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VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Aerial: A Journal In Sound, Issue #6 2147

Here's a good disc with which you can start arguments about what qualifies as music, especially with those friends who can't listen to anything more adventurous than a Sheryl Crow CD. Steve Peters, who runs the esoteric Nonsequitur label, has assembled a new collection of unusual experimental sounds by lesser known artists that are often unique. From Carter Scholz's digital reverb unit feedback experimentation to Mary Jane Leach's trance-inducing, multiple-oboe tone poem, the focus of this compilation is the exploration of texture and sonority. A strong example is Yat-Kha's smooth blend of Tuvan throat singing, percussion, and electronics. Equally enticing is the rhythmic concerto of railroad station signals and ambiences in Ellen Band's eleven-minute "Railroad Gamelan." Unlike much of the experimental scene, which can be noisy or bizarre for no apparent reason, these pieces offer their own internal logic. Some miss the mark, but they strive to expand our notions of sound and musicality. *The Aerial* may not be an album you'll feel compelled to play often, but it's a good place to start delving into the avant garde. When I hear both a saxophone and a railroad in a new light, I know something good is happening.

(What Next?/Nonsequitur, POB 344,
Albuquerque NM 87103)

—Bryan Reesman

CMJ NEW MUSIC REPORT

APRIL 17, 1995

Only Windham Hill Records could produce a "radio ready" version of an eletro-acoustic ambient collection and keep a straight face. Skip the *Path For Radio*, a mild, safe "ambient journey," and take a more interesting route. *The Aerial: A Journal In Sound* (Nonsequitur, P.O. 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103) is truly a "alternative" set from the children of Cage. Here is a collection of some of the music world's most enigmatic, individual artists doing work that ranges from incomprehensible to just plain unlistenable, all in the name of breaking rules, creating new ideas and, above all, making something *really new*. The names run from the familiar (Larry Polansky, Mary Jane Leach) to the obscure, and each one is a unique experiment. Argentine composer Ricardo Dal Farra collaborates with Swedish sax player Mats Gustafsson in "Xastock," which moves from a slow, wave-like ambience to a frenetic tsunami of sound as the sound of the sax is reprocessed and amplified beyond recognition. Also exciting is Leach's "Xantippe's Rebuke," a piece written for eight recorded and one live oboe. The results are somewhere between a transcendental church pipe organ and an inviting nightmare, one rich in acoustical metaphors. Canadian artist Ellen Band closes the program with "Railroad Gamelan," again an unmatched use of common sounds in uncommon ways.

GAJOOB MAGAZINE'S

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The DiY List
Issue #17
June 7, 1995

A listing of DiY recording information, distributed freely over the internet 2-3 times monthly (barring personal distress).

Various Artists *****
Aerial #6 - A Journal In Sound

I have always found the Aerial series intriguing, but this, for me, is the best in the series which combines a studied experimental approach with generous elements of spontaneity, inspiration and sonic humor. Case in point is Larry Polansky's piece for this issue which consists of software manipulation of his 6-month-old daughter's "bad mood" cry. The CD comes with a booklet that devotes entire pages to each artist and detailed, first-hand descriptions on how each recording was made, from conception to realization. The Aerial series offers an exceptional way to experience some highly exploration sonic works that not only succeed on a "how did they do that?" level, but manage to be enjoyable as pure listening.

[CD, Nonsequitur Foundation, PO Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103] 5/21/95

MANIFOLD 6

Aerial - Vol. 6 - V/A - cd

Nonsequitur

Experimental

soundscapes by various artists, mostly of the academic persuasion, meaning that there is an emphasis on the "experimental" aspect -

examining the ways to manipulate sound, the way it acts when affected, when used like paint on a canvas, etc.

In some places, it seems like the sounds and where they are going are secondary to these considerations. For that reason, a few pieces drone on a little bit too long, without evoking any sort of feeling.

Several tracks make up for it, however, most particularly "Tundras Ghost/Wanderers

Charm" by Yat-Kha, duo consisting of a Tuvan throat-singer and an electronic composer.

Chilling. And Frances Whites "Walk Through Resonant Landscape #2" is just what it says.

Steven Dresslers

"Woonsocket" strikes a sort of isolationist chord, with deep, dark drones moving here and there.

Also on this comp are Carter Scholz, Hel Rammel, Ricardo Dal Farra, Larry Polansky,



John Duesenberry,
Robert Carl, Mary Jane
Leach and Ellen Band.
VH

MOLE #9

M A G A Z I N E



AERIAL 6 (Nonsequitur) Pieces of sound--a sax, a baby's cry, Tuvan singing, gamelan, feedback, oboes--are grabbed & stuffed thru a space wormhole to yeild the psychological sounds of space. Homemade instruments & music software abound. Music belongs in space, comes from space, takes you into space. 11 composers & musical experimenters deliver new pieces of outer space experience.

Pform

WINTER 1995/96

a journal of interdisciplinary and performance art

AUDIO & PUBLICATIONS

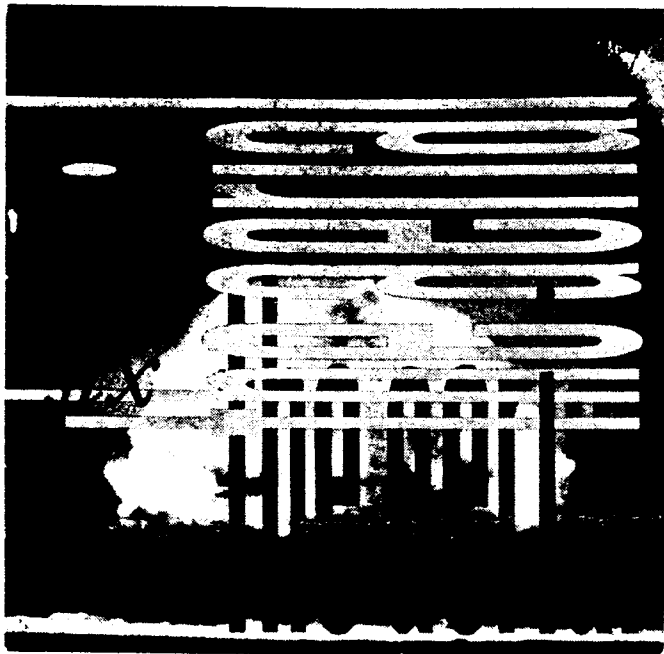
THE AERIAL

Issue #6

Issue #6 of *The Aerial*, an ongoing "journal in sound" of new and experimental music published by the Nonsequitur Foundation in Albuquerque, is an eclectic compilation incorporating environmental "found sound," invented and altered instruments, throat singing, and manipulated electronics. The CD is accompanied by a color booklet of artists' statements and brief biographies, and since you're as likely to respond to the concept and intent of the works as the pieces themselves, I found their descriptions particularly helpful.

Most of the 11 compositions are similar in their treatment of expanded musical forms, favoring an ambient, abstract sound layered into flowing, organic transitions that retain an allegiance to musical structures. There are no language or text-based works, no radically interrupted or rearranged compositions, no collages of wildly dissimilar elements. While not formally boundary-plundering, the collection is nonetheless a well integrated, even selection of competent work worthy of inclusion in a collection of contemporary sound works. My favorites include the more radical departures — Carter Scholz's "Talus," a kaleidoscopic haiku in static, Larry Polansky's "brief electro-acoustic snapshot of a baby's cry put through various digital transformations," and Mary Jane Leach's haunting "Xantippe's Rebuke," which begins in dark, dense harmonics that progressively brighten as a live, solo oboe meanders through and above eight taped oboes. Instrument inventor Hal Rammel twangs away at an altered artist's palette with contact mic to yield "mysterious, squiggly percolations," and "Tundra's Ghost/Wanderer's Charm" is a duet between a Russian electronic composer and a Tuvan throat singer gone rock 'n roll.

The works range in length from under a minute to more meditational, ten-minute sonic landscapes — Frances White's "Walk Through Resonant Landscape #2," or Ellen Band's "Railroad Gamelan," a layered,



bell-clanging, railroad environment that blends evocative memory with a screeching-metal present.

Issues #1 through #6 of *The Aerial* are available from :

Nonsequitur
PO Box 344,
Albuquerque, NM 87103.

Reign of Toads

ISSUE #4

VARIOUS ARTISTS, The Aerial #6: A Journal in Sound (Nonsequitur):

Producer/editor/curator Steve Peters has a knack for tossing together a grand mix of aural documents. Every edition of **The Aerial** leaves me breathless, inspired, and thinking each is subsequently better than the last. The pieces for #6 were collected in tribute to the late composer and magician, Jerry Hunt. In his spirit, this wonderful array of songs, audio art, and sound experiments surfs the tension of electro-acoustic fetishism and more shamanic, magickal adventures. This effect is an emergent quality comprised of the discrete experience of each of the parts. So it would be unfair to review without mention of each constituent: Carter Scholz's "Talus" is composed entirely from a cheap digital reverb unit and reveals the "sounds that arise from unstable systems." Hal Rammel's "Afterthought", composed with his self-designed electro-acoustic sound palette,

sounds like electric water trying to escape the morph from blip to bubble. Ricardo Dal Farra's "Xastock" reveals a silent, faintly percussive quality to the usually loud and wailing sounds you'd expect from a sax with digital effects. Larry Polansky's "Study: Anna, the Long and the Short of It" is composed using the digital manipulating program SoundHack to reconstruct a recording of his 6-month old daughter crying. John Duesenberry's "Wave Break" ushers in walls of industrial metallic surf. Robert Carl's "Levitation" features violin and marimba invocation of floating weightless ambience. Mary Jane Leach's "Xantippe's Rebuke" is several droning oboe tape loops and a solo oboe arranged so as to reveal a prismatic bouquet of sonorous enchantment with harmonic overtones. Steven Dressler's "Woonsocket" has enough of that ambiente hypnotic vibe to be on one of the gazillion ambient compilations—if only it didn't have that wonderful folk quality. The following piece features the amazing shamanic overtone throat singing of Yat-Kha—if you haven't heard these Tuvan vocals, you're really missing out. Francis White's "Walk Through Resonant Landscape #2"—recordings of his interactive sound installation—evoke imagery of walking through a mushroom-laden fairy land. Ellen Band's "Railroad Gamelan" concludes our sonic adventures with a witty, yet sincerely beautiful con-fusion of gamelan and train sounds. [SA]

April 1995

TheSun

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Closer to home, the best new music compilation series is without a doubt Nonsequitur's *The Aerial-A Journal In Sound (Number Six)*. The Albuquerque-based label contributes another delightful combination of relatively unknown but innovative composers and performers on the latest edition. This CD has it all from Tuvan throat singing to dense electro-acoustic sound palettes.



Issue 137 July 1995

Also dealing in the 'Sonic Arts', *The Aerial 6* is equally well-intentioned and uneven, as befits experimental compilations. Addiction would be possible if variety was sacrificed in favour of quality. At worst, this is institutionalised students playing with toys; but the otherworldly, synthetic sweeps of Duesenberg, Leach's time-bending oboes and the astonishing virtual locomotion of Ellen Bard prove to be irresistible propositions.

YOUR FLESH

\$4.50 US
\$4.85 CAN
£3.50 UK

SO MANY VARIOUS ARTISTS, SO LITTLE TIME

Volume 4: The Circumlocation of Your Location

The box of compilations is again a painful sight, of wasted dreams and confused ideas, with some interesting fodder floating to the top. If you read this column every issue and wonder why the hell a self-admitted compilation-hater is reviewing all of these compilations, join the club. I wonder that myself. The fact is, I meant for this column to be a way to *get rid* of the annoying things. Now, of course, it guarantees that I will be saddled with more than I ever could have feared—and with the glut of “new” music and new bands sprouting up around the country, there appears to be no end in sight.

As always, there is hope, this time in the form of the *Aerial* compilation series, a collection of new music that is released on a regular basis by ¿What Next? and the Nonsequitur foundation. As to what kind of music this is, the names of the label and foundation seem to answer that—mostly it's that one cannot know what will happen next, and that more often than not it will seem completely unrelated to the previous event. Somehow the words “experimental” and related debunkery don't quite fill the bill.

This is volume 6 of the *Aerial* series. It begins with a closed-loop feedback construction by Carter Scholz, in which he forces an innocent reverb unit to process its own signal, thus creating a swishy wash of what sounds like a circuit board undergoing severe self-doubt. Hal Rammel's “Afterthought (sonance in limbo)” uses an electro-acoustic sound palette, whatever that is, and sounds like electronically-altered dripping water, ranging from slow drops to big sheets. Ricardo Dal Farra's “Xastock” is his real-time digital manipulation of the saxophone cries of Mats Gustafsson, and the result is an unnerving tension between man and machine. Francis White's “Walk Through Resonant Landscape #2” is just that, a sort of sonic tour of a strange impossible place where tape-decayed feedback gambols with singing birds in limpid pools of lily-covered solace. It's a bit static, but placed well in the scope of this CD so that it really works as a landscape; after the raw sounds at the beginning of the disc, the mind welcomes the opportunity to be led through another space in sound. This is followed by Ellen Band's “Railroad Gamelan,” a collection of railroad tapes layered to create a collision of rhythmic patterns in the style of Richard Lerman's amplified-bicycle music (which he also called “gamelons” [sic]): the natural rhythm cycles are collected and left to collide on their own. The music uses rhythmic structures to create its mood and also refers to the source of the sound for its “narrative,” so that this is indeed Railroad Music. It's a glorious clatter, all ten minutes of it. (The *Aerial*. PO Box 344, Albuquerque NM 87103)