



BEN KONO
DON'T BLINK



BEN KONO GROUP DON'T BLINK

A new release made possible by the Chamber Music America: New Jazz Works Commissioning and Ensemble Development Grant

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"Don't Blink" is composer/bandleader Ben Kono's second foray into extended jazz composition for his battery of woodwind instruments and long-standing musical compatriots. Following the acclaimed 2011 debut recording of the Ben Kono Group's "Crossing", the veteran saxophonist received a grant from Chamber Music America to compose a suite for his quintet. The piece was premiered in New York City at Cornelia Street Cafe in 2014, and a new CD of the work, "Don't Blink", will be released in spring of 2019.

Through a sequence of connected vignettes, the arc of the suite's narrative takes its itinerant shape from the composer's own life-long exploration towards environmental consciousness. From a metaphoric dream pitting the extinct dodo against marauding humans, to reckless pollution of our waterways and political inaction, to an innocent encounter with an endangered monk seal, this collection of musical anecdotes presents a unified tale of environmental stewardship and moral responsibility, and to that end exploits the vast aural palette of the Group's wide-ranging talents.

The musicians performing on this recording represent the the vanguard of creative improvisers in New York City and share a long history of music-making together. Keyboardist **Henry Hey** (*Rudder, Forq, David Bowie, George Michael, Rod Stewart*), guitarist **Pete McCann** (*Kenny Wheeler, Lee Konitz, Patti Austin*) and Kono share roots dating back to their student years at the University of North Texas; percussionist **Satoshi Takeishi** (*Paul Winter Consort, Eliane Elias, Nestor Torres*) and bassist **Kermit Driscoll** (*Bill Frisell, Don Byron, John Hollenbeck*) have teamed with guitarist Ben Monder and frequented the rhythm sections of the most progressive large ensembles in today's jazz and new music circles.

The Ben Kono Group continues to thrill audiences with its far-ranging program and environmental message throughout the U.S. with performances at Pro Musica Joplin, MO; Music Mountain Chamber Music Festival; the Bryant Park New Music Festival; the Hopper House Museum in Nyack, NY; the Chamber Music America National Conference; and various jazz clubs and performance spaces throughout New York City.

Ben Kono: woodwinds, composition
Pete McCann: guitars
Henry Hey: piano and Fender Rhodes
Kermit Driscoll: basses
Satoshi Takeishi: drums and percussion

- Appearances at:
- Bryant Park New Music Festival
 - Hopper House Museum, Nyack, NY
 - 2016 Chamber Music America National Conference, NYC
 - Hopper House Museum, Nyack, NY
 - Pro Musica, Joplin, MO
 - Missouri Southern State University
 - Music Mountain Chamber Music Fest., CT

"Mr. Kono...has a gleaming new album, "Crossing" (Nineteen-Eight), that establishes his style as a bandleader-composer: cosmopolitan and unflappable, with a feel for rallying his sidemen."--Nate Chinen, *The New York Times*

"This potent sextet outing by composer and multi-instrumentalist Ben Kono unfolds like separate chapters of a novel, each revealing something about it's author."--Bill Milkowski, *Jazz Times*

"The first time I listened to "Crossing"...the music stopped me cold. Not only does Kono play a slew of instruments, his compositions and arrangements are strikingly good. Kono creates an auto-biography that is as moving as it is musical...what a debut!"--Richard Kamins, *Step Tempest*

Jazz Journalists Association Top Ten Lists: Debut Recordings 2011