

Códac

Thérmós

CBAKR2104000

Thérmos

“A wordless space for the instruments to tell a story.”

— Chilly Gonzales, “Enya — A Treatise on Unguilty Pleasures”

Cōdae

TRACKS

1. Meditation
2. Sorraia
3. Before Sunrise
4. The Empty Quarter
5. Silk Road
6. Chimera
7. Granada
8. Heat Outro

“Thérmos” is the 4th album by Cōdae. “Thérmos”, (“θερμός”) in Ancient Greek, means “warm” or “hot”.

THEME

This album consists of instrumental compositions that depict heat, aridity and remoteness.

It was inspired by images from history, films, art and music from around the world that represent heat, aridity and remoteness: Barren places like deserts and remote mountain ranges - the Atacama, Kalahari, Gobi and the Arabian Desert; journeys over vast plains with mirages shimmering in the distance; mountain retreats where the only sounds are the chiming of bells and souging of the hot wind; and sun-beaten landscapes with dust-clouds from galloping horses and camel trains.

Some compositions are experimental in that they combine musical forms from different cultures, or have traditional or classical forms, but are set to modern EDM-style beats.

STYLE

There are no lyrics on any of the tracks. Each piece is a wordless space for the instruments to tell a story, to use the phrase of musician Chilly Gonzales.

ABOUT CODAE

“Cōdae” (genitive, fem.), pronounced “CO-day” is the Latin plural of the music term “coda”, which is a passage that brings a piece of music to an end. Cōdae is the trademarked artist name of Marthe Bijman.

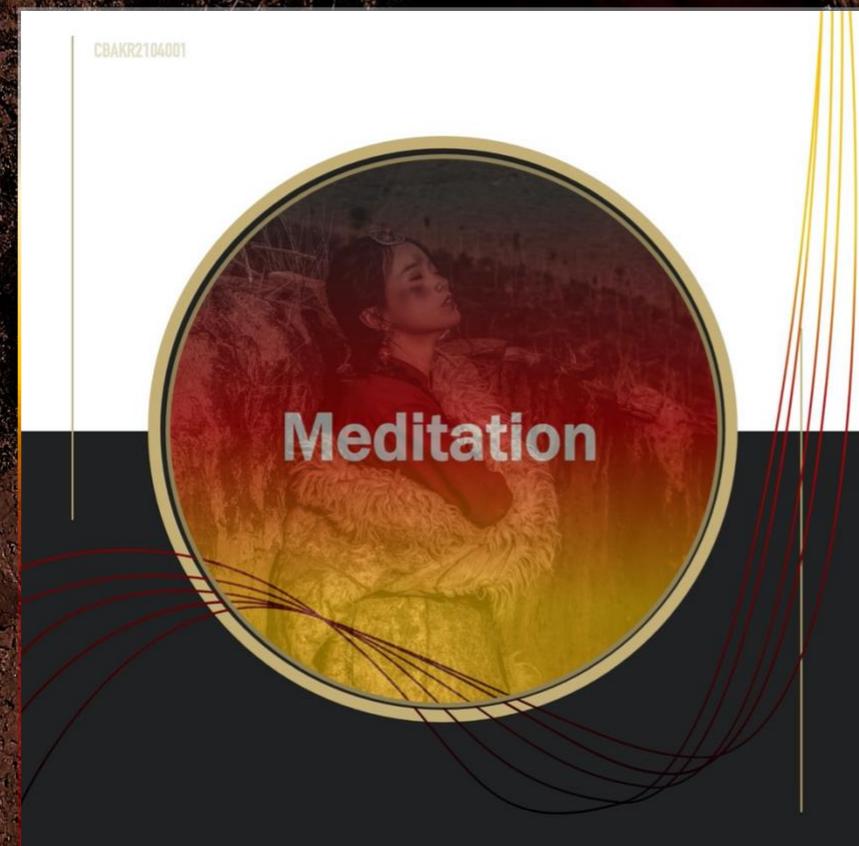
Meditation

This is a track that is rhythmic, sonorous and chant-like, giving sense of meditation. Imagine this: a retreat high in an arid desert mountain, resonant chanting floating out over the distance, the plaintive sound of the *erhu*, and bells clanging and echoing in the wind.

Sorraia

CBAKR2104002

Sorraia



"Sorraia" is the name of the Andalucían horse breed which ran wild in Andalucía hundreds of years ago. Today's Spanish Horse breed is descended from the *Sorraia*. The composition was inspired by images of these horses in a Mediterranean landscape, dust billowing under their hooves, moving in that white-hot light one gets at the peak of Summer. In the track, the horses are represented by a galloping rhythm, fast tempo, rondos, call-and-response style trumpets, and staccato violins.



Before Sunrise

I wanted to express the idea of a sunrise in a cloudless desert sky, with the light slowly spreading over the dunes. This was the result: a core romantic melody, which, like the colours of the sky, varies with every sunrise.

It can be described as “Modern Hausmusik”. In the liner notes to his 2015 album “Chambers”, musician, pianist and composer Chilly Gonzales (real name Jason Beck) uses the term “Hausmusik”:

“Hausmusik (not to be confused with the more modern 'House Music') was a style of music in the 18th and 19th centuries specifically composed for performance in people's homes. Many famous composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms composed Hausmusik duets for voice and piano.”

In this composition, the grand piano leads, accompanied by synth keyboards and Turkish *ouds*. It contains an echo of the opening notes from Schubert's Notturmo for piano, cello and violin in E Flat, as a nod towards this particular form of composition: Modern Hausmusik – Chilly Gonzales style.



The Empty Quarter

The theme of this album is “heat”, so I wanted to portray a hot place, a desert: vast spaces, empty, lonely, with mirages shimmering in the distance. I named this track after “The Empty Quarter” (*“Rub’ al Khali”* in Arabic), a huge sand desert in the Middle East.

The source of my inspiration for the composition was the music of the famous Iranian musician Mohammad-Reza Shajarian, particularly his 1998 album, “Night, Silence, Desert”. I had been listening to his music and trying to understand what I was hearing. But though it will take another lifetime for me to fully appreciate it, I thought he had created an exceptionally beautiful sound by blending modern and classical elements, and Middle-Eastern and Western forms and styles.

What I learned inspired me to write this. I based the melody and all the instrumental parts on a variation of the C Phrygian dominant scale, the fifth mode of F harmonic minor - which is common in Middle Eastern, Arabic, Flamenco and classical music. I included parts for instruments such as the Persian/Iranian *Santoor*, the Turkish *Saz Zither* and *Saz Lute*, and of course the Arabic *Oud*.

Silk Road

This composition contains both Western and Far Eastern music forms and instruments, and it was inspired by the trade route called the *Silk Road* which once stretched from the Far East to Europe, crossing the deserts of Asia and the Middle East, to end at the shores of the Mediterranean - hence the name. As the caravan moves along, from East to West and back again, the music moves shifts between minor and major scales.

Chimera

Chimera is another word for mirage: the melody wanders and weaves through the beat like a person who wanders towards a mirage in a desert, but cannot reach it. The intermezzos, with French horn ensembles and violas, contrast with the other parts like oases hidden behind the desert haze. The theme changes slightly with every movement, but the hallucination of the mirage — like the wavering, melancholy notes of the *oud* and the *saz* — stays the same.



Granada

“Granada” is the definitive track on this album because it best expresses the emotion and tone that I had in mind. “Granada” refers to the city of Granada in Andalucía, where the famous Alhambra palace is located. It is a homage to the music of the Andalucía region of Spain, and the historic Moorish influences in Spain., particularly on music and architecture. It is my variation on classical Spanish guitar music. The instruments include piano, flamenco guitars, classical guitars, accordion and trumpets. The time signature is 4/4 with a laid-back swing. The music of composer Isaac Albéniz (1860 – 1909) whose compositions I have always loved, was a huge source of inspiration.

Heat Outro

Heat Outro is the closing track of this album and is the final reprise of the melodic theme which runs through all the tracks in this collection. The composition is dominated by the plangent-sounding *morin khuur* (Mongolian horsehead fiddle), to tie it into the album's theme of heat and deserts. This is an exit with a rocking beat.



Acknowledgements

For me, making music is a time-consuming, solitary pursuit in which I have to negotiate a steep learning curve. These compositions exist because people have helped me to do that in ways that they probably are not even aware of: A word here, a thought there, an empathetic comment, a pointer in the right direction, a memory from long ago that led to an inspiration.

And one man is pivotal to it all: From day one my husband, Mike, has been infinitely patient and supportive, and has given me the time, freedom and resources to “play with my music” for hours on end. His belief that I *will* get my head around it gives me courage when I make a mess of things, which is often, and his positive comments make me feel that my efforts have worth.

I know how much he puts up with so that I can be this way. But every composition expresses what I do not say in words. It is my way of talking to him - not to the world - just to *him*.

Without him, none of this would exist.

Cōdae | M. Bijman Vancouver, Jan. 2022

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Image of walker with “Silk Road”: pexels-arfa-talib-722904

Image of man on cover of “Chimera”: pexels-amine-m'siouri-2120766



Inspiration

Everything comes from somewhere. Nothing can come from nothing. This is the first album in which I consciously composed the music to express a specific range of ideas that are important to me. On this page, I show a few of the sources of inspiration and ideas that led to these pieces.

COMPOSERS & MUSICIANS

- Mohammad-Reza Shajarian – Iranian (1940 – 2020)
- Isaac Albéniz, Spanish (1860 – 1909)
- Chilly Gonzales – Canadian, real name Jason Beck
- Franz Schubert, Notturmo for piano, cello and violin, in E Flat, D. 897
- Bert Kaempfert – German composer and band leader (1950s – 1970s)

BANDS

- The HU – Mongolian Rock band
- YĪN YĪN – Dutch band – Fusion of funk, psych, disco and traditional Southeast Asian music
- Huun-Huur-Tu – Tuvan Throat Singers
- Kongar-ol Ondar – Tuvan Throat Singer (1962 – 2013)

POETRY & LYRICS

- “All Souls Night” – William Butler Yeats
- “Song of an Old General” – Wang Wei
- “Sunrise, sunset”, from “Fiddler on the Roof” – J. Bock and S. Harnick
- “Ozymandias” – Percy Bysshe Shelley
- “Tai Khoen” – D.J. Opperman, from “Komas uit ‘n Bamboesstok”
- “Pilgrim” – ENYA
- “The Fountain of Daraxa’s Garden” – Epigraphic poem, Alhambra Palace

PLACES & PEOPLE

- The semi-arid interior of South Africa, particularly the “Knersvlakte”, a brutally hot, dry region where my family comes from
- The life of T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia)
- “Paradise Gardens: The World’s Most Beautiful Islamic Gardens”, by Monty Don, specifically the Alhambra Palace
- “The Song Machine”, by John Seabrook
- “Enya – A Treatise on Unguilty Pleasures”, by Chilly Gonzales
- MasterClass by DJ & Producer Deadmau5, real name Joel Zimmerman