

Alef: a refreshing local experience

BOP SHOTS

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"My purpose as an artist is to provoke a reaction. Good or bad, it means I've touched my audience," explains Sadato, a music/performance artist who has made Japan his home for over a decade. Sadato admits that in Tokyo it's often hard to get a reaction, adding that "some people are frightened" in one way or another. "I don't mind if somebody tells me he doesn't like my record or performance because a reaction is better than nothing!"

Sadato's group Alef combines the elements of jazz, free music, rock, atonal, and Eastern music while seeming to double as a continuing long-term art experiment since its inception just three years ago. Sadato is on saxes, flute, synthesizer, voice, and "action", joined by guitarist Dennis Gunn (formerly with Hotel No-Tell), drummer Kazuya Ishida, and bassist Hideki Katoh.

Sadato says that Alef's occasional performances aim not to create "not just music, but a memory," though it should be pointed out that Gunn, Ishida, and Katoh are superb players with brilliant timing and an excellent feel for Sadato's raw sense of urgency.

This year, Alef released their first LP, Hajime. It's on Sadato's own Kampai label because, as he says, "there's nobody in the world who'd like to produce me or license my record."

Hajime sounds much like an Alef performance, full of provocative chords, riffs, and just plain weird noises accompanying lyric passages suggesting dream-like states, non-shared reality, and stop-action flashes of insight.

Sadato says the record is a "musical biography, reflecting what I've been experiencing during my 10 years in Osaka and three years in Tokyo." Indeed it must be; most selections have Japanese lyrics, including the haunting Ningen, the myste-

riously dramatic Baachan No Tea Time, and Sarariman Shi-ne, a portrait of fear and dread in the white-collar workforce.

Though Alef currently has no plans for a live performance, their LP Hajime is available at several places in and around Tokyo. Tower Records in Shibuya, Pamu in Machida (0427-23-1005), Air Base (Vivre 21 bldg. in Yokohama, 045-314-2121), and Disc



Sadato

Inn #2 in Kichijoji (0422-48-3171) are places to find it. Out of Tokyo, the distributor is Zero Records, 075-643-5447. If you'd like more information about Alef, call Sadato at 364-2817.

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