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Hiroko Komiya

Eau Nouvelle

Maat CD

Paris based artist, guitarist and sometime Don Cherry collaborator Ramuntcho Matta has produced this intriguing solo album by Hiroko Komiya for his own label. The whole thing is a delicate tapestry of introspection involving stones, bells and toys, but it falls into two contrasting halves. Early tracks set up high-pitched streams of rattling like the midday singing of tropical insects, followed by long breaths, in and out like waves on a beach. Water drops into metal bowls. It's all acoustic, probably live without overdubs. Komiya builds her sonic world with considerable skill, releasing the tension into a rhythmic passage on bowls and bells. Her musical materials may be those favoured by dull New Agers, but she avoids the standard bong-along and creates real musical poetry.

The mood is darker and more complex for the second half, which is more of a narrative or dream sequence, hinting at what a baby might hear in the womb. A distorted cry could be a pre-birth vocalisation, and we hear a muffled conversation some distance away – two people trying to recall a song.

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