Osaka-born and New York-based pianist **Erika Dohi** is a multi-faceted artist with an eclectic musical background. From highly polished traditional classical to bold improvisation, she is a dynamic performer whose timeless style and unidiomatic technique sets her apart in contemporary NYC avant-garde circles. Dohi’s vast repertory is impressive, but what makes her truly such a barrier-defying artist is what lies ahead. *I, Castorpollux,* Dohi’s debut solo album, is a profound personal excavation set to a gripping landscape of wild, genre-fluid composition; a virtuosic, but emotionally generous convergence of the technical and the spiritual. With understated piano & keyboards at its center, *I, Castorpollux* is equal parts hazy nostalgia, science-fiction soundtrack and electro-acoustic experimentation. The project features contributions from **Channy Leaneagh** (**Polica**), **Andy Akiho**, **Immanuel Wilkins**, **Ambrose Akinmusire**, **Jeremy Boettcher**, **Emily Wells**, **Zach Hanson**, and is produced by **William Brittelle**, a vital modern composer himself.

Says Brittelle, "The first thing that really struck me about Erika's work is her unique and extremely rare ability to directly distill and channel emotion. Despite her years of training and formidable technique the ideas she presents are really stunning in their austerity, in the pure economy of their emotional impact. Even some of the more virtuosic moments on the record still have a laser-focused emotionality to them. Her artistic vision for the record was so compelling and palpable - it was really infectious and helped rally me, and all of our wonderful collaborators around a common purpose."

Dohi adds, “This is the first time I thought writing music through as a whole, beginning to the end, as opposed to using the spontaneity of the improv at a concert. I was very new to writing music, and this is where Bill helped me most. When I approached him with what I recorded initially, the materials were quite raw - only acoustic piano and some free-improv on Wurlitzer.”

The central theme to the album is the “split-self” and variable perceptions of time that Dohi has faced at formative moments in her life. Born in Osaka, she experienced the 1995 Kobe earthquake at age 7. Hiding under a table during the worst of it, she later emerged to find the world around her crumbled. In her immediate vicinity, a fixture of her childhood remained standing. The Tower of the Sun from Expo 70 (the World’s Fair in Osaka) stood tall. Designed by artist Taro Okamoto as a response to the atomic bomb, along with its twin work “Myth of Tomorrow,” the Tower is a trail-marker on Erika’s journey, a stand-in sigil to unlock the mysterious sounds of her work, with 70s synths and retro sci-fi aesthetics permeating the album’s narratives. Perhaps the Tower is a time machine itself, both a transportation back to her 7-year-old self in Osaka, but also a jettison into an unknowable future world. Or a three-faced time-stopper, where the past present and future are meaningless in the moment, as transitory as music itself. She moved to England as a 15-year-old for school, another split, and much of the album was written while living in Texas where the split between her Asian self and the idea of being an American created a lot of confusion. It also necessitated a near mountain of self-discovery to reconcile how she felt and who she was within the social backdrop of a strongly conservative environment. It is no wonder that the character of the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux from Greek and Roman mythology, resonate so deeply with her, or Haruki Murakami’s Two Moons and their strange light.

On the album’s opening piece “Two Moons (Osaka 1995),” Erika’s dulcet voice speaks to us in Japanese. Translated:

“The school closed after the earthquake at 5 am. My mom took my dad to the station, I was alone in the house. The earthquake hit again during that time. I crawled under the table in the living room with my teddy bear that I always carry. Time stopped.

Even when I go back to Japan, time looks like it has been frozen, but things have changed. People get older, buildings are newer, I am also older.

But the inside-myself is the same. Cannot fill the differences, I become alone. Time is stopped.”

This is the entrance point to a parallel world, the world living lifetimes within *I, Castorpollux*. Later in the album, in the piece entitled “Tower of the Sun,” Erika again weaves a narrative in Japanese, describing a moment etched into her memory, painting a picture for the listener. Translated:

“At 7 am, when the aftershock of the earthquake hit again, I was alone in the house. As I crawled under the table, waiting for the shake to stop, I looked at the trees of the expo park outside. The trees looked as if they had stopped moving. That moment had no meaning of past, future, or present. Even at that moment, the tower in the park was not shaken, but stood soaring.”

From her contributions to various projects, and her participation in the Artist in Residency collaborations, Erika has become a staple of the 37d03d community. 37d03d is honored to partner with her on her profound and moving debut.

Erika Dohi received her B.M. and M.M. from Manhattan School of Music, and her D.M.A. from Stony Brook University under Gilbert Kalish and Christina Dahl. Highlights of her past work include her BLUEPRINTS Piano Series, which put on the 11-concert festival “In Visible Roads” in collaboration with Metropolis Ensemble, featured in the New York Times and the New Yorker. She is also the co-founder of RighteousGIRLS, whose album *gathering blue* has been met with critical acclaim from both jazz and contemporary-classical critics alike. Hailed as “one of the most adventurous new music debut albums in recent years,” the album received a 4.5 stars from DownBeat magazine. The duo have received awards including the 2016 New Music USA Impact Fund Award, a 2015 New Music USA Project Grant, and an Independent Music Awards Nomination for *gathering blue* (Best Album) and KARakurENAI (Best Instrumental) by composer/steel-pannist Andy Akiho. Dohi participated in a Metropolis Ensemble performance of William Brittelle's Spiritual America, and performed in the Central Park Summer Stage with Ensemble LPR, featuring David Bowie’s *Blackstar* arranged by composer Evan Ziporyn, along with the Donny McCaslin Group. In addition, she has made appearances at international festivals including the D.C. Jazz Festival with Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra, Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music, Tokyo Experimental Festival, INTERSECT Festival in Bryant Park, and at the Time’s Arrow: Webern festival, for which she performed both solo and chamber works.