

# WIRED

**Tricky**

Return of the prodigal

Joe McPhee  
Michel Chion

Digital dancehall  
King Jammy to Cutty Ranks

Sick Llama / Fag Tapes  
Asva  
Reiko Kudo

THE WIRE 294 AUGUST 2008  
ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC  
£3.90 9 770952 068003 08



## John Davis The Gold Hooped Nature ROOT STRATA CD

Film maker, photographer and sound artist John Davis has been a close friend of Jeffrey Cantu-Ledesma since their days at the San Francisco Art Institute about a decade ago. When Davis began to experiment with sound in his impressionist film collages, Cantu-Ledesma, who is best known as a member of the avant rock ensemble Tarentel, offered a sympathetic ear, encouraging John with particular sounds and particular mediums. Davis furthered his sound investigations through manipulated field recordings, prepared guitar agitation and impressionist noise, and it makes sense that Cantu-Ledesma would publish the work through his Root Strata imprint. The soft focus cascading drones that undergird Davis's *The Gold Hooped Nature* lends itself to the imaginary soundtrack. Something like static landscapes rendered in 8 mm hypersaturation would do nicely.

## Ferial Confine First, Second And Third Drop SIREN CD

Ferial Confine was the moniker that Andrew Chalk used in the mid-80s for just a couple of cassette-only recordings. The most notable of these was the Broken Flag cassette *Meiosis*, and the others were private editions in tiny amounts which were probably just handed off to Richard Ruperus and David Jackman, both of whom Chalk later collaborated with in The New Blockaders and Organum respectively. *First, Second And Third Drop* is ostensibly an unreleased body of work recorded in 1985, although *The Wire's* David Keenan has reported that The New Blockaders used a good portion of this material on *The Final Recordings*. Chalk's prolonged metallic scrapes and raw acoustic noise parallel the aggregate complexities of Organum with Chalk choosing a slightly more restrained mode of attack and an occasional blossom of sunburst reverb. It's far from being as caustic as the other Ferial Confine recordings, and could stand as a bridge between his earlier noise constructions and the tone-smear majesty of *Mirror*.

## Koen Holtkamp Make Haste/Free Birds A ROOM FOREVER 12"

Koen Holtkamp is half of the pixel-pushing duo Mountains and proprietor of the Apestaarte label, based out of New York. This art edition piece of vinyl concludes A Room Forever's three part series of commissions with a studio recording on one side of the wax and a field recording on the other. (The two previous contributing artists were Machinefabriek and Svarte Greiner.) Holtkamp's studio work ("Make Haste") is not all that far from the Machinefabriek ethos, as a slow burning crescendo of gliding guitars nudges against a stream of softly broken static. This track in particular is eerily reminiscent of Eno's magnificent coda to *Here Come The Warm Jets*. The field recording side finds Holtkamp in

a large, resonant industrial space where his presence is agitating the resident pigeons. A nice recording, but somewhat pale in comparison to the arcing panache of his studio work.

## Lull Like A Slow River GLACIAL MOVEMENTS CD

Even if Mick Harris didn't have a storied career with a multitude of personas for menacing sound (Scorn, Painkiller, Napalm Death, etc), all of the linguistic cues leave no doubt as to what this album is going for. Harris's nom de plume, the title of the record and even the publisher's name directly point to the isolationist ethos embraced by Thomas Köner and BJ Nilsen. *Like A Slow River* is a full hour of very cold, very desolate electronic modelling which sounds as if it was recorded through the thick walls of some military bunker located at the polar region. Metallic pings and clanks resonate through Harris's sonic murk, offering softly hypnotic repetitions that border on turgid melody. Nothing within this album hurries beyond the pace of ice floe.

## Nole Plastique Escaperhead NEXSOUND CD

*Escaperhead* is the second album from the Russian duo Nole Plastique, who seem to have discovered the history of avant pop music through two separate ports of entry: Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd and Christian Fennesz. Within these two references, Nole Plastique re-engineer a particular variant of psychedelia that may have started at one time with simple songs for a couple of guys singing and strumming on their guitars. Yet when these wistful tunes are rendered through their arsenal of DSP tricknology, wooden rhythms end up grafted into the backbone of songs and studiously lysergic effects fire from every direction. The songs dissolve as semi-digitised ghosts with flickers of English lyrics and bright guitar riffs. In this Pink Floyd/Fennesz combination, Nole Plastique are acutely aware of their American contemporaries (Animal Collective, Indian Jewelry, Black Dice), and while wonderously jubilant, *Escaperhead* occasionally suffers from being too calculated in the search for the 'new'.

## Edward Ruchalski WaterTrain HUMBUG CD

Compiling recordings culled from a few CD-Rs originally released earlier this decade, and kitted out with two new tracks, *WaterTrain* is a good introduction for latecomers to American composer, improviser and instrument inventor Edward Ruchalski. The CD booklet includes images of two of his instruments, the bell stand and truro box, both curious contraptions that look like they've teleported in from another time, much like the inventions of fellow countryman Hal Rammel. Rammel's also a good comparison for Ruchalski's music - short, pithy pieces that fold field recordings into a

stew of glittering bells (as on the opening "Akinovna"), source wheezy drones from stretched strings, or plot ceremonial improvisations that are rather like a rural take on the tonal attention and careful pacing of the best electroacoustic improv. **3.0N DALE**

## \*Sone Passerelle AND/OAR CD

Yannick Dauby, Christophe Harvard and Hughes Germain concluded their 2004 residency at the Centre d'Art Passerelle in Brest, France with a sound installation/performance which used the resonant frequencies of the building as the source for their piece. The three controlled the oscillations of vibrating devices which rattled heavy chimney and steel doors for low throbbing frequencies. They also manipulated the feedback interplay between loudspeakers, narrowband parabolic microphones and contact microphones for a glistening range of mid- and high range frequencies. As mathematically precise as the spatial positioning of these devices must have been in the installation space, the movement of tones gliding across the audio spectrum enjoys a rich poetry of angelic shimmering and subharmonic heaviness. The psychoacoustic properties are a fascinating point of entry, but the results captured on this disc transcend the process, and are reminiscent of similar successes from Christina Kubisch and Stephen Vitiello.

## Troum Symballein SMALL VOICES CD Objectlessness FARIA CD

Troum's previous incarnation Maeror Tri had issued two compendiums of tracks that had appeared on various compilations, titled *Meditamentum I* and *II*. The German duo has followed suit with *Symballein*, offering another collection of tracks. Given the consistency that Troum present in their black clad, Industrial Ambience, a collection such as *Symballein* works as well as any of their albums. A steel plated darkness ripples through each of these six tracks, forged through bass and guitar drones with liberal amounts of effects. The variations upon this theme find Troum injecting distant mechanical rhythms at the event horizon and frigid electronics reminiscent of the classic Maurizio Bianchi sound of the early 80s.

*Objectlessness* is another archival recording, having originally appeared as a Mystery Sea CD-R in 2004 before disappearing almost immediately upon its release. Two lengthy tracks drift out of a primordial, black void, a suggestion of pre-symbolic language. The amorphous gasps and deep bellowing groans of arcing intensity on *Objectlessness* are rich fodder for cathartic introspection, but anyone seeking to find a shiny happy side of the human psyche need not look here. ☐

# OUTER BOUNDS OF SOUND

A new Series of Limited Edition LP's, only 300 made of each, no repressing no cd's

Series includes

- Z'EV
  - STEVE MOORE (Zombi)
  - BURNT HILLS
  - K.K. NULL
  - KLEINSTWAHR (Gary Mundy)
  - SMEGMA
  - WICKED KING WICKER
  - ULTRABUNNY (Bunnybrains)
  - HAZE XXL (Halo of Flies)
- and more to be announced

# MERZBOW

"Protean World" New LP  
1000 copies being made  
pre-orders get colored wax

# CHROME

Remastered Ltd Ed CD's  
"Half Machine Lip Moves"  
"Alien Soundtracks"  
"Third From the Sun"

# GANDALF MURPHY

See them on tour in the UK  
Order "Rajacks From the Sky"  
Pic Disc LP from our website

# Coming Soon SKULLFLOWER/WICKED KING WICKER SPLIT LP

Distributed by Cobraside.com  
(yes, they ship worldwide!)

# To order, for mp3's, info go to NOISEVILLE.com

Snail mail:  
Noiseville  
PO Box 244 Cold Spring NY 10516 USA

# foxy digitalis

reviews

I'm guessing that *The Gold Hooped Nature's* aesthetics lend themselves to John Davis' filmic and photographic exploits. These drones are panoramic in scope; wide-angled works, peppered with the odd soft focus shot, snatches of earthen landscape blurred into indeterminacy. *Queen Mab's Chariot* is



testament to this; a particularly textured work where warm, Niblockian drones meet fickle pops and grains created from un-credited sources. Impressively, *The Gold Hooped Nature* rarely conjures the same images. Rather than simply altering the frequency to extend, Davis shapes widely varying drones, and the keys are often in the titles. *Blood Rust* offers an unromanticized, cavernous dirge; while *Moral Frost* presents an expansive, glacial snapshot. But these inter-media observations are more than labored parallels; they extend to production similarities. For

example, the split-channel approach taken in *Hudibras* demonstrates a precision in the editing room: an aqueous piece that makes perfect use of our binaural perceptions. And it's not all pressing drones; they're temporarily suspended for the intriguing reverse-jazz meanderings of *Half Consumed* but also for the disappointingly flat oscillations of *The Forlorn Bookworm*. And meanwhile the closer, *Naumkeag*, recalls the hauntological output of *The Caretaker* over textbook atmospheric drone-isms of Thomas Koner, with ghostly delay casting a phantasmic shade over the final minutes. Ultimately, *The Gold Hooped Nature* is both a charmingly romantic and skillfully premeditated work. Undoubtedly a worthwhile addition to a cramped genre.

-- David Ainley (6 August, 2008)

<http://www.digitalisindustries.com/foxyd/reviews.php?which=3597>