

Contact!

A publication of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community (CEC)

Automne / Autumn 1994

The Aerial #5: A Journal in Sound

Various Artists

{What Next? Recordings

The Aerial #5 is a collection of nine compositions from as many composers, accompanied by a very interesting and detailed booklet. The first listening convinced me that I was hearing first-rate new age, but additional listenings made me realize that the specific uses of the human voice moved this CD away from new age: the beautiful text that Bob Gregory wrote and recites for Gustavo Matamoros has too much content for regular new age, the over-worked, distorted, twisted 'wild man' voice of Klein and Hosler is an extremely brilliant idea, man's nature being his culture, (but why not return the latter in on itself to exemplify wildness?), and the reflexive use of discourse in Derek Bailey's composition, which might be seen as the ultimate expression of what this CD intends to be—a journal.

Just another group of sounds? A glorification of human voice like that achieved through German liederers? This CD is a reflexive attempt to face oneself. Is there anything else needed?

Luc Gauthier

DEAD EYES MAGAZINE seven

THE AERIAL #5 (what next)

Well put together compilation of experimental \ spoken word \ vocal artists. The overall tone of this is very serious. The artists involved all seem quite skillful at their chosen field, be it The Machine For Making Sense's tape manipulations or Sydney Davis on piano and tapes. This is a good way to hear several experimental artists all doing interesting work. They are also always accepting high quality tapes for further comps, so send em in.

Furnitures: The Magazine of North American
Ideophonics

Issue No. 11: June, 1993.

The Aerial: A Journal in Sound: Nine diverse works on this fifth issue: Willem De Ridder & Hafler Trio, Helen Thorington, Gustavo Matamoros & Bob Gregory, Sarah Peebles, Sydney Davis, Philip Corner, Richard Klein & Mark Hosler, The Machine for Making Sense, and Derek Bailey. Lots of great language-based works here. (*Note New Address*: Nonsequitur Foundation, PO Box 344, Albuquerque, NM, 87103).

Fall 1993 High Performance

The Aerial, a journal in sound



Various Artists

For those of you agile enough to navigate the seas of new and experimental music, *The Aerial* (issue #5) is a "journal in sound" that will rock your proverbial boat. Complete with a 20-page color booklet, this 73-minute CD covers a wide variety of genres (composed or otherwise) from text/sound poetry and electronic toys to contemporary classical and invented instruments. On *The Aerial* find spoken-word tour-de-force duo Richard Klein and Mark Hosler coming to you from Negativland, and New American Radio series producer Helen Thorington creating a cybersonic landscape for the open ear. Also included are London's Derek Bailey with his tongue-in-cheek commentary on music technology, Amsterdam's Willem De Ridder & Haffler Trio with their "creepy hallucinatory mind control experiment" and Toronto's Sara Peebles with samples from the natural world mixed with acoustic instruments like the Japanese *sho*. With nine artists in all, this chapter in the *Aerial* series is a welcome addition to the world of recorded music, language and audio art. JP

The Aerial/Nonsequitur Foundation, PO Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103. \$12 CD, \$8 Chrome Cassette.

intake

Issue # 5 Absolutely Free

MANIFOLD

the Aerial - (v/a)

cd - Nonsequitur

Billed as a "Journal of Sound", this is an installment in a series of jewel-boxed compact disc releases that contains a disc of highly varied and experimental tracks by various artists, and a rather thick cd booklet that devotes a page or two to each artist, elaborating on the musicians and perhaps what they are "up to" with respect to their particular contribution. It works real well. Artists include Willem De Ridder and the Hafler Trio doing an amusing bit of spoken word mindplay backed by clouds of spooky noise, and a vocal sculpture of the voice of Bob Gregory by Gustavo Matamoros that is somehow irritating and captivating at the same time. There are so many things here that I could literally fill up a magazine column trying to describe any one of these tracks. Sarah Peebles "Excerpts From Kai" is beautiful and relaxing water-sounds, chimes, bells, hums, animal noises and more - it is an excerpt from these intriguing live performances where the audience is surrounded by speakers producing various taped sounds while unamplified primitive instruments are played in their vicinity. "Star Axis" by Sydney Davis is a recording of an enormous Charles Ross sculpture in the desert of New Mexico - humming sounds as the guywires that support the thing vibrate as the wind blows and such. Also here are Phillip Corner, Richard Klein and Mark Hosler, The Machine for Making Sense, Derek Bailey and Helen Thorington all doing pieces that are amusing and revolutionary. Aerial 5 is fascinating! great work that energizes/feeds the mind. Great stuff!

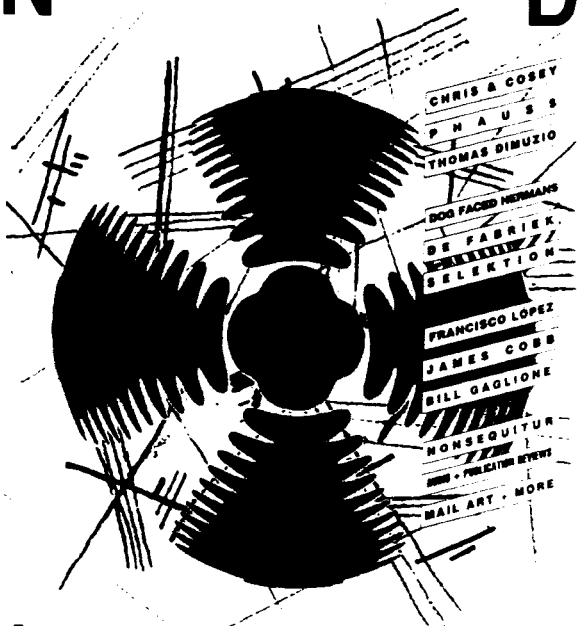
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The Aerial #5 [Nonsequitur] (CD.) Another wonderful journal of sound which features works by Willem De Ridder & Hafler Trio, Helen Thorington, Gustavo Matamoros, Sarah Peebles, Sydney Davis, Philip Corner, Richard Klein & Mark Hosler, The Machine for Making Sense, and Derek Bailey. Besides the wonderful selection of audio art, compositions, treatment of language, and delightful excursions in sound there is a very informative booklet about the work itself and the artists. A recommended series (OP)

OPTION

MUSIC ALTERNATIVES

IN'-BELIEVABLE



● **THE AERIAL #5: A Journal In Sound** This is the latest in a noteworthy series of sound art works. Though there's still some of the disjointed feel endemic to compilations, most of the pieces are low-key timbral explorations, so they flow together well. These musicians mix high- and low-tech sources without distinction, but get the same rough, guttural tones from samplers and other electronics that they do from the less complex instruments. In many cases, it's hard to say what kind of instrument is being used; as in Helen Thorington's "In the Dark," which mixes natural sounds with a voice sample until they occasionally border on silence. Other pieces use voice more conventionally to recite a text but with enough processing that the results are not like a poetry reading with music. A few pieces are based on traditional instruments, like Korean cymbals; others are familiar collaged noisemaking, but without sounding overly experimental. The best-known musicians are improvising guitarist Derek Bailey, process music group the Hafler Trio, members of Negativland, and Australian collagist Rik Rue. Anybody not scared by the phrase "sound art" will probably want to hear this. (Nonsequitur, Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103) — Lang Thompson

Pasatiempo

THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN'S WEEKLY ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE - JUNE 4, 1993

This magazine will prick up your ears

By DAVID PRINCE

'The *Aerial* is a magazine for your ears. This *Journal In Sound* presents its "readers" with a CD or cassette filled with great music.

When *The Aerial* began issuing its recorded compilations of avant-garde musical forms in early 1990, it was envisioned as a quarterly publication. However, the difficulty

REVIEW

of finding high-quality works that also meet the magazine's goals of cultural, geographic and gender diversity have made that ambitious schedule impossible to maintain, and *The Aerial* #5 is only now being released.

#5 returns to the evocative combination of spoken word with electronic and electronically altered sound that made the first issue so rewarding.

It's a stunning achievement. The opening selection, *Report*, is a hilarious introduction to the volume, with Willem De Ridder's precise Dutch accent

sounding like a sort of kindly, but demented hypnotherapist directing us through a session involving a piece of paper, which actually is provided as a prop so we can participate at home.

(To fully appreciate the stereo effect, it is further recommended that *Report* be heard through earphones.)

Along the way, De Ridder asks us to question some of our assumptions about reality. At the end, he invites us back, gleefully warning, "It's gonna be worse."

Gustavo Matamoros' *Portrait: Bob Gregory* is one of the album's highlights, as well as a favorite of producer Steve Peters.

"Bob Gregory's voice is so wonderful and unique, it reminds me of a cross between Robert Ashley and Peter Stampfel, and I love his poetry," said Peters, speaking from the magazine's Albuquerque offices.

Using a portion of the text of Gregory's *Bebop in the Forest of Lonely Rhythm* as read by the author, Matamoros has overlaid a complex series of sounds, adding a foreboding

Continued on Page 37

Continued from Page 36

atmosphere to Gregory's darkly metaphysical ruminations.

Abrupt stops and starts give the work added dramatic emphasis, the background sounding like the vaporous voices of ominous Earth Spirits as Gregory's characters make their way across the shadowy landscape of the mind.

Though most of the works on this disc are in the oral tradition, there are some pure sound collages.

Helen Thorington's *In the Dark* is a masterful achievement, quite frightening actually, a sonic equivalent of one of those claustrophobic Poe tales about being entombed alive.

Eerie, breathy drones slide along underneath as the mocking call of crows hovers overhead, regularly interrupted by the sound of a heavy metal door sliding shut, locking us within (or perhaps, without).

There are a series of idyllic sounds here, too, peaceful and leisurely meditations on the natural world.

Santa Fe composer Sydney Davis' *Star Axis* is such a piece.

Composed as a tribute to artist Charles Ross' *Star Axis* earthwork project near Las Vegas, the work features Davis' own piano playing (representing the noises of space) alongside sounds generated by such items as steel strings vibrating in the wind or rocks inside a Tibetan prayer bowl being struck with a stick.

"This piece is part of a larger score that I'm writing as part of the sound design for a film that's being made about the *Star Axis* project," Davis said. "I spent a lot of time crawling around the site, recording sounds. The actual composition came rather eas-

ily, taking about five days, including the on-site taping."

Philip Corner's *Gong/Ear*, recorded in a Northern New Mexico canyon during 1991, utilizes Korean cymbals played in the midst of the outdoors. It sounds like a lengthy solo by drum master Max Roach, subtly modulated and deeply satisfying.

This feeling of jazz and improvisatory investigation is heightened by Peters' sequencing. *Wildman*, which follows, is a raucous and irreverent workout featuring the rantings of Mark Hosler, a member of the controversial band *Negative Land*.

This is followed by *Changing the Subject*, which consists of a shifting series of verbal "cells" with musical accompaniment performed by Australia's *The Machine for Making Sense*.

The album ends with the extraordinary British jazz guitarist Derek Bailey reading from fellow guitarist Henry Kaiser's transcribed comments about a composition Kaiser was creating.

Bailey's guitar acts as an ingenious running commentary on the spoken sections, which are read as if they were the musings of a mad scientist working through his latest experiment. It is at once thorny and brilliant, a marvelous conclusion to this latest volume of what is quickly becoming an eagerly awaited event.

If your local record shop does not carry *The Aerial*, contact Nonsequitur, the non-profit corporation that publishes these recordings, at Post Office Box 344, Albuquerque N.M. 87103, or call 1-254-9145.

Individual volumes, including back issues and single releases, as well as subscriptions, are available.

Revue de Composée

N°17, trimestriel, septembre 93 20 F

THE AERIAL #5 AER 1992/5. Dist. Metamkine.

Avec Willem De Ridder & Hafler Trio, Helen Thorington, Gustavo Matamoros, Sarah Peebles, Sydney Davis, Phillip Corner, Richard Klein & Mark Hosler, The Machine for Making Sense, Derek Bailey. Excellente compilation avec de nombreux traficoteurs de bandes sonores d'une part, et l'utilisation d'instruments traditionnels d'autre part. J.N.

RUBBERNECK 15



Sun Ra
John Russell
Pat Thomas
Simon H Fell
Clive Bell

free issue

The Aerial, based in Santa Fe, USA, is "A Journal in Sound", i.e. a CD with booklet notes mostly written by the contributors. #1 came out in Winter 1990, including the likes of David Moss, Malcolm Goldstein and Floating Concrete Octopus; subsequent releases featured Jin Hi Kim, LaDonna Smith & Davey Williams, Peter Cusack, Nicolas Collins, Brenda Hutchinson and Elise Kermani. The latest, #5 (1992), contains nine tracks (73 mins) dealing with text-based spoken and sung compositions, concrète soundscapes, tape manipulation and improvisation, including Willem De Ridder & Hafler Trio, Sarah Peebles, The Machine for Making Sense, and a hilarious Derek Bailey vocal/guitar rendition of a Henry Kaiser interview. Attractive presentation and definitely for the adventurous listener keen to expand their horizons. Recommended. (editor: Steve Peters, The Aerial, P.O. Box 2638, Santa Fe, NM 87504, USA).

sonic



striations

issue #2

\$1.50

Various Artists-The Aerial #5

(What Next) (CD, cs) The latest volume of the What Next label's "journal in sound" complete with a 20 page booklet with notes on the pieces and performers and contact addresses. "Report" is a mesmerizing collaboration between Willem DeRidder and Hafler Trio that invites listener participation; Helen Thorington's aptly titled "In the Dark" is six plus minutes of quiet, eerie droning punctuated by sparse percussive clanking and animal sounds. The composer's description of it as an imaginary geography couldn't be more on the nose; "Portrait: Bob Gregory" features the author reading from his own "Bebop in the Forest of Lonely Rhythm" with Gustav Matamoros manipulating his voice; Sarah Peebles' "Kai," an 11-minute reflection "upon the process of change in the life cycle" features Japanese mouth organ, prayer bells and rice bowl mingled with samples of crickets, loons and Lake Ontario; "Star Axis" by Sydney Davis is a low key work for piano and tape inspired by a visit to the site of the Star Axis, an ambitious earthworks project that will measure wobble in the earth's orbit; a quote from Philip Corner's notes on "Gong/Ear" is the best description of the piece. "The bath of sound which is the result of resonant metals sounds like the most perfect harmony"; "Wildman" is one of the lighter pieces here with percussion and goofy ranting from Negativland's Hosler and Klein; five piece improv using text, spoken word and instruments from Australia's The Machine for Making Sense and Derek Bailey improvising on acoustic guitar while reading from an interview with Henry Kaiser.

THE AERIAL #5

A journal in sound

[Nonsequitur Foundation]

The Aerial #5 is a privately released CD featuring various artists' experimental compositions. Many of the pieces make use of computerized sound or recordings of the sounds made by an endless variety of objects ranging from bells to water to hardware. It could be seen by some as an interesting aural experiment, however, it has been done before. During the 70s, at art school, we listened to many tapes of similar design, and one I particularly remember was called *Airwaves*. Most of the sound experimentation of that time was of natural origins, the voice or other instruments. They're using computers now to do the same thing, but it doesn't seem as if they are really *using* the computer; there must be something *more*. However, this CD does have a positive side; as in the Shinto religion, where the trees are gods, nature is made useful for meditation. On the other hand, I can't help thinking that perhaps this was not the point of the production. Sarah Peebles' contribution was most interesting of all. The rhythms she uses make a pattern; the *mokugyo* "wooden clapper" of Buddhist rites, the bells, and her use of what sounds like stones grated together, was mysterious, frightening, and had visionary feeling. Something scratches behind your heart. An album of Peebles' own compositions would be welcome. ♦ (Hiroyuki Fujimaki)

THE WIRE

ISSUE 116 OCTOBER 1993 £2.25/US\$5.50

Various Artists

The Aerial

NONSEQUITUR AER1992/5 CD

The Aerial is a sort of New Mexico-based version of *Unknown Public*. Rather than *UP*'s all-encompassing commitment to "creative music", *The Aerial* limits itself to what might be called "Sound Art": one of the few remaining exploratory "frontier" territories left. Here distinctions between categories — improvisation, fluxus-type open scripts, radio art, text, acoustic, tape, electronics, processing, etc — are blurred, disregarded as limiting or ignored completely.

This issue opens with Willem de Ridder and The Hafler Trio generating a nebulous electronic haze and promising us "incredible results" if we follow de Ridder's bizarre intoned instructions: "You can do with your brains what you want. You might decide to never use them again." Beyond this gateway into the unknown lies Derek Bailey giving an ironic reading of a Henry Kaiser interview over his usual clipped guitar playing; Gustavo Matamaoros and his "sound portrait" of lurching surreal poet Bob Gregory; an excerpt from Philip Corner's personal, strangely affecting performance recorded in a remote Mexican canyon using resonant metals, the sound of his shoes crunching in the dirt and the wind whipping in the distance; the Australian improvising quartet, The Machine For Making Sense who deploy prepared text by Chris Mann (whose work John Cage was apparently reading alongside the bible shortly before his death), plundered sound (Rik Rue) and acoustic instruments (Jim Denley's flute and Stevie Wishart's violin) with a cartoon velocity and playfulness; and pieces by Negativland's Mark Hosler and several others.

I personally feel uncomfortable with the way Sound Art's often transcendent aspirations are being used as an excuse to include a couple of items with (whisper it) New Age leanings, but otherwise this collection is a charming appeal to the imagination.

PHIL ENGLAND