



MARCH 1981

## YMO

**A**n introduction to YMO begins with the story of Haruomi "Harry" Hosono, since the band evolved from "futuristic" concepts on which he was working for a solo album in early 1978. Hosono had a fairly typical musician's childhood (piano lessons from the age of 8 to 11; various school bands, etc.) before making his professional debut during his final university year as bassist with a short-lived group called April Fool. After work with other bands, Hosono embarked on a series of solo albums, involving an amalgamation of his eclectic influences, which include Brian Wilson, Professor Longhair, Dr. John and Van Dyke Parks, not to mention the music of China, the Caribbean, Latin America and a good deal more. He has been known to refer to this mixture as "chunky music."

A friendship was struck up with Riuichi Sakamoto and Yukihiro Takahashi during sessions for Hosono's solo album *Paraiso*, whereupon YMO became a working entity almost on the spot. Their first LP was released in November of 1978, although later remixed and reissued at the suggestion of A&M Records, YMO's label outside Japan. It was the next record, *Solid State Survivor*, released in September 1979, which really established the band, staying in the Japanese LP charts for over a year and selling upwards of 800,000 copies. An appearance in the summer of 1979 supporting the Tubes at L.A.'s Greek Theatre, led to a tour of clubs and small halls in Europe and America that same year, the publicity from which provided some of the initial impetus for the band's success at home.

However, 1980 was the year of yellow fever. *Public Pressure*, a live album released in February, went top-ten almost immediately, and was followed by an SRO Japanese tour in March and April. In June, YMO released a 10-inch album, *Multiplies*, composed half of skits by the infamous Snakeman Show. The year was rounded out with another tour of Europe and America, and a four-day Christmas stint at the Budokan, not to mention a succession of awards for *Solid State Survivor* as best-selling album of the year.

The only thing certain about the outcome of YMO's new LP (their fifth of all-new material) when recording commenced on January 16, was the title, *BGM*.

*BGM* is music to be listened to with equal enjoyment at a variety of levels. It removes the tedium from everyday actions such as cleaning the dog or walking the dishes when played softly, while holding its own with a vengeance at higher volumes.

For the first time on a YMO album, no guest players have been used (with the exception of Hideki Matsutake, who almost qualifies for member status), and all the sounds on *BGM* emanate from the barrage of instruments manipulated by the three musicians. In fact, with *BGM*, YMO has become almost completely self-contained, all the lyrics on the album being composed by the respective songwriters, translated into English and then rearranged to the extent necessary to fit the music. Also, whereas previously drummer Yukihiro Takahashi was responsible for all of YMO's vocals, on *BGM* Haruomi Hosono (bass and keyboards) and Riuichi Sakamoto (keyboards) each make vocal contributions on their own compositions, with five vocal cuts out of a total ten.

### HARUOMI HOSONO

Born on 9 July, 1947 in Tokyo  
Birth sign: Cancer Blood type: A

Graduated from Rikkyo University, he once hoped to be a cartoonist but changed his mind and got into the music world as a member of April Fool in 1969. In 1970, he got together a band called Happy End with Takashi Matsumoto, Eiichi Ohtaki and Shigeru Suzuki and gave an injection of freedom and surprise to the Japanese music scene—then heavily influenced by American and British rock—with their unique use of western rock with Japanese lyrics.

(over please)



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Happy End disbanded in 1972, and he made a first solo album, *Hosono House*, in 1973. Then he joined Caramel Mama and also produced Chu Kosaka's (1) *Horo* album. By that time he established himself not only as a bassist but also as a producer and sound creator. Caramel Mama changed its name to Tin Pan Alley, which became a sort of musical commune for young musicians such as Minako Yoshida (2), Yoshitaka Minami (3), Eiichi Ohtaki (4) and Tatsuro Yamashita (5). The band made two distinctive albums which had so-called "chunky" sound including Chinese, Caribbean and Latin music. Tin Pan Alley ceased to exist as the individual members took separate directions.

During the recording of *Paraiso* in February 1978, he got to know Riuichi Sakamoto and Yukihiro Takahashi and YMO came into the world. In April 1978, he made a month trip to India with an illustrator, Tadanori Yokoo and got into Indian music and philosophy deeper than ever.

He produces Sheena and the Rokkets and Sandii as well as taking a leadership in YMO and offering us fantastic works.

- (1) Male singer-songwriter
- (2) Female singer-songwriter
- (3) Male singer-songwriter
- (4) Male singer-songwriter, ex-member of Happy End
- (5) Male singer-songwriter who sold 500,000 records in Japan, 1980

#### SOLO ALBUMS

<i>Hosono House</i>	May 25, 1973
<i>Tropical Dandy</i>	June 25, 1975
<i>Taian Yohkoh</i>	June 25, 1976
<i>Paraiso</i>	April 25, 1977

## RIUICHI SAKAMOTO

Born on 17 January, 1952 in Tokyo

Birth Sign: Capricorn Blood type: O

He was somewhat political and involved in a student movement in high school and even fought against the police. But this radical scholar got into the Tokyo University of Arts with the ability to play the piano which he acquired when he was three. He started composing at age 10. He continued studying up to the post-graduate level, majoring in musical composition: thus the nickname "the Professor."

Still in the university, he worked as a session musician. His first recording work was with a singer, Masato Tomobe, whom he happened to meet and have a chat with at a pub just one night before he had the recording. He joined the "Bye Bye Session Band," a backing band for a singer, Lily, and did some arrangements for her *Aurora* album. He left the band and spent most of the time as a session musician. "That time I thought I had nothing to be afraid of. I was sort of big-headed," he recalls.

He then worked with Taeko Onuki (1) as an arranger and producer on her albums and became known as an important figure on the Japanese music scene. He made a debut album, *One Thousand Knives*, in October 1978 and got to know Yukihiro Takahashi through the recording.

1979 was a hectic year for him since he did a series of concerts with Akiko Yano and also with YMO in their world tour, as well as working in the studios.

He's got various interests, including music, films, books and people. He is very inquisitive and is a think-tank for YMO.

- (1) Female vocalist



#### SOLO ALBUMS

*One Thousand Knives*

October 25, 1978

*B-2 Unit*

September 21, 1980

#### SOLO SINGLE

"War Head"

July 21, 1980

### YUKIHIRO TAKAHASHI

Born on 6 June, 1952 in Tokyo

Birth sign: Gemini Blood type: A

Influenced by his older brother, he became interested in music whilst in high school. After leaving the Musashino University of Arts (1), he joined a backing band for Garo (2). He subsequently became a member of the Sadistic Mika Band which was led by Kazuhiko Katoh. With them he did a British tour and made albums including *Black Ship* and *Hot Menu*. When the band broke up, he formed the Sadistics with Masayoshi Takanaka, Hiroshi Imai and Tsugutoshi Goto. The band got quite a big following of people who were much into both fashion and music.

He did some studio sessions while in the Sadistics and, in February 1978, he came across YMO. He produced albums for Raji (3) and Suzan (4) and recently did sessions with Akiko Yano (5), Taeko Onuki (6), Kazuhiko Katoh and Kenji Omura (7) on their albums. His sensitivity and sharp drumming, especially on synthesizer drums, are highly acknowledged.

He also works as a men's fashion designer for a boutique called "Buzz Shop" which is run by his family, and designs all the stage costumes for YMO. As he is involved in both fashion and music, he is very aware of the direction these fashions are moving in.

He admires Tsuguji Fujita (8), his beautiful wife, Emiko, and their dog Roro, and is very fond of fishing. His eyes are directed towards 1981 and he is a balancing factor in YMO.

(1) Private art school in Japan

(2) Folk group who sold million records in Japan

(3) Female vocalist

(4) Female vocalist

(5) Female vocalist, guest player for live performance of YMO

(6) Female vocalist

(7) Guitarist, guest player for live performance of YMO

(8) The late, famous painter who did many works in Paris, actively

#### SOLO ALBUMS

*Saravah!*

June 21, 1977

*Murdered By Music*

June 21, 1980

