

An abstract painting with a complex texture. The background is dominated by shades of blue and green, with visible brushstrokes and some darker, more saturated areas. In the upper center, there's a figure that looks like a person or a stylized form, possibly a traditional Japanese figure. To the right of the center, there's a prominent yellow rectangular shape, which could be a book or a piece of paper. The overall composition is layered and textured, with a sense of depth and movement.

THE LEGEND OF
HAGOROMO
AARON LARGET-CAPLAN

American and Japanese music for classical guitar



THE LEGEND OF
HAGOROMO

AARON LARGET-CAPLAN

THE LEGEND OF HAGOROMO

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | KEIGO FUJII (b.1956)
The legend of Hagoromo | 18'34 |
| 2 | LEO BROUWER (b.1939)
Hika, in memoriam Toru Takemitsu | 8'06 |
| 3 | TORU TAKEMITSU (1930–1996)
Equinox | 6'00 |
| 4 | KEN UENO (b.1970)
Ed è subito sera * | 3'03 |
| 5 | KOTA NAKAMURA (b.1979)
Sui-hou * | 4'57 |
| 6 | HAROLD ARLEN (1905–1986)
Over the rainbow (arr. Toru Takemitsu) | 2'39 |
| 7 | GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)
Summertime (arr. Toru Takemitsu) | 3'45 |
| | MARTIN MAX SCHREINER (b.1950)
Two Japanese idylls * | |
| 8 | i Japanese idyll no.1 | 4'48 |
| 9 | ii Japanese idyll no.2 | 4'21 |
| | | 56'14 |

AARON LARGET-CAPLAN guitar

* Première recording

Aaron Larget-Caplan, hailed by the *Washington Post* as “a riveting artist”, and noted in *Fanfare* for his “enthusiasm and virtuosity”, was born in Oklahoma, raised in Colorado, and gave his debut at the Tabor Opera House at the age of sixteen. Since then he has premiered over 60 compositions, and performed throughout the United States and Europe. A gifted performer and speaker, he is a sought-after soloist and chamber musician regularly performing new and standard repertoire and connecting with audiences with a Bernstein-esque ease. His recordings have received critical acclaim from *Audiophile*, *Fanfare*, *American Record Guide*, *Guitar Magazine* and many more. As a chamber musician he has performed works for small and large ensemble including with choir, string quartet, duos of all types and mixed ensembles. Collaborators include the Rimsky-Korsakov and New England String Quartets, Boston Lyric Opera, and Schola Cantorum of Boston. He is the founder of the New Lullaby Project, a 21st-century commissioning endeavour that invites composers to write classical miniatures in the genre of the lullaby. He released the debut CD “New Lullaby”, featuring 14 new lullabies by 13 American composers in 2010 to critical and public acclaim. He has since premiered over 45 new lullabies coming to him from Japan, Norway, Australia, and the USA by such composers as Scott Wheeler, Ken Ueno, Carson Cooman, Francine Trester and Alan Fletcher. He regularly collaborates with dancers and is the founder of the ensemble iCon Fuego!, which juxtaposes classical Spanish music and flamenco dance and song. He performs many of his own arrangements of Bach, Scarlatti and Spanish composers. His recent arrangements of John Cage and Reynaldo Hahn are to be published by Editions Peters and International Music Company (IMC). He is also the director and founder of Greater Boston House Concerts. He is a graduate of Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with David Leisner. His principal guitar teacher was Dmitry Goryachev and he received additional coaching from Eliot Fisk, Juanito Pascual, and pianist Seymour Bernstein. He is on faculty at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He plays a 2012 guitar by Franco Marino of Sicily, gifted to him by the luthier, and is endorsed by Hannabach Classical Guitar Strings. He lives in Boston with his wife, healer and muse, Catherine.

Keigo Fujii (b.1956 *Hokkaido, Japan*) started playing the guitar when he was nine years old. At 15, he started writing a piece of music each day instead of a diary. He studied in England and Spain at the Guildhall School of Music and the Oscar Espla National Conservatory. Fujii studied composition under Carly Blyton and guitar with David Russel, for whom *The Legend of Hagoromo* is dedicated, and Ichiro Okamoto. Fujii lives in Kyoto, Japan, where he teaches composition at Osaka College of Music.

Leo Brouwer (b.1939 *Havana, Cuba*) is one of the pre-eminent guitar composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. A concert guitarist for many years, he retired from guitar performance after a hand injury in the early 1980s, and is currently the conductor of the Cordoba Symphony in Cordoba, Spain. He attended the Hartt College of Music and later the Juilliard School, where he studied under Vincent Persichetti and took composition classes with Stefan Wolpe. Brouwer and Toru Takemitsu were good friends for many years. The prior premiered many works by Takemitsu including *Towards the Sea* for alto flute and guitar.

Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996 *Tokyo, Japan*) was the first classical composer from the Far East to be introduced to Western audiences, and by none other than Leonard Bernstein. Predominately self-taught, he scored more than 90 films, including many for Akira Kurosawa, and wrote more than 20 books; his *Confronting Silence* is a must read for musicians and music lovers. He successfully combined Western classical music and Eastern philosophies on sound, sound production and balance into his music. His ability to manipulate instruments to obtain special timbres (colours) convinced some to classify him within the musical lineage of Debussy, though the influence of his friends Olivier Messiaen and John Cage should not be underestimated. He wrote more than 20 works for guitar solo and in ensemble, including a guitar concerto premièred by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Ken Ueno (b.1970 *New York, USA*) is a recipient of the Rome Prize and the Berlin Prize and is currently an associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley. As a vocalist, Ueno specializes in extended techniques (throat singing, multiphonics, circular breathing). His music has been featured by Kim Kashkashian, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Del Sol String Quartet, and Alarm Will Sound. His music has been performed at such venues and festivals as Maerz Musik in Berlin, Warsaw Autumn, MusikTriennale Köln Festival, the Muziekgebouw, Spoleto USA and Lincoln Center. Ueno holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Read Ueno's complete bio at: www.kenueno.com

Kota Nakamura (b.1979 *Niigata, Japan*) is a graduate of Tufts University in Boston and Schulich School of Music at McGill University in Montréal where he holds a D.M.A. in music composition. His instructors include Chris Paul Harman, Tibor Pusztaï, Vuk Kulenovic and Allan Cohen and John McDonald. Nakamura's music has been performed on numerous occasions in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. Read Nakamura's complete bio at: www.soundcloud.com/nakamura-kota-1

Martin Max Schreiner (b.1950 *Massachusetts, USA*) has a broad catalogue of compositions including more than 70 works for traditional symphonic instruments, jazz ensemble, chamber groups, choral music and solo vocal works. He began writing for traditional Japanese instruments in 1994 – particularly the shakuhachi and koto. Some of his most recent works combine Japanese and western instruments and include three concertinos for koto and symphony orchestra. His music has won awards from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, NERT International Chamber Music Composition Competition and a Bryant Fellowship from Harvard University. Martin's music has been performed across the United States, in Europe and Japan. Martin is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music where his principal teachers were Arthur Berger, Pozzi Escot and Malcolm Peyton. As an undergraduate he majored in music composition as a student of Philip Bezanson and Robert Stern at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

"That point of intense silence preceding it, called 'ma', there is a metaphysical continuity that defies analysis."

Toru Takemitsu

This programme is a diverse exploration of Eastern and Western musical aesthetics of the late-20th and early-21st centuries through the aural lens of the guitar, though each emanates from unique and personal inspirations: *The legend of Hagoromo* a myth, *Hika* a composer, *Equinox* a painting, *Ed è subito sera* a poem, *Sui-hou* the ephemeral, and the pairs of *Summertime—Over the rainbow* and *Two Japanese Idylls* a melding of the two aesthetic traditions.

Found in variation throughout Asia, the **The legend of Hagoromo** describes a young fisherman falling in love with a heavenly maiden who can fly when she wears her magical feathered kimono (Hagoromo). Wanting to prevent her from leaving him, he steals and hides her Hagoromo while she bathes under the autumn full moon. After a time, and unable to go home to the immortal world, she returns his love and they have a child together. While walking her young son, the boy sings a lullaby whose words describe where the Hagoromo is hidden. Donning it and robed in the blue of heaven she ascends again! But she cries in sadness, for she cannot bring her husband and son along. Lovesick and lonely as well, her husband plants the seed of a moonflower for her, and as her tears water it from the world above it grows into the heavens allowing the fisherman to climb up and join her; her tears becoming a rainbow. Based on a 16-bar song in the traditional Okinawan mode by Hiroshi Yamanoha (d.1991) about the Hagoromo legend, Keigo Fujii does not adhere strictly to the mode and incorporates many extended techniques and effects to create one of the 20th century's great masterpieces.

Opening with an evocation of funeral bells reverberating throughout the mountainside, **Hika** stands as one of Leo Brouwer's most engrossing compositions. Calm with hints of foreboding in its spaciousness and processional pace in the outer sections, the middle rages with wild emotions, possibly at the all-too-early passing of his dear friend. The intermittent recurrences of the funeral bells remind us of the potent loss. Brouwer finds inspiration in Takemitsu's final piano solo *Rain Tree Sketch II – In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen*, and he quotes his own early composition *Tres Apuntes*.

Toru Takemitsu's **Equinox** balances the sonic spectrum of light and dark while evoking hues of the mystical and the bold waves of life through masterful use of color and pacing. The inexact repetitions harken to the imperfect circular shapes in Juan Miró's 1967 painting of the same title.

Through quartertone *scoradatura* and the guitar technique of *tremolo*, **Ed è subito sera** (And suddenly it is evening) constructs a sonic world that reflects on the brevity and the nocturnal image of the lullaby genre. Ken Ueno thought of Salvatore Quasimodo's masterpiece from whence the title originates:

*Everyone stands alone at the heart of the world,
Pierced by a ray of sunlight,
And suddenly it is evening.*

It was written for the New Lullaby Project, and premièred by Aaron Larget-Caplan in November 2013.

Opening with a slow breeze, **Sui-hou** (ephemeral) by Kota Nakamura explores the ephemeral qualities of the guitar and the lullaby through subtle texture, harmonic and timbre effects. The simple rhythmic pacing and consistent tension and release lulls and attracts the ear to the peaceful moment that soon vanishes. It was written for the New Lullaby Project, and premièred by Aaron Larget-Caplan in May 2010.

Takemitsu's arrangements of **Over the rainbow** and **Summertime** juxtapose influences of classical, jazz and traditional Japanese music and come from his *Twelve songs for guitar*. Both songs have a popularity that transcends the larger works within which they were originally contained (*Summertime* is from Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*, and *Over the rainbow* is from the movie *The wizard of Oz*), but more importantly they are also quintessentially American – something which makes the fusion of styles all the more potent.

Martin Max Schreiner's **Two Japanese idylls** explore and reinterpret Japanese folk and classical music traditions. The first idyll fashions timelessness in its lyrical and outwardly expanse through long phrases and slowly unfolding harmony. The rough, percussive, and angular qualities of the second derives from the traditional folksong *Fine fishing song from Haragama*. This musical commentary sculpts a sonic expression of the old with the new and the East with the West. They were written and dedicated to Aaron Larget-Caplan and premièred by him in March 2014.

Special thanks to Dmitry Goryachev, Peter Janson, Steve Hunt and Charles Schweigert.

Produced by Aaron Larget-Caplan.

Engineered and edited by Steve Hunt.

Mastered by Eric Conn at Independent Mastering, Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Recorded 3–4 January and 2–3 July 2014 at The Kitchen, Chelmsford, Massachusetts, USA.

Publishers: Edition Gendai Guitar (1,2); Schott (3,6,7).

Cover and inlay: *Hagoromo* (detail) © 2013 Charles Schweigert, reproduced by kind permission; www.cjschweigert.com.

Photographs of Aaron Larget-Caplan © 2014 Kelly Davidson.

Booklet notes © 2015 Aaron Larget-Caplan.

Graphic design: Colour Blind Design.

Printed in the E.U.

This disc is dedicated to Catherine & Caroline.



5060192780567

