese Embassy in Greece and the Greek-Japanese Association, and was dedicated to the 81st birthday of the Greek musicologist, music critic and composer George Leotsakos.

鷹の目も今や暮れぬと鳴く鶉

taka no me mo ima ya kurenu to naku uzura

The quails are chirping in the dusk aware the hawk's eyes are now dim



From left to right: Nao Tohara (violin), Keiko Hisamoto (koto), Shie Shoji (voice), Naomi Sato (shō).

The composer and performers



Basil Athanasiadis

After completing his piano and advanced theory studies at the National Conservatoire of Athens, Basil moved to London. He studied composition at the Trinity College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and finally at the Canterbury Christ Church University where he obtained his PhD supported by the *Research Studentship Award*.

Having recently completed his *JSPS Bridge Fellowship* (2018-19) at the Tokyo University of the Arts, Basil is the only composer to date to be twice the recipient of the prestigious *JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship Award* (2010-11 and 2011-13). During that period, Basil was based at the Tokyo University of the Arts as a *Special Foreign Researcher*, where he composed new works for Western and Japanese instruments with a particular interest on the shō (mouth

organ) and the 20-stringed koto.

Basil's works are characterised by a strong visual identity; his performances has often been accompanied by dance or stage action. Early influences can be traced in Sergiu Celibidache's views on aspects of ambience and acoustic space (Athanasiadis attended Celibidache's Munich seminars in 1994), and in composers such as Christou, Feldman and Takemitsu. His most recent works focus on the Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*, which has also been the main subject of his doctoral and postdoctoral research since 2004.

Represented by United Music Publishing since 2014, his music has been released on CD by Dutton Epoch, Sargasso, Regent Records, Fonorum and the Choir & Organ Magazine.

Basil's works have been performed in Europe, US, Canada and Asia by performers and ensembles such as Evelyn Glennie, Mayumi Miyata, members of the Düsseldorf Symphonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet, New London Chamber Ensemble, Silk String Quartet, Okeanos, Mondriaan Quartet, Alea III, Shonorities and choirs such as the BBC Singers, Wells Cathedral Choir, Cambridge Chapel Choir of Selwyn College and Montreal Christ Church Cathedral Choir.

Shonorities

Shonorities is a diverse group of performers and composers committed to promoting a range of repertoire that encompasses a wide spectrum of musical styles including old, contemporary and traditional pieces. By blending a variety of musical cultures, Shonorities aims to show the potential of the cross-cultural collaboration in the contemporary music creation. Shonorities' past projects feature works for a variety of instrumental combinations including female voice and traditional Japanese instruments supported by organisations such as the Japan Foundation, Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Sawakawa Foundation, Japanese Embassy in Greece, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, British Council and the Greek-Japanese Association.

Shie Shoji

Shie studied singing at Trinity College of Music and the Royal Welsh College of Music. With an experience in both operatic and musical theatre roles Shie has taken part in productions such as *Turandot*, *I Due Foscari*, *Boris Godoenov* (National Reis Opera), *Miss Saigon* (Cameron Mackintosh Production) and *The Merry Widow* (Carl Rosa Opera Company). New dance/music theatre works credits include the production of *Love Suicide at Amijima*, (Riverside Studios), Evelyn Ficarra/Sarah Fahie's *Submarine* (Robin Howard Dance Theatre) and *Nigh bed is in mess* (Japan), broadcast on Resonance FM in *Soap Opera* (Albany Theatre) and Kurtag's *Kafka Fragmente* (Greece). As a co-founder and vocalist of Shonorities, Shie has been actively collaborating with musicians and other artists for the creation of new works. Her recordings of Basil Athanasiadis' works have been released on three CDs under the labels Sargasso and Metier.

Naomi Sato

Naomi studied saxophone at the Tokyo University of the Arts and Conservatorium van Amsterdam and shō with Ko Ishikawa at the Tokyo University of the Arts. She was the Semi Finalist of the 2nd International *Adolphe Sax Concours in Dinant* (1998), and 3rd prize winner of the *Saxophonewettbewerf Gustav Bunke* in Hannover (1999). Naomi is a permanent member of the Atlas Ensemble in the Netherlands. As soloist she has performed with ensembles such as Ives Ensemble, Nieuw Ensemble, Diotima Quartet, Ensemble Resonance, Ensemble PHACE, Ictus Ensemble, B'Rock, Prague Modern, N-JP project and the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra.

Keiko Hisamoto

Keiko studied koto with Nanae Yoshimura. Graduate of the Kunitachi College of Music, was trained in the Yamada style which is not very common in the contemporary Japanese music scene. Keiko has participated in numerous performance projects in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Korea and appeared on the NHK-FM programme *Japanese Music Moments*. She has also collaborated with artists of different music genres, such as live appearances by Demon Kogure performing with Japanese drums and voice or soundtrack recordings. Keiko is master of the Genso Koto Association, member of the organisation Pro Musica Nipponia and a lecturer at the Tokyo University of the Arts.

Lin Lin

Lin has studied at the Royal College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and currently undertaking performance based PhD research program at Goldsmiths University of London. Lin has established herself by giving a large number of solo and chamber recitals in major concert halls and music festivals throughout Europe and Asia. She also worked with leading orchestras as the soloist and principal flute, including recent public performance with Trinity Symphony Orchestra, as the flute soloist, for the European premiere of Golden Flute Concerto (Chen Yi) as well as world premiere of Hua Mulan Saga (Sandy Clark) at London Blackheath Concert Hall.

Nao Tohara

Nao studied violin at the Tokyo National University of Arts. During his studies and at the time of his graduation, he was recipient of the *Anke* and *Acanthus Music Awards* respectively. In 2012 won the 1st prize at the *17th Concert Sale Maronie 21 String Competition*, whereas in 2014, he was recipient of the *Aoyama Foundation Scholarship*. In the following year, he became member of the Tokyo Kioi Sinfonietta and in 2016, he was awarded the *Career Development Award* at the *Banff International String Quartet Competition*. A fellow at the *Suntory Hall Chamber Music Academy (3rd Season)*, Nao is a member of the Quartet Arpa (violin), Lemoned Quartet (viola) and concert master at the Geidai Philharmonia Orchestra.

Noah Max

Noah Max has been described as ‘one of nature’s artists’ (John Wilson). His activities have been praised by conductors Sir Mark Elder and Sian Edwards, critics Barry Millington (The Guardian) and Paul Conway (Musical Opinion) and composers Sir George Benjamin, Roxanna Panufnik and Joseph Phibbs. 2018 highlights included assisting Jonathan Cohen at the BBC Proms, working with Marin Alsop in Snape Maltings, championing new and neglected music with his orchestra the Echo Ensemble and writing for groups including the Barbican Piano Trio, Ebor Singers and Marryat Players. 2017 saw his Cadogan and Wigmore debuts; this year he performs at the Royal Albert Hall’s Elgar Room and 13 of his works will be given first performances between January and July 2019. Noah is a chamber musician, filmmaker and BP Young Artist whose paintings have exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery. His poetry has been set to music by Ronald Corp OBE.

Elena Abad Martinez

Born in Spain, Elena began learning the violin at age seven and gave her debut solo recital aged 8. In 2001, she joined the Málaga Soloists Youth Orchestra, with whom she gave numerous concerts performing a varied programme as a soloist. Since then she has undertaken a number of concert tours around Europe. In 2007, she moved to London to study with Evgeny Grach (Principal of the London Symphony Orchestra) at The Purcell School of Music with a scholarship. Elena, has completed her MA Music in violin at Trinity Laban where she was a *Trinity College London Scholar*, *Violet Wright Scholar*, *Beatrice Taylor Scholar*, and *Helen Roll Scholar*. She recently won the prestigious 2019 *Trinity Laban Gold Medal* award.

Chloë Meade

Chloë started learning the violin at the age of 4 and was awarded a Music Scholarship to Alleyns School at 11. She is currently studying with Joshua Fisher at the Royal Academy of Music. She was a *Beckenham Festival Musician of the Year Finalist* in 2009 and 2012 and was awarded the *Maxine Kwok and Daniel Bates Cup* for the most promising string player at the Festival in 2012. In 2014 she was the soloist in a performance of Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 at St. John’s, Smith Square, and in 2016 performed Bach’s A minor Violin Concerto at All Souls Church, Coventry, as well as leading a performance of Verdi’s Requiem at the Royal Festival Hall. Chloë is a member of the Frinton Quartet. During her studies at the Academy, Chloë has played in the Symphony Orchestra with conductors such as Christopher Warren-Green, Yan Pascal Tortelier Sir Mark Elder and James Newton-Howard.

Daichi Yoshimura

Born in Japan and raised in England, Daichi Yoshimura is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London under the tutelage of Juan-Miguel Hernandez, violist in the legendary Fine Arts Quartet. He has held the position of both co-principal and principal viola in the Academy Symphony Orchestra on numerous occasions. He was awarded 2nd place in the *Mica Comberti Bach Prize*. His string quartet at the Academy are also recipients of the *Davey-Posnanski scheme*.

Henry Hargreaves

Henry, 21, is an award winning cellist studying at the Royal Academy of Music with Felix Schmidt. He is principal cellist with Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra and assistant cello tutor at Youth Music Centre, Golders Green. Henry performs as soloist and chamber musician at leading festivals and venues around the UK and Europe most recently performing the Brahms Double Concerto at Cambridge University. He has excellent orchestral credentials, continuing to work with many of the world's greatest conductors and maintains a successful private class alongside his performing commitments.



From left to right: Elena Abad Martinez (violin) Lin Lin (alto flute), Henry Hargreaves (cello), Basil Athanasiadis, Daichi Yoshimura (viola), Noah Max (conductor), Chloë Meade (violin)

A great part of this recording has been made possible through the generous support of the organisation JSPS, the host Professor Tatsuhiko Nishioka who generously invited me in Japan for the third consecutive time, the indispensable help of Professor Toru Kamekawa who kindly engineered three of the tracks in this collection, my host institution Tokyo University of the Arts for their amazing hospitality, my wife for her discreet but invaluable support, my son for his great patience during our rehearsal and recording sessions in Tokyo, my sister for kindly creating the cover artwork and finally all the performers from UK, Holland and Japan who diligently dedicated their time to prepare this collection.



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Recording engineers: Toru Kamekawa (tracks 2-7, 15); Sean Wooklock (track 1), Basil Athanasiadis (tracks 8-14)

Editing/mixing: Basil Athanasiadis

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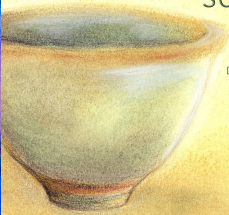
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"Mesmerizing quietude. Music that hues closely to a Japanese aesthetic based on simplicity of utterance and purity of expression... absolutely intriguing and immensely satisfying, leaving this listener in a state of completely peaceful relaxation." - (Rafael Music Notes)

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