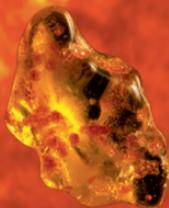


# SUSPENDED in Amber

Sarah  
Peebles

composition, electroacoustics

サラ・ピーブルス



琥珀の中

TAKASHI HARADA

ondes Martenot

原田 節

KAZUE MIZUSHIMA

music installation

水島 一江

KÔ ISHIKAWA

shô

石川 高

HIROMI YOSHIDA

shô

吉田 弘美

IKUO KAKEHASHI

percussion

梯 郁夫

# SUSPENDED in Amber



“A phoenix derives her energy from the waxing and waning of the moon. The shō resonates with the vastness of the Silk Road and over a thousand years of history. This image and this ancient sound, through dance and music, still extends to people today.”

- Mie Morimoto.

This recording is dedicated to the memory of dancer and choreographer Rene Highway, who so enthusiastically supported and joined in my endeavors, and whose spirit continues to inspire.

The ethereal, transfixing sound of the *shô*—“like a butterfly suspended in amber”, as William Malm so aptly described it—inspired much of the music on this recording. While working intensely as an apprentice studying *gagaku* (Japanese ancient court music), *sato kagura bayashi*, and *matsuri bayashi* (pantomimed music-theatre and ensemble music performed at Shinto festivals) in Japan in 1986 and 1989, I became interested in the role of music in society, as well as in expanding my own compositional language through observing and playing non-Western music. This led me to explore, for performances of my own music, alternative concert settings, and the relationships between performer and audience and between audience and space. Returning to North America in 1990, I experienced difficulty in finding collaborators in my new home, Toronto. What began as a place of isolation became an exploration of sound from within the ear of the microphone as I shifted from the acoustic and analogue realm to the world of sampled sound—an exploration which came to include acoustic Japanese instruments and familiar natural sounds from the Great Lakes region and, later, the soundscapes of my rural and urban surroundings once again in Japan.

“Cross-cultural” collaboration is also a primary ingredient in the works on this disc, both in the international sense and in the subcultural contexts that exist within the Japanese art world. The mix of improvisers, contemporary music performers, and traditionally oriented artists presented us all with an educational and at times a challenging experience—intense, but well worth the risk. My orientation as a North American yielded as many clashes as fruitful and unexpected dialogues. The musical results are, I hope, as intriguing as was the process.

“**Transforming Temple**” was the title and theme of the concert during which the first three compositions on this recording were presented. Held at Shukôji, an intimate, historic temple situated in a small remnant of countryside amid the urban sprawl of Kawasaki’s Asao borough, the concert experience was intended to transcend the contemporary Western notion of the concert hall. Stepping off the train and walking up the long path through bamboo forest to the temple, the listeners began a physical, sonic, and spiritual journey. Late-afternoon *gagaku* in the temple’s inner garden opened the musical cycle; as dusk descended, a mixture of contemporary sound, architectural elements, calligraphy, and Buddhist-inspired ritual followed within the main hall. The concluding music and dance, held in the inner garden, was accompanied by the loud ringing noises of insects, rustling bamboo in the cool night breeze, and the glowing moon above.

—Sarah Peebles

## 1. *Blue Moon Spirit* (1987) 3:34

Kô Ishikawa, *shô*

A friend has commented that listening to the *shô* is like watching the clouds change. This short piece was my first for the *shô*. The motion, harmonies and flavor here refer to a specific *gagaku* composition—“tonality” having no relevance to that musical tradition. *Blue Moon Spirit* is titled after a painting by Mizuko Uchida in which a woman holds before her a blue “moon” while another glows in the sky above her. The spheres are actually the spirits of the woman and of her lover. The blue orb in the sky, says Uchida, “falls very, very slowly. The woman waits forever.”

• Composed by Sarah Peebles. Recorded by Tsutomu Sutô at Studio 246, Tokyo, 4 April 1995.

## 2.-7. *Tomoe* (revolving life)

(version 4, 1991–1993) 39:59

an improvisational tableau for three musicians, calligrapher, temple, and autumn evening soundscape, in six parts:

Pre-Dawn, Spring, Summer, Autumn, The Big Sleep, and Rebirth

Hiromi Yoshida, *shô/û*

Ikuo Kakehashi, percussion and MIDI

Katcontroller, noise-makers;

Sarah Peebles, MIDI keyboard, sampled sound, electronics, *shô*, noise-makers

*Tomoe* is a work about cycles and process in which Japanese and North American perspectives are explored through environment and sound. It draws upon the most basic natural elements: the seasons, creation, death, rebirth. The *shô*, loons, bells, and

Hiromi Yoshida, *û* (revived ancient mouth-organ): **Tomoe**, part V  
(photo: Paul Nakamura)





water weave a sonic and allegoric thread throughout the piece. Music of the *shō* is historically believed to provide a trail for Shinto *kami* (deities) between this world and the nether world; the loon, with its distinctive calls and “laughs”, inhabits a treasured place in the hearts of people of the northern woodlands of North America. The birthplace of all life and a symbol of purity—the ocean—finds its parallel here in the Great Lakes. Impermanence, infinity, the intangible, transition in time and space—all are embodied in the lingering tone of a bell.

I initially developed the idea for and structure of *Tomoé* from an original concept for avant-garde *shōdō* performance with musician,

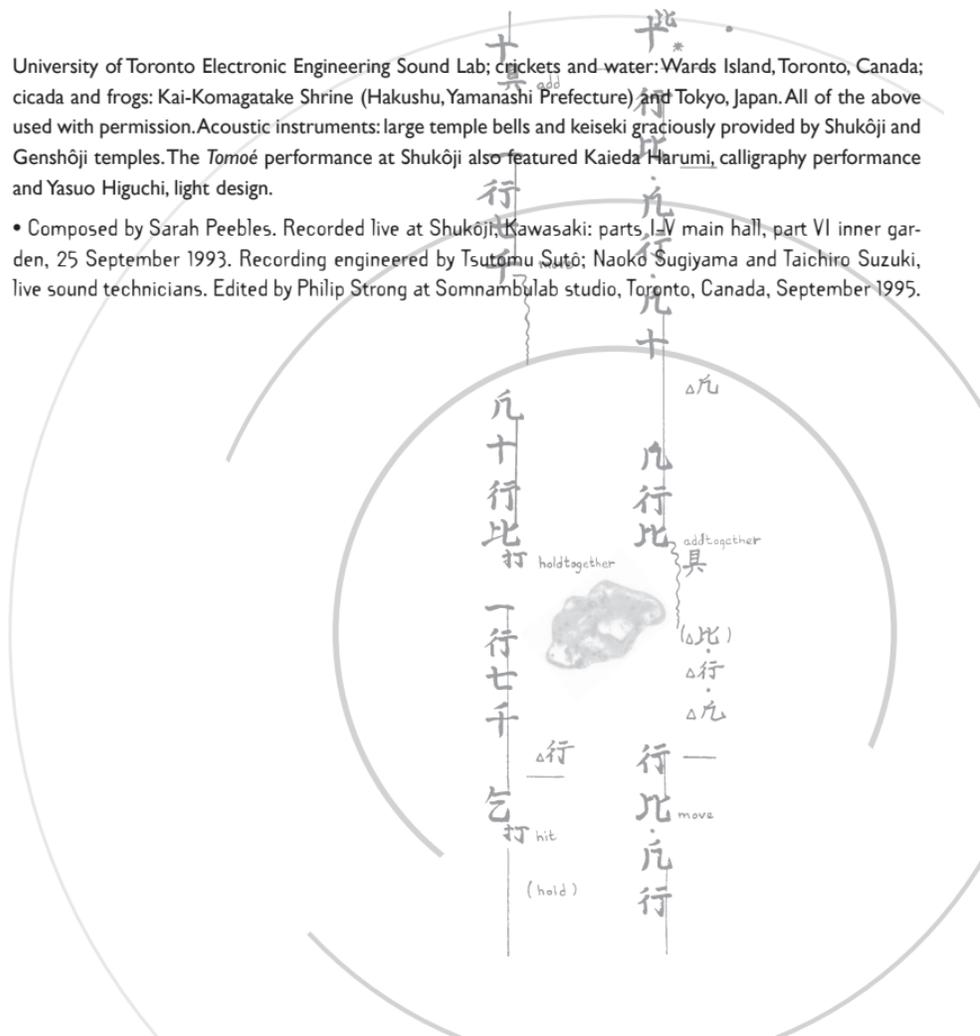
based on the Buddhist concept of *rinne tensho*—literally, revolving life or “revolution” (originally entitled *Kai*)—by the Japanese *shōdō* artist Ono Toshihiko. Version 4 of this sixty-minute work features *shō* and *û*, folk toys, prayer bells, *keiseki* (a tuned stone used in Buddhist ritual), electronics, sampled sound, and tape. Three musicians and a calligrapher performed in various areas of the temple’s main hall and outer garden. Two of the musicians triggered sampled sounds via MIDI keyboard and Katcontroller; one musician controlled sampled materials in real time, choosing from twelve different “instruments”. Collaboration and improvisation are essential to the performance.

• **Sound sources** Loon recordings and samples: *Voices of the Loon* CD/LP (Audubon Society, U.S.A.); Buddhist chant: the Toronto Buddhist Church (*Amida Kyō* sutra); prayer bells (*kin*) and *shō* recorded at The

Harumi Kaieda, calligraphy: **Tomoé**, part III (photo: Paul Nakamura)  
**Blue Moon Spirit** score excerpt (opposite)

University of Toronto Electronic Engineering Sound Lab; crickets and water: Wards Island, Toronto, Canada; cicada and frogs: Kai-Komagatake Shrine (Hakushu, Yamanashi Prefecture) and Tokyo, Japan. All of the above used with permission. Acoustic instruments: large temple bells and *keiseki* graciously provided by Shukōji and Genshōji temples. The *Tomoé* performance at Shukōji also featured Kaieda Harumi, calligraphy performance and Yasuo Higuchi, light design.

• Composed by Sarah Peebles. Recorded live at Shukōji, Kawasaki; parts I-V main hall, part VI inner garden, 25 September 1993. Recording engineered by Tsutomu Suto; Naoko Sugiyama and Taichiro Suzuki, live sound technicians. Edited by Philip Strong at Somnam Bulab studio, Toronto, Canada, September 1995.



## 8. Phoenix Calling (dance version, 1991-1993) 12:44

Ikuo Kakehashi, tuned percussion

Hiroshi Yoshida and Sarah Peebles, shō

bugaku percussion ensemble: Haruo Suzuki, o-daiko; Yasuo Yamamura, kakko;

Norifumi Shimazu, tsuri-daiko; Aya Motohashi, shōko and keiseki;

Andy Morris, claves (taped)

*Phoenix Calling* explores the dynamics of *aitake* (harmonies used in *gagaku*) and rhythm of *bugaku* (court dance) in a setting which involves electronic tape, *bugaku*-like cyclic rhythm, rhythmic improvisations, dance, and *shō* players who call and respond as they move along opposite sides of the audience.

Harmonies shift from what a Western ear might perceive as consonant pitch—sets of several *aitake* which are derived from the first five pitches of a tonal series (D A E B F#)—to more “dissonant” *aitake* aggregates which include the sixth and seventh pitches of a tonal series and thus include half-steps and tritones. I wanted to study the quality of *aitake* via sampling each, one by one, transposing, and superimposing this material. Claves mark the change from one *aitake*-based group to the next. The series is abbreviated on this recording, and the *aitake*-based groups appear in the order *otsu*, *kotsu*, *ju*, *ge*, and *ku*.

The tuned percussion player memorizes seven basic *aitake* as well as a “master rhythm” which s/he improvises upon throughout the piece. Providing a base for the dancer, a cyclical rhythm performed on *bugaku* percussion underpins the various musical elements, loosely reflecting a typical *bugaku* pulse. This rhythm is based, as is the above “master rhythm”, on a secular mantra of the Buddhist Shingon sect, unrelated to *gagaku*.



time	Scale degrees:	I	V	II	VI	III	VII	IV
	(generating tone)							
0:00	<i>otsu</i>	D	A	E	B	F#		
3:28	<i>kotsu</i>	<u>A</u>	E	B	F#			
5:24	<i>ju</i>	<u>G</u>	D	E	B			
8:22	<i>ge</i>	D	A		B	F#		G#
10:18	<i>ku</i>	D	A	E	B		C#	G#
12:05	<i>otsu</i>	D	A	E	B	F#		

underlined tones = fundamental or lowest tone (only 7 of the total 11 traditional *aitake* appear)

Said to depict the shape of the phoenix resting her wings, the *shō* and its sound represent the cry and image of this mythical creature. The phoenix is thought of in Asia as imperial, regal, and usually female. In the *bugaku* ensemble, she adorns the right half of the *dadaiko* (great drum) pair, which is also crowned by the moon (one of the most significant and powerful connections to woman-kind and to the cycle of life). In our “modern” lifestyles, we have all but forgotten these basic connections and, in both Western and Asian histories, we are taught to hide, reshape or to be ashamed of—rather than to revere—our powerful and sacred female bodies. *Phoenix Calling* is a celebration of Woman.

- Composed by Sarah Peebles. The *bugaku*-style dance for this performance was choreographed and performed by Mie Morimoto. Recorded live by Tsutomu Suto at Shukaji, Kawasaki; Naoko Sugiyama and Taichiro Suzuki, live sound technicians. Electronic tape engineer, Chris Smith. Remixed and edited at Audacity (Eric Klein, engineer). Toronto, Canada, October, 1995. *Phoenix Calling* was premiered at Studio Kinshicho’s “Sound Recreation” series, July 1993, and was awarded an ASCAP Grant to Young Composers in 1994.

Mie Morimoto, dance: **Phoenix Calling** (photo: Ichiro Morimoto)



## 9. *Aqua Babble* (1993) 13:49

improvisation: Takashi Harada, ondes Martenot  
Kazue Mizushima, music installation  
Sarah Peebles, electroacoustics, shô, toys

Strings, oscillators, free reeds, bells—all seem to embody the idea of the continuous tone, like the hum of the nervous system. In reality, they can transform sound into totally unexpected shapes. This performance provided an unorthodox forum within which seemingly contrasting instruments could either collide or unite on common ground, each element overlapping intriguingly with the other.

• Composed by Takashi Harada, Kazue Mizushima and Sarah Peebles. *Aqua Babble* was performed in the context of a video installation by Haruo Higuma. Music installation: 70 paper cups, string, trash can lid, and wire. Electroacoustics: Boss SE-50 processor, Sample Cell I, bells, noise-makers. Thanks to Helen Dryz (*shakuhachi* sample). *Aqua Babble* was produced by Haruo Higuma as part of the annual Water Echo Series performance-art festival at Studio Kinshicho, Tokyo, and was recorded live by Shinichi Miyoshi, 11 June 1993 at Studio Kinshicho. Edited at Somnambulab, and Audacity Studios, Toronto, Canada, October-December 1995.

above, left to right: Harada, Mizushima, Peebles, with video image by Haruo Higuma  
(photos: Tomoko Tezuka)

**Sarah Peebles** has composed for electroacoustics, small ensemble, dance, animation, inter-disciplinary collaborations, music-theatre, and outdoor installations. Originally from Minnesota, she received a B.M. from the University of Michigan School of Music in 1988, and her teachers have included William Albright, C. Lee Humphries, William Bolcom, and George Wilson. She has received awards and support from ASCAP (Grants to Young Composers), BMI (Student Composers Award), the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, a Minnesota Composers Forum McKnight Fellowship, and a Japan Foundation Uchida Fellowship, among others. Her music has been performed and broadcast over radio and television in North America, Japan, Australia, and Europe, and appears on *The Aerial #5* (Nonsequitur), *Discontact! II 1 + 2* (CEC, Canada), *ACM SIGGRAPH Video Review Issue 91* and *Imagina 93/94* video and videodisk (INA Entreprise, France). Upcoming recordings include *Revolving Life, version 2* and a compilation of new works for the ondes Martenot. Peebles resides in Toronto, Canada, where she also broadcasts for community radio and organizes new-music activities.

**The Aerial #5 sound journal:** The Aerial/Nonsequitur Foundation, PO Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103-0344

**Discontact! II 1 + 2** (Canadian Electroacoustic Community): 1908 Panet, suite 302, Montreal, QC H2L 3A2, Canada



After graduating from the Faculty of Economics at Keio Gijuku University, **Takashi Harada** entered the ondes Martenot class at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique à Paris, and was awarded first prize upon graduating in 1982. As a distinguished ondist and composer, he has played more than 170 new pieces for the ondes, and has appeared as a soloist with numerous international orchestras in such centers as London, Paris, Berlin, Oslo, Brussels, Sydney, Tokyo, and San Francisco. He has received the Global Music Promotion Award, the Idemitsu Music Award, and the Hida Furukawa Music Award, among others. Harada's wide-ranging work

includes the soundtrack for the 20th Century Fox movie *Rising Sun* (music by Toru Takemitsu), music for the Tokyo Ballet's *M* (depicting the life of Yukio Mishima), and numerous recordings, including *Le Vent Sur Le Lac* (VICC-69, JVC), *In the Garnet Garden* (VICC-124, JVC), and *Astral Concerto, "A Mirror of Lights"* (FOCD-3174, Fontec).

**Kazue Mizushima** received a B.A. at the Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, and an M.A. in composition from the University of California in 1991. She has been active as an independent composer and installation artist throughout Japan and internationally, creating small- and large-scale performance works for dance, theatre and "installation music" with her own ensemble, Studio Eve. Praised by Alvin Lucier as "one of the most talented and original young composers in the world today", her



photo: Fumio Takashima

work has been exceptionally well received in Canada, Portugal, Korea, and Holland. Mizushima's extensive work in Japan has been presented at such venues as the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Theater, Theater X, P3 Gallery, Tsurugi International Art Festival, and Xebec.



**Kō Ishikawa** graduated from the philosophy department of Sophia University in 1990. He has studied *shō* under Mayumi Miyata and Hideaki Bunno, *gagaku* ensemble from Sukeyasu Shiba, and is a member of the group Reigakusha. A performer of both classical and new *gagaku* works, he performed Toru Takemitsu's *Ceremonial* with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1995, and has appeared at the National Theater of Japan, in Europe, the United States, and throughout Japan.

**Hiromi Yoshida** has appeared on the National Theater's contemporary "Reigaku" music series (revived ancient music) since 1986, and has performed at Berlin's "Inventionen Festival" as well as with Ichiyanagi's group, TIME, in Germany and Austria. She graduated from Kunitachi College of Music, and her teachers include Mayumi Miyata and Hideaki Bunno.

**Ikuo Kakehashi** majored in percussion at Tokyo College of Music under Professor Makoto Aruga, and has also studied Indian classical music under Professor Tadahiro Nakabayashi. He researches world music (particularly Asian and Arabic musics), and is also active producing computer music software and providing research and development consultation to companies in the area of electronic musical instruments. He also works as a studio and session "percussionist-without-borders", covering all genres of percussive music.

Cover and booklet design: Rossignol & Associates. Photos: Yosh Inouye (amber) and Maya Ôtani (back cover). Japanese calligraphy (cover): Masako Barrett. Translators: Shunichi Shiba, Chihiro Kogestu, Naomi Baba, Deirdre and Yūsuke Tanaka. *Phoenix Calling aitake* chart courtesy of Robert Garfias (from *Music of a Thousand Autumns*, University of California Press). Copy Editor: Lauren Pratt.

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back cover: Morimoto, with bamboo and paper installation by Maya Ôtani, at Studio Kinshicho (photo: Ôtani)

photo: N. Nakamoto

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**Blue Moon Spirit, Tomoé** (version 4) and **Phoenix Calling**  
composed by Sarah Peebles (ASCAP).  
**Aqua Babble** composed by Takashi Harada (JASRAC),  
Kazue Mizushima (JASRAC), and Sarah Peebles.

Suspended in Amber CD mastering at Audacity studios, Toronto, Canada  
Produced by Sarah Peebles Executive Producer: Homer G. Lamprecht