

Hiromi

Hiromi's Time Control

Artist Interview by: [Kevin Cox](#)

April 2007 - "Other people can put a name on what I do", says keyboardist Hiromi Uehara. "It's just the union of what I've been listening to and what I've been learning. It has some elements of classical music, it has some rock, it has some jazz, but I don't want to give it a name."

On her electrifying new release, ***Time Control***, Hiromi explores the concept of time. The CD features long-time Hiromi bandmates drummer

Martin Valihora and bassist Tony Grey, along with special guest guitarist David Fiuczynski.



JazzReview: What are you up to these days?

Hiromi : I'm touring right now. My CD was just released, and I've just started touring...today. I'm in Philadelphia, then on to Boston and New York...

JazzReview: Let's talk about the new CD, ***Time Control***. It's a really interesting concept. Can you tell us a bit about it?

Hiromi : Well, I'm constantly touring and going all over the world. I'm continuously feeling time differences and jet lag. Time was the thing that became my main focus. Time was forcing me to write music. I realized that I wanted to link the time in general life with the time in music....Interestingly enough, music is the only art form which forces people to enjoy it in a certain time frame. If the piece is four minutes, then the person needs to listen to it for four minutes. If it were a painting, then people decide how long they want to stay in front of the painting. So, I thought there should be a close relationship between music and time.

JazzReview: There has definitely been a progression in your music. The last time we spoke, after ***Brain*** was released, you talked about wanting to continue to progress and expand your music. Since then, you've release ***Spiral*** and now ***Time Control***. Do you feel that your music is progressing in the direction you want to take it - do you see it moving more towards the cutting edge?

Hiromi : Definitely. I always want to try to find a new door in my music. I've been touring with my trio for four years, and I was really satisfied with the sound of the trio. The closer it got to what I was looking for, the more I wanted to break it. I always like taking risk in terms of finding something new - a new landscape that I've never seen. I decided to change the format of the band. I really need to break the

triangle - in a good way - I needed somebody who would be a strong spice. I thought of Fuze [David Fiuczynski] because I had played with him on my first record and I felt a great chemistry with him. I knew I wanted to make a full album with him some day, and the time has come. It's hard in terms of writing music because guitar and piano are two chordal instruments and it's so easy for them to sound messy together. I really had to learn when to shut up and when to play.

JazzReview: Having broken that triangle now, do you see yourself ever going back to a trio?

Hiromi : I would like to explore the potential of this band, the four of us, for a while. I want to see what we can do with this.

JazzReview: When you are at home relaxing, do you listen to your own music?

Hiromi : I never listen to my own CDs, but I do listen to my live recordings - I record myself every single night. I am the harshest critic of my music.

JazzReview: As a band leader, are you very critical of you bandmates? Do you critique them as well?

Hiromi : As a composer, yes, but not as a player. Everybody has a different approach, and I decided to play with them because I really like their approach, and you know people have good nights and bad nights. I wouldn't criticize how they improvise, but I might criticize how they play the written lines. I criticize myself above all.

JazzReview: One of the things you are known for is your energy and the passion that you bring to your live performances. Has the addition of David Fiuczynski to the band increased the energy level of your live performances?

Hiromi : It definitely did increase the energy and it definitely exhausts me much more. I always thought that I couldn't be any more focused, but I am. It's really energy taking.

JazzReview: I know that you are an art lover. Are there any artists who have influenced your approach to music?

Hiromi : Yes, definitely Salvador Dali. I also like Mark Chagall.

JazzReview: What are you listening to these days?

Hiromi : My favorite jazz record recently is *Trio Beyond*, with John Scofield, Larry Goldings, and Jack DeJohnette. It's a live recording of them and it's just really amazing. I really like when they take risks, and just go there....I've been listening to a band called Oval. Their music is techno/electronica... Art Blakely & the Jazz Messengers - I've been listening to them so much...

JazzReview: What is your next step musically?

Hiromi : I always try to push myself, and I don't want to be scared to do something new. I always want to find a new voice within myself. I just want to keep moving the bar higher.

JazzReview: Have you ever considered doing a solo piano record?

Hiromi : Yes, I have to do that someday. I'm excited about doing that. I used to work in a restaurant playing nothing but standards. It was fun. I love George Gershwin, and Duke Ellington compositions....I feel so blessed that I have so much more I want to do.

JazzReview: You feel that you've still got room to grow as a musician and composer.

Hiromi : Oh, of course. It's going to be like that forever. Music is so fascinating because I never feel that I have conquered it. There is always a challenge.

JazzReview: Do you still feel a strong connection with your fans?

Hiromi : I feel so much connection. I'm so happy when I go back to a city where I've played before and people bring new friends to the show. I feel like my family is growing, and I'm happy that I'm making somebody happy. That was the first reason why I started playing piano - I always wanted to make people happy.

JazzReview: Do you have a favorite track on the new CD?

Hiromi : These days my favorite track is ***Time and Space*** because it really requires me to shut-up. It's kind of a zen feeling.

For more information: <http://www.hiromimusic.com>

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