

# Windswept Adan

Ichiko Aoba

A Listening Guide

*Step onto an island that only exists in sound.*

Presented within  
*Futures Festival:  
Worlds in the Making*

Part of  
*Soundworks from  
Worlds Not Yet Born*

# Welcome to the Oculus

The Oculus at ArtScience Museum is an open space with a circular sky window that lets in natural light and rain. When it rains, water falls into the central pool below, forming a waterfall. It is part of a sustainable system that collects and recycles rainwater.

The Oculus is more than just a design feature. It is also an open-air gallery for showcasing sound art. Artists create or adapt sound pieces specifically for this space, using its unique architecture and natural acoustics to shape the experience.

To bring these soundscapes to life, the museum installed a custom-fitted sound system. Speakers are strategically placed all around the space, creating a 3D-like experience. In this way, the Oculus becomes a giant listening chamber where sound comes alive around you.





*Image courtesy of Kodai Kobayashi.*

## **Windswept Adan by Ichiko Aoba**

*Windswept Adan*, a multi-channel sound installation by Japanese singer-songwriter Ichiko Aoba, transforms this space into an immersive environment that invites reflection, attention and curiosity.

This work is part of *Soundworks from Worlds Not Yet Born*, itself nested within *Futures Festival: Worlds in the Making*—a museum-wide celebration of imagination, care and collective responsibility.

*Composed by Ichiko Aoba & Taro Umebayashi*

*Sound Engineer: Toshihiko Kasai*

*Art Direction & Photography: Kodai Kobayashi*

## A Story of Islands and Futures

In early 2020, Ichiko Aoba travelled through the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa, Zamami, Kudaka, Amami Ōshima, Kakeroma, and Ishigaki), immersing herself in local culture, folklore, festivals and landscapes. A fleeting vision in a Naha izakaya sparked a line—*"there were no words on the island"*—that unfolded into an entire world.

The resulting story is a piece of speculative fiction centred on a girl with prophetic powers. Exiled from her home on the fictional island of Kirinaki, she journeys to the island of Adan, a place of lush biodiversity and seashell-based language. Adan's short-lived creatures celebrate her arrival, then vanish. The girl follows, dying and being reborn in multiple forms.

Through music, Aoba imagines an ecosystem where life, death and transformation are continuous, and where communication exists beyond words.

## Making the Music

*Windswept Adan* was created like a voyage at sea.

Aoba worked with composer Taro Umebayashi, exchanging story fragments and demo recordings as the plot and music evolved together. Rather than composing, recording and mixing sequentially, the team worked concurrently, like “someone with a compass, someone steering, someone fishing for meals, and someone reading the wind”.

The work features a diverse instrumental palette: strings, woodwinds, celesta, prepared piano, harp, charango, accordion, gamelan-inspired percussion and field recordings from Amami Ōshima. Musical traditions from Ryukyuan music, shima-uta and Bulgarian vocal harmonies were blended to create a sound that feels rooted, yet unplaceable—a floating archipelago in music.



## Songs as Waypoints

Each track offers a portal into Adan's world. Listen for these highlights:

***Prologue*** — Waves from Honohoshi Beach mingle with organ, choral vocals and wind chimes, introducing the island's soundscape.

***Pilgrimage*** — A harp, arpeggiated flutes and charango carry Aoba's invented language, like a music box voyage.

***Porcelain*** — Orchestral strings, woodwinds and percussion depict the changing weather of the Kerama Islands.

***Horo (Sail Clothing)*** — Accordion and improvised vocals evoke birdsong and the island breeze.

***Easter Lily*** — Twin vocal melodies bloom alongside celesta and guitar, a mumbled haiku to a Ryukyuan flower.

***Parfum d'étoiles*** — Prepared piano and Amami jays create a meditative, almost improvised space.

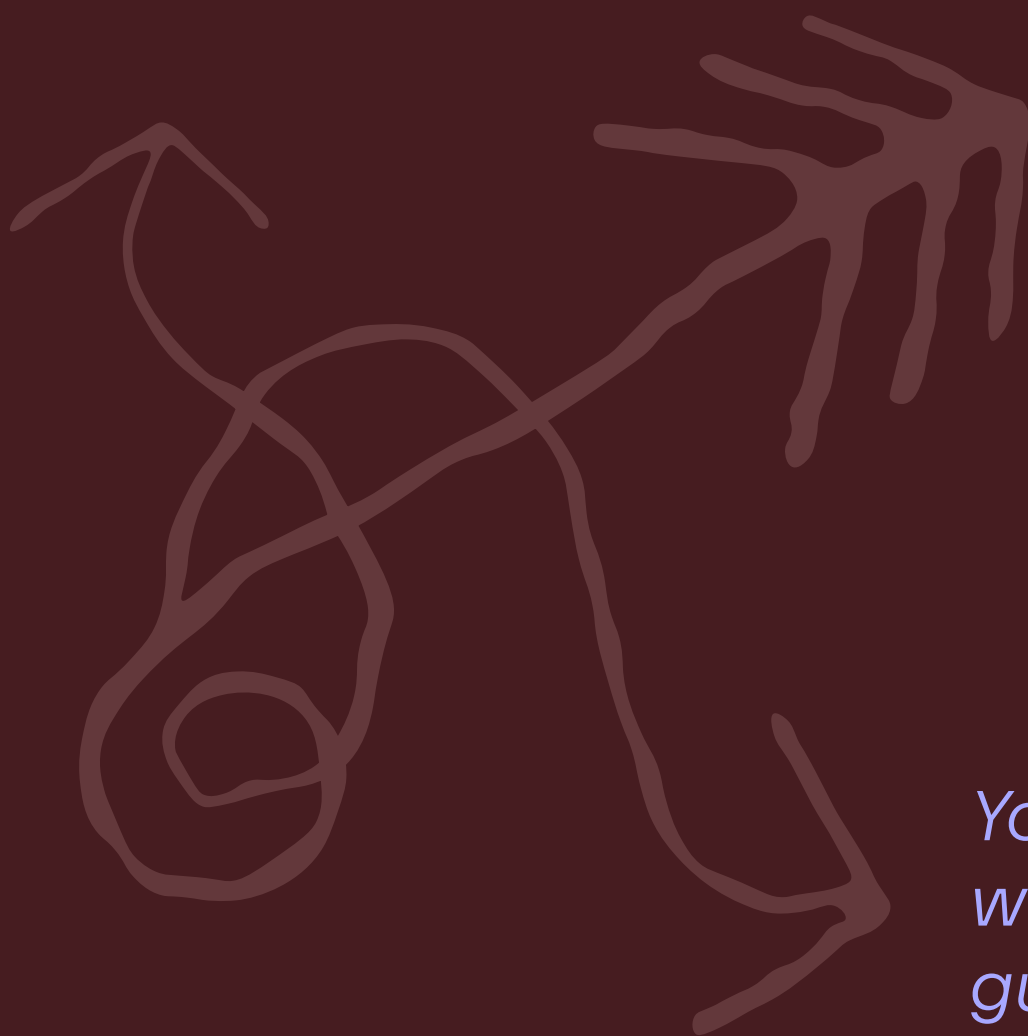
***Kirinakijima*** — Layered a cappella harmonies call back to the girl's home island.

***Red Silence*** — Lyrics adapted from an Okinawan healing spell resonate across time.

***Hagupit*** — Named after a typhoon experienced by Aoba, strings and vocals shimmer with eerie beauty.

***Dawn in the Adan*** — Quiet reflections on continuity, sadness and rebirth.

***Luminescent Creatures*** — The closing birth festival of Adan begins softly and swells into a luminous orchestral crescendo, fading into ocean waves.



*Think of these pieces as currents.*

*You can drift wherever the sounds guide you.*

# How to Listen

Approach the music as a traveller in Adan.



## Wander the Space

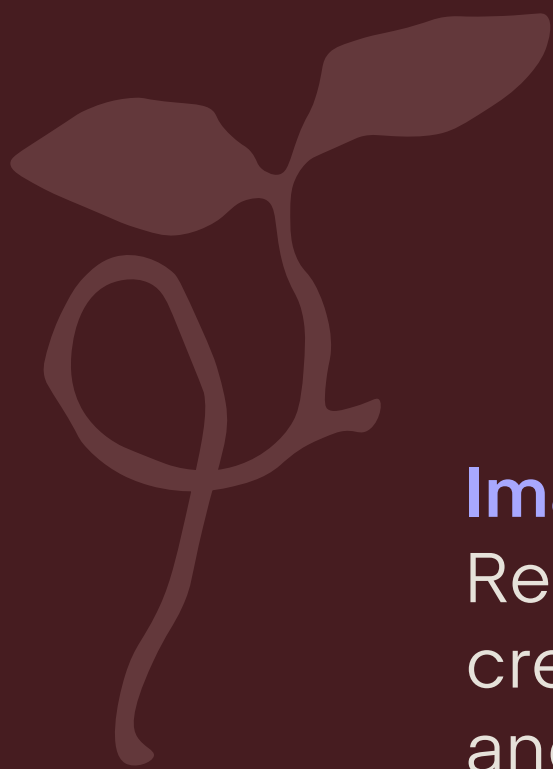
Notice how melodies rise, fall and move around you.

## Trace the Layers

Listen for flutes, strings, harp, celesta, piano hammers, field recordings and improvisation.

## Sense the Origins

Hear the interplay of Ryukyuan, South American and Bulgarian influences in harmony.



## Listen Between Words

Many vocals are wordless, asking you to engage with tone, timbre and silence.

## Imagine the Voyage

Recall the production “ship”: crew navigating, composing, and reading the wind together. Let this way of making music shape your listening.





## Closing Passage: Listening as a Practice of World-Making

As you leave the Oculus, pause with the sounds you have experienced.

*Windswept Adan* is more than music. It is a world you have inhabited. Each track has invited you into the island of Adan: a space of transformation, rebirth and imagination.

The girl's journey of exile and reincarnations mirrors the flow of life: impermanent, interconnected and full of possibility. The island's mythologies and ecological richness offer a perspective rooted in care and non-Western futurities, inviting reflection on how we might approach our own worlds.

As a listener, you have co-created this speculative space by noticing textures, following currents, and imagining forms of life that exist only in sound.

We invite you to carry this attentiveness forward:

- What stories or futures did the music make possible in your imagination?
- How did the textures of sound, voice and silence shape the way you sensed the world?
- In an era of ecological uncertainty and rapid change, how might listening deeply inspire care, creativity, and collective imagination?

By listening with curiosity and empathy, you practise holding the world open—attuning to difference, embracing transformation, and imagining futures that are already in the making.



*Thank you for experiencing  
Windswept Adan with  
imagination and openness.*