



Bio information: **VOLAPÜK**

Title: **WHERE IS TAMASHII ?** (Cuneiform Rune 3384)

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File Under: **AVANT PROGRESSIVE / ROCK IN OPPOSITION / POST-ROCK / CHAMBER ROCK / POST-CLASSICAL**

Reissue of the final – and perhaps finest – album by Volapük, drummer / composer/ Etron Fou Le Loublan alumnus Guigou Chenevier's extraordinary avant / post-rock / Rock In Opposition quartet

Where Is Tamashii? is a reissue of the final album by **Volapük**, the genre-defiant, avant rock French ensemble led by drummer and composer **Guigou Chenevier**, an alumnus of the legendary **Rock In Opposition (R.I.O.)** / art rock quartet **Etron Fou Le Loublan**. One of rock's great unsung drummers, Chenevier founded Volapük in 1993 as a trio with classical musicians **Michel Mandel** and **Guillaume Saurel**. He named his group Volapük after a universal language that pre-dated Esperanto by 50 years. It was a fitting name for a group that ignored musical barriers, liberally sharing elements of rock, classical, folk music and even jazz in the pursuit of composition and melodic essence. . In 1999, Volapük welcomed its fourth member, violinist **Takumi Fukushima**.

Cuneiform Records began working with Chenevier and Volapük in the 1990s, releasing three Volapük studio albums. It also released a big-band project organized by Chenevier, called *Les Rumeurs de la Ville*. Recently, as part of its digital release series, Cuneiform reissued a live Volapük recording, *Pükapök*. Cuneiform is honored to now reissue *Where Is Tamashii?*, Volapük's last release before disbanding in 2010.

We asked Guigou Chenevier to tell us about *Where Is Tamashii?* Here's what he said:

*"In my opinion, **Where is Tamashii?** is the best realized album that **Volapük** ever recorded and released during the 12 or 13 years of our existence.*

Unfortunately, for non-musical reasons, this album was not really well distributed when it was first released in 2003 and was not able to find the audience it should have.

*This digital release that **Cuneiform Records** offers us today is a real chance for this album to finally exist again, and for more people to discover the very nice music it contains amongst its eleven pieces.*

Listening back to this album today, something I had not done for many years, I am suddenly struck by the fact it constitutes a perfect bridge or link between the earlier period of the group and later projects which have emerged from the Volapük nebula of musicians.

*The song, '**Where is Tamashii**' (I really LOVE Takumi's singing on this song!), sounds quite like some pieces by **Rêve Général** (<https://altrockproductions.bandcamp.com/album/howl>), the 'super-méga-group' that we*



*founded in 2016-2017 with a meeting of musicians coming from the Austro-Czech-Turkish band **Metamorphosis** and **Volapük**.*

*Guillaume cello's and my drums on '**Impro Cloche**' very strongly remind me a bit of the song '**Dunaj**' by **Rêve Général**. Takumi's violin in '**Chantag**' is reminiscent of some parts of the album by **Les Mutants Maha** (<https://lesalbumsclaus.bandcamp.com/album/bakuhatsu>), a trio I created with Takumi on violin and vocals and **Lionel Malric** playing low tech keyboards in 2015.*

I could easily list other examples, but in brief, my impressions in listening again to this album today; twenty one years after it was first released, its music is still fresh, organic and very real! A good surprise for me.

– Guigou Chenevier, Avignon, France, September 16th 2024



VOLAPUK WHERE IS TAMASHII?

Credits:

Guigou Chenevier : batterie, percussions

Takumi Fukushima : violin, voix

Michel Mandel : clarinette, clarinette basse, taragot

Guillaume Saurel : violoncelle, basse électrique



*"The band specializes in an expert fusion of folk, circus music, gypsy dances and sounding like something that would go very well over a silent film about murderous clowns. Fukushima's occasional vocals also bring a few of the songs into a realm similar to Czech vocalist Iva Bittova's eccentric avant-pop. All...without the slightest hint of "Art," though the fact that Chenevier had to pull his musicians from classical conservatories should tell you something. **There aren't many bands playing this kind of music, but I can say without hyperbole that Volapük is by some measure the best.***

*...music at once as joyous, strange and accomplished is few and far between... Chenevier's projects can always stand more exposure, and **Where Is Tamashii?** is on par with the best of them."*

– Dominique Leone, **Pitchfork**