

## **Tanakayama: Same same, but different.**

Three Musicians from Vienna, their charming Pop and their mysterious Nippon connection.

Tom Waits was “Big in Japan”, Bill Murray was “Lost in Translation”, and Sting was an “Englishman in New York”. Certainties, whether of a geographical or linguistic nature, have no place in art, so it doesn't actually make any difference if the sun which once fell from the sky in Carinthia is the same which now rises in Kyoto.

It is, however, not insignificant that Tanakayama, three musicians from Vienna, have known each other since boyhood. They spent their youth in that land of the setting sun, where for a long time music seemed the biggest, often the only, source of light. Michael Staudacher (keyboards, vocals), Thomas Hödl (bass), Andreas Gstettner (guitar, vocals) and Marko Deisinger (drums) absorbed that musical light like solar cells and soon came together and worked over the years in various bands. Most recently, Gstettner & Staudacher joined forces in Parabol (album “Sorry Satellite”, Schoenwetter Records, 2005). The constellation that has existed since 2008 as Tanakayama is, nevertheless, new to all three musicians.

Of course, traces of the network that grew over the years can be heard in Tanakayama's songs. Whether in the Beatles-like happiness of “Aoi Sora”, in the open, elegiac Indie-Rock of “Nanimokamo”, or in the (not) self-explanatory title “Haiku No Reggae”, there is an ease throughout in the handling of styles which only cosmopolitan, musically experienced people who know each other well, both personally and artistically, can produce. Live, Tanakayama impressively demonstrate their recipe, whose main ingredients include feeling, knowledge and listening. Here you have three musicians playing, seemingly without egos, but instead with a great deal of intuition and style.

Oh, by the way, Tanakayama sing in Japanese. Fans of Anime, Manga, and Co. will recognize at once that the band is not an Otakus' club, whose purpose in life is to musically underscore fan conventions. Main songwriter Staudacher caught the Nippon virus in 2008 and has meanwhile been able to persuade bassist Hödl to take a trip to Japan. But the references to Japan don't define Tanakayama – they are an additional facet, which opens a further range of possibilities to the already multifaceted music and sometimes, like a hidden level in a Jump & Run game, reveals new meanings. It's just that here, playing means listening.

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