

# **DEAD EYES MAGAZINE seven**

**EXQUISITE CORPSES FROM P.S. 122      (what next)**

**30 people add their sounds to make up this improv audio college. The songs never seem to sound cluttered as one would think though. Each track of this 56 min c.d. is described in detail as to how it was recorded. Very interesting and worth a look , especially to sound artists.**

# Экзотика

МОСКВА №2

\* **EXOTICA DIGEST** is illustrated compilation of articles about modern music in all styles. The edition is of 10 000 copies, with volume about 90 pages. Distributed on the former USSR territory.

## Exquisite Corpses From PS 122

*1990 What Next? WN 002 56' 11"*

Один из первых CD выпущен американским лейблом What Next? Наверное самый интересный и представительный альбом за всю историю импровизационной музыки. Для реализации этого проекта собрался весь цвет Нью-Йоркского авангарда — более тридцати музыкантов из различных составов приняли участие в записи, среди них: George Cartwright (Curlew), Antony Coleman (Naked City), Ikue Mori (DNA, Words Of Love), Doug Henderson (Spongehead), Zeena Parkins (Skeleton Crew, No Safety, OWT), Sue Garner (Fish & Roses), Bruno Meillier (Etron Fou Lelublin), Mike Sappol (Krackhouse), Catherine Jauniaux (Black Seep, Aksak Maboul), Chris Cochrane (No Safety), Sue Ann Harkey (Audio Letter) и многие другие. Сюрреализм, фантазия и всевозможные звуковые сюрпризы наряду с полным взаимопониманием исполнителей выгодно отличают эту работу от большинства free improvise стандартов Нью-Йоркского даунтауна.

# GASORB

## **VARIOUS ARTISTS**

### **Exquisite Corpses From P.S. 122** ♦

This CD was developed and realized using the "exquisite corpses" game as inspiration. The game involves a drawing or a piece of writing which is started by one person and then handed to another with only part showing — a sort of obscured serendipity. The participants here were a loose collective of regulars in the A. Mica Bunker improvisation series (formerly held every Sunday night in a dungeon on E. 9th Street in NYC). All compositions were developed collectively at several meetings. They are essentially blueprints specifying time-slots to be filled by the musicians, the monitoring environment (what the player hears while recording tracks; this is always a small fraction of the piece), and some directives for mixdown. There were no instructions on what or how to play within the time-slots. What results is quite free-form — essentially intriguing by virtue of the recording environment — with a diverse assortment (30 players are represented) of elements (both personnel-wise and sound source). [¿What Next?, PO Box 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506, USA] —*Bryan Baker*

# the improvisor

Originally, an exquisite corpse was a surrealist game of paper folding, which involved composition of phrases or drawings by separate players, none of them having any idea of the preceding contribution or contributions. Since then, the notion of complete blindness has been relaxed to that of partial occultation. If you were taking part in a paper exquisite corpse today, you would be asked to draw or write on a page; some or all, of the rest of the sheet, you could not see. The idea is that, since no single participant has a view of the whole, no one will be tempted to force the formation of the overall gestalt. In this way the imagination becomes free. If you were taking part in a recorded exquisite corpse, you would be asked to lay down a track on a multi-track tape recorder; some or all, of the other tracks, you could not hear. This CD (it is also released as a cassette) is a community of ostriches, crocodiles, alligators, pushmepullyous, planarian worms, bozos, and absent friends. It is complex, it is multi-layered, it is wild; but not once (except during the bozo pieces) did I hear the "white noise" of cacophony. The liner notes are wrong. This is not a project authored by 30 participants. This is a series of 18 different solos by a 60 armed, 60 legged, 30 brained, androgynous musician playing 10 guitars, 4 saxophones, 3 bases, 2 flutes, a violin, stick violin, contrabass clarinet, piano, toy piano, trumpet, bassoon, balloons, keyboard, sampler, analog synthesizer, drums, congas, drum machine, peckhorn, busy box, tape loops, vox, travicello, and shears. Don't get me wrong, the 30 different people's musical identities didn't get "lost in the sauce", they just became different facets of the same persona. This CD/tape, once and for all, shatters the illusion that the only good improv is live improv. This is *not* live improv and (given the current state of technology) it couldn't be, but it is definitely good improv.

The Magazine Journal of Free Improvisation

Autumn 1991

# The Michigan Daily

## Exquisite Corpses from p.s. 122

What Next? Recordings

O.K., sure, so modernity is officially dead. And the unanswered question of avant-gardism is rendered moot... simply a quaint notion reinvented by each generation to convince themselves that they are doing something *really* different. Current composer-hipsters are left looking quizzically at their feet, chicken scratching at the musical material accumulated in the present in hopes of turning up some overlooked kernels of "newness" worth digesting.

Since deconstructionism destroyed all of its own material, it has become pointless to look toward the future to get

the jump on "the next big thing." Modern minded composers have begun looking through their legs for direction from the past, but they are faced with the impossible decision between full blown Romanticism and Naked City-esque post-modern pie fights, where musical genres whirl by faster than a quick wristed spin of the FM dial (or free-form radio on fast-forward).

Yet, a slight enlightened few have paradoxically turned to formality for freedom. While some jazz-schooled composers subvert the autocracy of transcription and orchestration by incorporating improvisation / chance into their notations, other musicians from the East Coast isle of sanity experiment with less

conventional outlines for order. Exquisite Corpses pushes 30 of NYC's most unconventional musicians onto shaky ground by forcing each to improvise against partial duets, inverted solos and flashing windows of sound.

Like a surrealist chain letter, the original game exquisite corpses is a process of collective composition, in which players base their contributions on bits or hints of their predecessors' motifs. On this premise, the musicians erect short improvised sound collages, ranging from group bozobursts to subtly intertwined duets. The music shoots off along individual tangents and converges on briefly contained lucidity. Although such freedom can be equally as taxing on the performer's and listener's concentration, each piece on "from p.s. 122" creates a thrilling dynamic without overkilling each piece's unique methodology.

Since each solo had to be recorded individually, the CD uniquely collects some of the downtown's most forthright improvisation (complete with Dunaway's balloon torture, Jauniaux's contorted vocals, and Cartwright's frigid winds). But, if that doesn't blow your horn, it's worth a listen just to hear shears played, along with a stick violin, toy piano, "junk," and a travicello—mutant spawn of America's armpit.

—Chris Wyrod

# MUSICIAN

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Exquisite Corpses from P.S. 122 [What Next?]*

Not quite as compelling as its predecessor, but this latest document from NYC's slow-visabstractionistimprovising camp does wax très fluent in the plink/chip/blur vernacular many seem to think is dead. These 30 participants say it ain't, and back up their opinion with utterances that get squashed into 18 short stories. It's the process which glues the stuff together—between the diversity of instrumentation and compression of personalities, they fashion a well-rounded, if temporary, nation. (Box 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506)—*Jim Macnie*

# Revue & Corrigée

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## **EXQUISITE CORPSES FROM PS 122**

CD WN 0002 56'11"

(What Next Recordings, po box 2638,  
Santa Fe, NM 87504, Etats-Unis. Distri-  
bution Metamkine)

Nous avons déjà parlé de Exquisite Corpses from the Bunker dans R&C N°4. Ici le principe est le même: des improvisations (toujours une seule prise) sur le principe du cadavre exquis (jeu favori des Surréalistes).

Le premier volume était très brut et "noisy". Celui-ci est beaucoup plus réfléchi. Toutes les compositions ont été élaborées collectivement: définition des durées, du matériel et quelques directives pour le mixage. Mais jamais aucune instruction en ce qui concerne le jeu. Chaque musicien est enregistré séparément, à l'exception de deux pièces qui comportent des duos enregistrés live.

Chaque improvisation suit donc une règle ou un principe décrit dans le livret. Exemples: dans "Duet Seeds", 12 musiciens sont répartis en 6 duos et chaque musicien entend la moitié d'un autre duo. Dans "Crocs & Gators", les musiciens réunis en sextet déclenchent des séquences enregistrées préalablement par un autre sextet. Dans "After The Tone", tout se passe sur un répondeur téléphonique où chaque personne continue le message précédent, etc...

Comme pour le premier volume, la richesse du jeu instrumental et de la palette sonore font de E. C. F. PS 122 un disque à se procurer d'urgence.

Jérôme NOETINGER

# Submission

Exquisite Corpses from P. S. 122 ( What Next? Recordings). Produced by Doug Henderson and Guy Yarden.

The object of the game of exquisite corpses is for a group of people to compose a collective portrait, except that each player is only given a small part of previous players's contributions. This disc represents the second effort by the producers to create a version of that game using sound. The music on this album was created by thirty people, each pretty much working incommunicado, and with only a little bit of the others's material to work with. No artist was allowed more than one take to work with, i.e. no rerecordings were permitted. Each individual track is a variation on the game; a different set of production guidelines to produce a different result. Armed with the full explanation of each track, one can then pin down the manner in which each was created. It makes for a quite intriguing listening experience. Each piece results in a noise montage containing various elements. I won't go into specifics here, but it all works out and it all sounds quite good in the end. Any music theorist worth his salt should listen to this disc, and any noise connoisseur should as well. —dmg





# YOUR FLESH #29

## VARIOUS ARTISTS *Exquisite Corpses From PS 122 CD*

This is music from the math lab. Based on the surrealist game "Exquisite Corpses" (one player composes a sentence or two and passes it to the next, only revealing one or two words), this is an aural equivalent as performed by thirty-one NYC improv players. Some of the pieces are inspired by playing the basic tracks backwards, most of them by devising some sort of mathematical equation to decide which parts would be pasted together. On paper it sounds interesting but the execution reads "boring." The individual "solos" are gripping enough but if, in the spirit of the concept, the energy level was represented graphically it would be a simple straight line. Save your time and listen to people who can come up with crazier structures in real time (try Boredoms, Dead C and GodheadSilo). [What Next] *Jeffrey Herrmann*