

BOI AKIH DUO



Monica Akihary voice
Niels Brouwer acoustic & prepared guitar, electronics

Monica Akihary and Niels Brouwer, known as Boi Akih, are winning increasing acclaim for their concerts. Norwegian magazine Jazznytt wrote: "It was all captivating, each minimalistic expression by either guitar or voice, every sound variation in Akihary's great vocal vocabulary, each crisp or subtle phrase on Brouwers guitar, every powerful discharge from this perfectly attuned duo would make Charlie Parker long to come back to life."

Boi Akih has developed a distinctive repertoire, one in which cultural roots form the basis for composition, improvisation and text. The new program of the duo reflects the development of their own musical language whereby sound and elements from various traditions take on a new meaning.

The warm and lithe voice of Akihary and the guitar playing of Brouwer offers the audience a vista of a world filled with emotion and colour. A concert by this duo is an amazing experience. The voice of Akihary is exceptionally nuanced. With her spot on timing, tone and charismatic personality, she immediately touches the heart of the listener, just as Brouwer's abstract passages sounds warm throughout.



Review excerpts

Freie Klänge, Magdeburg

review by Thoralf Winkler January 2018

' Beide Musiker sind im Konzert so harmonisch aufeinander eingespielt, dass es keine Rolle spielt, wer da eigentlich wen begleitet. Mal ist es Monica Akihary, die eine Melodie zu singen beginnt, in die Niels Brouwers Gitarre einstimmt. Mal begleitet sie dann seine Gitarrenmelodie stimmlich'.

<http://freie-klaeenge.blogspot.nl/2018/01/boi-akih-duo.html#more>

Boi Akih live at FMM Sines 2017

<https://youtu.be/C4gr8VTgPqg>

Holland Festival 2017 Looking back

review by Bas Springer July 2017

Controlling the Swing

One of the highlights of the jubilee edition was the world premiere of Controlling The Swing through the formation Boi Akih, as part of 'A Night in Indonesia' on June 16 in Paradiso. This new composition of guitarist Niels Brouwer was performed by the duo Boi Akih with Ryoko Imai (Marimba, Percussion), Tobias Klein (bass clarinet, contra bass clarinet) and guest musicians from Indonesia, including the Moluccan (Ambon City) poet and peace activist Rudi Fofid

Full dedication

The relationship between love and hatred is central to Controlling The Swing. Impressively, traditional and contemporary music, acoustic and electronic, was melting together in the packed Small Hall of Paradiso, where the sweat was on the backs of the visitors, so hot it was. Rarely did I hear Monica Akihary singing so well – pitch perfect and full dedication. Her partner Niels Brouwer and the other accompanists brought out the best in each other. The thunderous applause at the end was therefore perfectly correct.

<http://mixedworldmusic.com/nieuws/newsItem.php?n01ID=19206>



Niels Brouwer live Holland Festival 17

Concerto.at #nr.6 ****

review by Thomas Hein January 2017

Die niederländische Sängerin mit Molukkischer Herkunft, Monica Akihary, und ihr Mann, der Gitarrist & Komponist Niels Brouwer bilden das zentrale Duo van Boi Akih, die für ihre neue Aufnahme "Liquid Songs" mit der Japanerin Ryoko Imai (Marimbaphone, Reyong und Perkussion) und dem Saarbrückener, in Amsterdam lebenden Tobias Klein (Bassklarinette/Kontrabassklarinette) ein Quartet der besonderen Art geformt haben. Weltmusikalische Elemente treffen auf neue Musik, freie Improvisation, Klanggebilde und klassische Spielweisen. Die unterschiedlichen (Musik)kulturen und persönlichen Wurzeln tragen wie eine Vielzahl an fein abgemischten Gewürzen zum anregenden Duft und Geschmack der "Liquid Songs" in hohem Ausmaß bei. Monica Akihary, die neben der vom gesamten Quartett stammenden Komposition " Déjà Vu" auch die Lyrics schrieb, wandelt zwischen gesungenen Textteilen und Improvisationen, die sich bisweilen auch völlig freie experimentelle Felder begeben und "Liquid Songs" zu einem vielfarbigem außergewöhnlichen Fundstück der besonderen Art im Grenzbereich der musikalischen Genres machen.

Jazz.pt

Review by Rui Eduardo Paes 4Jan 2017 ****

<http://jazz.pt/ponto-escuta/2017/01/04/boi-akih-liquid-songs-trytone/>

Jazznytt #241

Review by Bjarne Soeloft November 2016

The visit in Oslo of the Dutch duo Boi Akih during European Jazz Nights 2009, and their fifth excellent *Yalelol* (reviewed in Jazznytt #2-2008), arouse warm memories. The duo, consisting of the married couple Niels Brouwer on several acoustic guitars and the Indonesian vocalist Monica Akihary, constitutes the basis in varying constellations from disc to disc. On this new *Liquid Songs* they play together with the German Tobias Klein on his flexible bass clarinet and the dramatically outstanding contrabass clarinet, and also the Japanese Ryoko Imai with her poetic, percussive eruptives and atmospheric marimba playing, as the most organically attuned fellow musicians on the Boi Akih-records.

The lyrics are all written by Akihary, and mainly in the language of her family, *haruku*. Brouwer is both the composer and group leader with his distinct, comprehensive guitar playing. The music uniquely integrates elements from world music, contemporary music, jazz and improvisation. The introductory track, "Liquid Songs", lasts for fifteen minutes and expresses much of the musical language of the group, ranging from quiet acoustically produced sound landscapes – crawling, floating, pulsating – over to Akihary's textual homage to life, which certainly also is let loose in a unique collective improvisation. In addition comes the melodious, tender ballad sung in English, "Little Girl", as well as songs about both spiritual and erotic love, respectively "Ale Mei Wa'ati" and "Japala'a". And lastly, in the wordless "A Stranger Everywhere", Akihary succeeds in creating – with her natural resonant contralto voice – a profound sense of existential gratitude.

Musicframes.nl

review by Mattie Poels 28 nov 2016

'Transparent fluidity in 'Liquid Songs'

<http://www.musicframes.nl/2016/11/transparante-vloeibaarheid-in-liquid-songs/>

Saltpeanuts.eu

review by Jan Granlie 14 nov 2016

<http://salt-peanuts.eu/record/boi-akih/>

Brouwer's compositions are specifically written for these four musicians. His compositions fit precisely to these four musicians. Marimba and clarinet goes together well with vocals and guitar and create an original and beautiful ensemble. Where we hear lyrical melodies that fits in almost every atmosphere, they are flirting with free improvisations where you can feel the energy and vitality, especially in the third song 'Ale mei wa'ati', the song begins ultimate thrilling with a double-bass-clarinet.

Boi Akih has delivered an exciting, creative and interesting record with 'Liquid Songs'.

The record must not be a secret only reserved for the Dutch audience. This is world music that is perfectly suitable on Jazz festivals, like world music festivals, and Jazz clubs, something that should attract the attention of the musical programmers in the Scandinavian countries and the rest of the world.

Boi Akih @ NPO Radio

Co Live , Co de Kloet talking with vocalist Monica Akihary

<http://www.nposoulenjazz.nl/colive/uitzending/397883>

MixedWorldMusic.com

review by journalist Ton Maas (NL)

<http://mixedworldmusic.com/recensies/index.php?id=1142&offset=12&poffset=0>

Tomajazz.com

review journalist Pachi Tapiz (ES)

<http://www.tomajazz.com/web/?p=27441>

' And there we were, half way at a festival, where.... David Liebman in the company of French Andy Emler Trio was probably a kick, as well as Boi Akih, Dutch trio with Monica Akihary as magnificent vocals. '(Dagasiven 14 N)

Boi Akih, based around the singer Monica Akihary, does an alternative take on a number of bluesier numbers, including Hendrix and David Crosby. Her guitarist Niels Brouwer has a fascinating guitar including sympathetically- resonant strings. Yedo Gibson, a saxophonist who was for some time part of the London Improvisers Orchestra circle, provided some striking interplay on saxophones. In attitude, rather than in particular sound, I was reminded of Christine Tobin's work - arrangements that they make you reassess and give you a version which matches and even, at times, exceeds the originals. (*London Jazz news June 2013 UK*)

'Fabulous singing and masterly guitar playing in their own universe .' (*De Volkskrant NL*)
'The melodies that Niels Brouwer has composed for her extremely lithe and rich voice, recognize the European roots of his own background and while displaying his familiarity with the Moluccan tradition.' (*Rondo Magazine D*)



Boi Akih live at Djazz Nevers Journal du Centre 15 November 2013

Language

In 1998 the linguistic community hailed Brouwers and Akihary's texts as a phenomenon. While Boi Akih's music subtly refers to Moluccan roots, it is above all through language that Akihary honors her heritage. She writes and sings in her father's native language, regarded as moribund by the scientific world. Since 1998 Brouwer and Akihary have been working with Dutch and Australian linguists who study Haruku. With their help and support, Boi Akih not only keeps the tradition alive, but also employs the language in its most authentic form, poetic self-expression.

Concerts

Boi Akih has worked with such musicians as Ernst Reijseger (cl), Ernst Glerum (bs), Sean Bergin (sx), Owen Hart Jr.(dr), Sandip Bhattacharya (tabla) and has toured in Europe, South Africa, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, China, Canada, Brazil, South Korea. Club appearances include Bimhuis (Amsterdam), Sunset (Paris), Unterfahrt (Munich), Schloss Elmau, Das Konzerthaus (Vienna), Theater Musee Quai de Branly, Salle Gaveau (Paris), Indian Habitat Centre (New Delhi), The group has played at such festivals as North Sea Jazz, Berlin Jazzfest, Elbjazz (G), Jazzkaar (EST), Awesome Africa Festival (SA), European Jazz Nights Oslo (N), Bray Jazz (IRL), Fest.GlattundVerkehrt (A), Festival Radio France et Montpellier, Jazz D'OR & Jazz Grenoble, Djazz Nevers (F) SunFest, TD Ottawa Jazz Fest, TD Vancouver Jazz Fest CDN, World Expo Shanghai, Guangzhou Jazz Festival (PRC), EFG London Jazz Fest, Vossa Jazz, JAKJazz, Penang Jazz, Festival FFM Sines (Portugal), Holland Festival 2017, Jarasum International Jazz Festival 2017, Korean Music Festival of Bukchon (South Korea) and worked together with Bobby McFerrin & Philip Glass. Boi Akih has also appeared on diverse radio and TV programs - VPRO - Reiziger in Muziek, Vrije Geluiden, France2 - Les mots et minuit, Radio France- Equinox, BBC - Charlie Gillet Show.

Discography

2017 Monica Akihary: Lagu Lagu 2 (BROMO) BROMO 004
2016 Boi Akih: Liquid Songs (TT559-070)
2012 Boi Akih: Circles in a Square Society (BROMO) BROMO 003
2007 Boi Akih: Yalelol (Enja Records) ENJ-9487 2
2005 Boi Akih: Lagu Lagu (BROMO) BROMO 001-
2004 Boi Akih: Uwa I (Enja Records) ENJ-9472 2 -
2000 Monica Akihary: Above the Clouds, Among the Roots (A-Records)
1997 Boi Akih: Boi Akih (Invitation Records/ EMI)



Booking & Information

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