



AKHILA & THE ALCHEMISTS

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Praise for *Think Miyazaki*

“Beautiful is the only word I have for this track [*Think Miyazaki*]. It’s an amazing production in terms of a brand new soundscape, with beautiful drums making sudden appearances in the track, the pop melody and semi-spoken lyrics with the low drone. It’s a layered song with its heart steeped in pop. The experimentation is beautiful, with the major melodies spinning a web and complementing the Carnatic violin, which sounds like a rock guitar playing in reverse. The mix and mastering are splendid. What throws you off is the unconventional instruments and their usage. The dynamics are well rounded off.”

-Bonnie Chakraborty (*vocalist, playback singer, folk musician*)

“There's something enchanting yet mysterious in every movement on *Think Miyazaki*. It pulls the listener in several directions, while impressing upon this kind of airy chorus, which stays with you well after the diverse song has ended. Considering the number of people involved in this project, it definitely seems like a lot has gone into it and it's heard throughout the song.”

-Anurag Tagat (*journalist, music critic*)



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“*Think Miyazaki* grabbed my attention and got me hooked right from the first note. The music has a wonderful quality that perfectly mirrors the alternating darkness and hope the lyrics portray. There is also an earthy, grounded feel to the song, bolstered by strong, emotive vocals and instrumentation by all the artists.”

-Nisha Rajagopalan (Carnatic vocalist)

“*Think Miyazaki* is a very nice song, and very well produced. The Carnatic violin adds a new dimension to the song, and the rap is interesting too.”

-Neil Mukherjee (songwriter, guitarist)

Praise for *Woe Begone*

“An album with the energy of a concert and the vision of a work of theatre. Like the alchemists of old, Akhila and her musical companions draw on the deep material of their lives to create not a fusion but a transcendent wholeness that speaks to what’s whole in each of us. And all of us, together, listening.”

-Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma (poet, translator, musician, magician)

“To find our way out of the ecological disaster we currently find ourselves in will require a blend of returning to the traditions that helped all human cultures live in balance with the land while at the same time inventing new ways of relating to a burning world we simply have never experienced before. The best art – the only art worthwhile in these devastating times – helps us blend tradition and invention to find the courage we need. *Woe Begone* does that. Akhila Ramnarayan's classically trained voice is worth listening to no matter what she's singing about. But, when she turns that voice to color modern lyrics about snail extinction, space age demons, and rising seas, you find music's original reason: posing questions about how to live in our specific time. Beware enchantment by the Alchemists! If Akhila's voice isn't enough to break your heart, coupling that voice with the Alchemists' textures and soundscapes surely will. Will *Woe Begone* sew your heart back together again in the end? Can you, as Akhila asks in the end, put lipstick on the apocalypse? Listen to this album and find out.”

-Will Falk (poet, essayist, activist)

“*Woe Begone*, an indie album from Akhila and the Alchemists, traverses distances, cultures, emotions, and music styles. Carnatic melds with bass and chants fuse with melody, just as despair flows into joy and leads us along the pitted journey of our times, and life itself. The lyrics are a study of myth and metaphor and are enriched by the visual art that goes with each song. Whether the words lead us to Basho and the natural world, poet Subramania Bharati’s spark in a forest hollow, Miyazaki’s anime, or the future apocalypse - in their appeal, the songs are universal. That these musicians have not physically played together is something that is an ode to the times – bridges can be built through exhilarating music.”

-Geethanjali Rajan (poet, haiku editor, Japanese language expert)