

Talibam!/Matt Nelson/Ron Stabinsky
Hard Vibe

ESP-Disk DL/LP

Talibam!

Endgame Of The Anthropocene

ESP-Disk DL/LP

As Talibam!, the New York duo of keyboardist Matthew Mottel and drummer Kevin Shea delight in compulsively picking at the scab that separates irritation from entertainment, while maintaining deadpan straight faces that dare you to call out the emperor's state of undress. *Hard Vibe* is based around a wincingly optimistic, endlessly repeating Hammond organ riff cycle, stretched out for 40 minutes over two sides of vinyl, over which guest saxophonist Matt Nelson sprays stream of consciousness tenor manoeuvres that flit between basic skronkage and up and down runs without ever finding a satisfactory melodic centre. *Endgame Of The Anthropocene* is a disorientating swirl of off-kilter rhythms and laser beam synths that coalesce into aspartame-rush 1980s TV themes. Both albums are maddening, infuriating and extraordinarily well executed.

Upp

Upp/This Way

Voiceprint CD

Upp were a British trio of keyboardist Andy Clark, bassist Stephen Amazing and drummer Jim Copley who harboured an unhealthy obsession with American funk and soul, and let it splurt out all over two mid-1970s albums. Their 1975 self-titled debut, produced by – and featuring occasional guitar solos from – Jeff Beck is a sticky mess of killer breaks, slick synths, chewy clavinet and oleaginous vocoder. Fans of Stevie Wonder's purple patch might dig it – but someone really should have talked Clark out of singing: his lame falsetto is entirely unconvincing and questionable lyrics fall the wrong side of creepy. 1976's *This Way* makes matters worse by slathering on processed disco cheese and strings.

Trevor Watts/Veryan Weston/Alison Blunt/Hannah Marshall

Dialogues With Strings: Live At Cafe Oto In London

Fundacja Sluchaj DL/LP

Trevor Watts and Veryan Weston have collaborated for many years, as have cellist Hannah Marshall and violinist Alison Blunt, while there have been various crossovers between the two duos. When all four play together, the result is quicksilver improvisation with a remarkable range of moods. One moment Weston's piano is placing tentative markers, encouraging anxious grind and scrape from cello and violin. Suddenly the keys pick up into a barroom prance sending Watts's soprano sax into a rearing, shenai-like flame fanned by angular strings. Dropping down into a pool of lachrymose reflection with gentle piano stipples and rich string drones, the alto picks out peppery quacks that signal the next sudden shift in tone. This first-time meeting of four keen imaginations burns with ideas and energy. □

Jim Haynes on
haptic
interventions,
Jeanne Moreau
samples, and an
exercise in
narcolepsy

Lucía Chamorro

Luna Anfibia

Pan Y Rosas Discos DL

Parallels are self-evident between the DIY distribution networks of the experimental cassette culture from the late 1970s/early 80s and today's net labels. Both aspired to connect artists and their audiences at a minimum of cost, though the current systems do eschew much of the communication involved. Beyond decentralised distribution, similarities end there. However, in the work of Uruguayan composer Lucía Chamorro, you can hear echoes of homespun electroacoustic and rudimentary musique concrète from that temporal groundswell. Tape loops of haptic interventions between indeterminate household objects spiral amid roughly recorded bird sounds and snippets of conversation, with sonic activities taking place in a quiet to middling dynamic range.

Escupemetralla

Poison Of Dead Sun In Your Brain Slowly Fading

Novak CD-R/DL

This obscure Spanish project, which published a few cassettes way back, returns after a 20 year hiatus. The opening salvo of sequenced industrial muscularity recalls fellow countrymen Esplendor Geométrico, but that shifts towards a morass of media-sampled admonitions against US jingoism before the album finale's saccharine bloom of cinematic portent held in constant climax. All of this is cast amid classic countercultural citations of WS Burroughs's intertextual time travel and Allen Ginsberg's poetic rantings, rubbing shoulders with time-stretched dilations of Miles Davis solos and breathy Jeanne Moreau samples. Casting them across a wide conceptual net, Escupemetralla has difficulty connecting his omnivorous crosshatching of references under any unified banner.

Hypoxia

Division Of Trust

Make Noise LP

On this series of releases, the Make Noise electronics company showcases what their Shared System synthesizer can do by commissioning works from a veritable who's who of contemporary synthesists,

including Robert AA Lowe, Keith Fullerton Whitman, Alessandro Cortini, etc. Hypoxia is Moe Espinosa, better known as Drummcell, maker of Berghain approved techno. As Hypoxia, he's scored a work to be played in a single session. Previously he has used a Buchla tablet to adapt science fiction retro aesthetics embraced by John Carpenter, Goblin, et al. That aesthetic doesn't shift when working the Shared System through a well-crafted set of elegiac sequencing and dark-eyed arpeggiations.

Hans-Joachim Irmeler & Carl Oesterheld
Die Gesänge Des Maldoror

Klangbad CD/DL/LP

Hans-Joachim Irmeler helms one of two Faust incarnations currently operating on parallel yet different trajectories since the original group split around 2005. On this this proggy rock opera interpretation of Lautréamont's 19th century novel of baroque grotesqueries on the poetics of evil and madness, Irmeler is joined by Carl Oesterheld. The moderate orchestration of keyboards, guitar, bass and drums occasionally swells in portent with the addition of a string chamber ensemble, recalling the idiosyncratically dissonant albums of Igor Wakhevitch. Individual notes and rhythms are struck with a strident staccato, implying the sting from Lautréamont's texts. The Rowland S Howard swagger of "Zweiter Gesang" makes for a surprisingly groovy interlude before the two propel through anxious chunks of timpani lock-stepped with the other instruments.

NoOne

How Doth The Little Crocodile Improve His Shining Tale

Midira CD/DL

There's a purposeful denial of specificity within the patient sound design of NoOne's repurposing of this slight variant on a poem found in *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. A vague surreality settles upon the dominant mood of pooled drones, eerie surges of ectoplasmic thrum and crackly vinyl appropriations. Lumbering pace and heavy-lidded obfuscation both plunge the entire album into an exercise of narcolepsy.

Penny Rimbaud

What Passing Bells

One Little Indian CD/DL

Declarations against any and all forms of warfare have long been at the heart of Crass founder Rimbaud's work. His latest opus *What Passing Bells* proclaims a firm anti-war sentiment through the recitation of Wilfred Owen's war poems. Owen, a British soldier who died in combat during the First World War, wrote in the romantic tradition about the madness and horrors of trench warfare. Rimbaud has an amazing speaking voice, nimbly trilling his 'r's with baroque eloquence. Here he surrounds himself with a sparse musical accompaniment adapted from fin-de-siècle parlour forms by Liam Noble on piano and Kate Shortt on cello. The anachronism of this stylistic conceit can only go so far as a match to Rimbaud's oration. At times the album is more polite audiobook than virulent anti-war sermon. □



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