

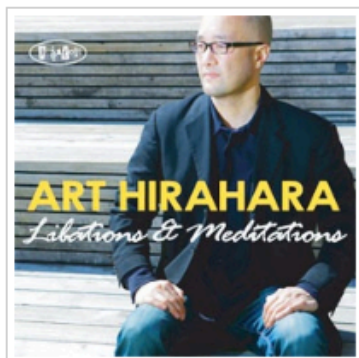
STEP TEMPEST

CREATIVE MUSIC SHOULD CHALLENGE US, MAKE US THINK AND MOVE US FORWARD. MUSIC CAN MAKE ONE'S LIFE BETTER AND FULLER, ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST PLEASURES.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2015

2 X 3s (January '15 edition)



Pianist and composer **Art Hirahara** has worked and continues to work with a varied group of artists, from the late baritone saxophonist/activist Fred Ho to vocalist Bianca Wu to Travis Sullivan's Björkestra, bringing a fine sense of melody and rhythmic sophistication to each project. "**Libations and Meditations**" is his 2nd release as a leader for **Posi-**

Tone Records and features his current working trio of bassist **Linda Oh** and drummer **John Davis**. In the 4 years since his previous release, the pianist has been extremely busy as a sideman yet his own music feels as if it has been matured like a good wine. One should enjoy listening to the interactions of the trio, especially how Davis locks into the groove and drives the uptempo tracks (most effectively on tracks such as "**D.A.Y.**", "**Be Bim Bop**" and its partner "**Bop Bim Be.**") Besides leading her own group, Ms. Oh has become quite an in-demand "side person", working with Dave Douglas, Pascal LeBouef, and Kenny Barron. Her playing here frames most of the pieces on the disc, from the insistent pulse that lies underneath "**Father's Song**" to the "get-up-and-go" walking lines on "**D.A.Y.**" to the impressionistic bowed bass beneath the rippling piano lines and cymbal washes of "**Dead Man Posed.**"

Upon repeated listenings, one can hear just how distinctive a pianist and composer Art Hirahara has become. Many of his pieces have strong melodies, rich chords patterns (there are moments when "**Big Country**" sounds like a Lennon-McCartney compositions) and his playing favors a 2-handed approach. There are 2 handsome solo piano tracks; "**The Looking Glass**", which has the elegance of a George Gershwin song, and "**Karatachi No Hana**", a work from Japanese composer **Kosaku Yamada** (1886-1965) that is lovely, with a flowing melody line and sounds quite Western. He can also swing quite delightfully - just listen to how the Trio navigates the variable rhythms of "**Be Bim Bop**" and you hear musicians who certainly have great "chops" but who are also having great fun.

"**Libations and Meditations**" is music that deserves to be heard, not only on "record" but in person. The program has everything a piano trio - actually any sized ensemble - should have, in the intelligent melodies, great interactions and strong solos. This is music that is full of life and deserves to be part of yours. For more information, go to arthirahara.com.

POSTED BY CULTURECREATURE (RICHARD B. KAMINS) AT 5:50 AM

NO COMMENTS: 

LABELS: CD REVIEWS, PIANO TRIOS, POSI-TONE RECORDS, SUNNYSIDE RECORDS, SUNNYSIDE ZONE

THE JAZZ SESSION

The Jazz Session: Radio
Edition - September 15, 2014

The Jazz Session #442: Bob
Sneider - August 29, 2014

The Jazz Session #441: Kevin
Hays - July 28, 2014