

### *ai kuwabara trio project*

Pianist Ai Kuwabara (b. 1991) produces her original music in collaboration with bassist Yusuke Morita for this piano trio project. While her music calls to mind a striking resemblance to that of two of her most loved and admired jazz pianists, Michel Petrucciani and Esbjörn Svensson of the Esbjörn Svensson Trio (E.S.T.), Kuwabara expresses her creative world with the backing of her lush sensitivity and precise technique. The trio's first album "From Here to There" debuted nationally in Japan on EWE Records in November 2012, and their second album "The Sixth Sense," released in April 2013, reached Number One on the Tower Records Jazz Chart. This year, they have confirmed festival bookings at Sapporo City Jazz Festival 2013 in July and the 12th Tokyo Jazz Festival in September.

### **Member Profiles:**



#### **Ai Kuwabara**

Born September 21st, 1991. Graduated from the Music Department at Senszoku Gakuen High School as a jazz piano major in 2010. Studied piano under Yuki Arimasa, Yoko Yamashita, and Kazune Zaima. Has been active since her early years, winning many awards such as gold medals at the All-Japan Yamaha Electone Concours, for both the lower elementary division and the upper elementary division. Performed in many concerts such as the UNICEF Charity Concert, and International Junior Original Concert. Featured in AERA magazine as "Genius Electone Girl." Worked as Electone player for Kei Ogura's musical Kids Algo in 2004 and 2005. From the latter half of junior high school, switched to playing the piano. Planned, produced, and composed music, all by herself, for her very first show in April 2010 gaining favorable reviews. Currently performing all over Japan in shows spanning a range of genres, such as her collaboration with Mr. Masahiko Kitahara, trombone player for Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra. Worked in Germany from May to August 2011 as the pianist for

the German production of The Young Americans Dinner-Theater Europe. Toured Japan as pianist for Yo Oizumi's "Oizumi One-Man Show" in October and November 2011. Took part in the first official CD for the fashion brand Mastermind Japan, as well as in Def Tech's Greatest Hits album. Her first album "From Here to There" debuted on EWE Records in October 2012, and her second album "The Sixth Sense" was released in April 2013.



### **Yusuke Morita**

Born in 1988 in Hyogo Prefecture. After trying out various instruments, started playing bass in his high school years, and then began to study jazz on his own. Graduated from Tokyo College of Music as a composition major. Studied composition under Mr. Shigeaki Saegusa and Mr. Katsuhisa Hattori, and studied electric bass under Mr. Yoshihiro Naruse. Played with many professional musicians in jam sessions during his student years. Collaborated on recording work and provided other support for several projects, mostly in the club scene. After graduating, took charge of arranging tracks for several compilation albums featuring tracks by artists such as Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder. A new generation bassist that has it all - improvisation using the diction of jazz, groove cultivated while working on dance music in the club scene, and logic fostered from composition and arrangement. Other than his present work with the Ai Kuwabara Trio Project, currently busy supporting and doing arrangements for several major artists.



### **Shintaro Imamura**

Influenced by his father, an amateur drummer, Imamura began playing drums at three years old. Went to the United States upon graduation from high school and entered Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied under Kenwood Dennard, an experienced drummer who played with Jaco Pastorius and Maceo Parker. Returned to Japan in September 2005 and relocated his base of operations to Tokyo. While performing shows and supporting projects of all genres, has played as a member of Enginez (R&B, jazz, J-pop Fusion) and Soul Ajar (instrumental jam band). Played in Hiromi Uehara's band in the FNS Music Festival with Ayaka and Hiromi. In 2009, contributed to the opening song and other music for the Sugako Hashida's TV drama The Neighbor's Lawn (Tonari no Shibafu). Currently engaged in various recording and live performance projects.