

# Contact!

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David Dunn (no biographical information is provided) has two works on the CD, *angels AND insects*, both cosmic, and both ever-present for those with (the) ears to hear. *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum 49* (duration: 28' 28") is the time expansion of the reading, in seven connected movements, of the names of 49 (7x7) good angels from a text prepared by the sixteenth century scientist-mystic, John Dee. *Chaos & the Emergent Mind of the Pond* (duration 24'35") uses sounds of insects recorded underwater with hydrophones.

Both works have strong metaphysical and mystic connotations, and are sonically very rewarding, with the appearance of a virtual-reality sound kaleidoscope. Always-(n)ever the same.

The digital granularity of the extended vocal cords and the buzzing, clicking, pulsing and scratching of the insects (with virtually no processing) articulate the same ever-present universal sound-language-message. *angels AND insects* demonstrate that the tongues of angels and the parole of insects are two aspects of the one.

Listening to this CD is a good way to spend a Saturday night. Fascinating and highly recommended for those with the ears, the intent, and a good attention span.

The American composer/musicologist Dika Newlin is reported to have attempted to simulate the sounds of a marsh (because of its complexity) on the Bell Labs computer system in the early 60s but was disappointed by the results. The original, as presented here, shows that even uneducated fleas have rhythm beyond the realm of the great algorithmicist.

Kevin Austin

# CREATIVE LOAFING

## MUSIC FOR LIFE

BY DOUG DELOACH

A fresh approach to the "environmental ambient" category is David Dunn's "Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond," from *Angels & Insects* (1990, What Next?/Nonsequitur), an audio collage comprised of DAT field recordings of sounds generated by microscopic aquatic insects in freshwater ponds in North America and Africa. The rhythmic textures, Dunn remarks, "appear to consist of an order of complexity greater than most human-made music, rivaling the most sophisticated computer composition or polyrhythms of African drumming." The composer also notes that "bio-acousticians have hypothesized that every location on earth inhabited by living organisms has a unique acoustical biospectrum."

# DEAD EYES MAGAZINE seven

**DAVID DUNN: ANGELS and INSECTS (what next)**

This 53 min. c.d. is composed of two parts. "TABULA ANGELORUM BONORUM 49" is the first. It is 28 min. 28 sec. of processed computer voices. It is based on the workings of John Dee (astrologer) and Edward Kelly (medium). The whole 28 mins. is pure experimental heaven, the voices are stretched, compressed and otherwise manipulated until they don't sound like voices at all. Perfect music for ritual. The second piece "CHAOS & the EMERGENT MIND of the POND" is a audio collage of aquatic insects. The c.d. book inclosed links the two pieces together with a long thought out essay on angels and insects. Get this one and check it out, there is so much sound to be enjoyed here. Recommended.



**David Dunn** *Angels and Insects*

(What Next? WN009) CD 53 minutes

**Annea Lockwood** *Thousand Year*

*Dreaming* (What Next? WN0010) CD 43 minutes

Both these CDs comprise expanded versions of tracks from the compilation *Aerial #2* [reviewed in **EST** #2]. David Dunn has an unusual talent for finding music in some of the most unlikely places. *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum 49* is inspired by a list of 49 angelic names written down by 16th-century occult philosopher John Dee, which Dunn has broken down into phonemes, and reassembled using a computer to create enigmatic, electronic-sounding resonances. The resulting drones, oscillations, and shimmering bass-sounds are undeniably an imaginative suggestion of what angels might perhaps sound like. This CD's other track, *Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond* is just as unlikely a proposition. What you hear is a dense, intricate web of rhythms, buzzings, poppings, bubblings, all derived from underwater recordings of pond insects. The structure and gradual development is Dunn's work, but the beautiful, fascinating texture relies entirely on the insect sounds, which at this volume are simultaneously alien and familiar. Parts of it sound like bubbling brooks, others like sawtooth radio waves from another galaxy. It's original, and illuminating music. *Thousand Year Dreaming* has little in common, relying very much on live performance (here, including such notables as Art Baron, Jon Gibson and Peter Zummo). A mixture of scored and improvised music, with a diverse instrumental ensemble including conch shells, dijeridus, clapping sticks, frame drums, clarinets and several other instruments, it's a loosely structured marriage of wind and water, evocative tones allowed to float half-submerged in a resonant acoustic space. Fortunately, there's more than enough happening to ward off the Evil Eye of ethnically-inspired new age mush. Melodies, drones and percussive texture billow and blend together well, to create music that may not be as challenging as *Angels and Insects* but is nonetheless very enjoyable. [What Next, PO Box 344 Albuquerque, NM 87103, USA] **BD**

# File 13

#16/Summer 1993

\$2.50

DAVID DUNN

*Angels and Insects* (CD)

(¿What Next?)

A couple of interesting ideas lead to largely successful results on this CD. The "Angels" portion is based on the 16th century work of John Dee and Edward Kelly, a blend of mathematics and the occult that produced a chart of the names of 49 "good angels"—seven groups of seven names, each having seven letters. Dunn's piece uses seven voices, stretching their syllables out using a computer, based on the frequencies of the letters in the chart. The results are anything but voice-like, instead consisting of gentle purring, deep throbbing sounds, buzzing noises, and notes that are almost bassoon- or trombone-like. It's a patchwork of textures that doesn't sound at all calculated. "Insects" refers to Dunn's recordings of aquatic bugs in various American and African ponds. Some of the recordings are slowed down to make them an octave lower, but otherwise no sound processing is used. We hear almost soothing munching, sizzling, and dripping noises that remind me of the sounds one might hear while snorkeling. The human and emotional content of these two pieces is obviously close to zero, but those who believe that music is wherever you find it (and how ever you produce it) will enjoy this a time or two. —Mark Lo

**Furnitures: The Magazine of North American**  
**Ideophonics**

**Issue No. 11: June, 1993.**

**David Dunn: Angels and Insects:** A pair of visionary experiments from this New Mexico composer. "Tabula Angelorum Bonorum 49," computer-processed voices based on the investigations of Renaissance mathematician/astrologer John Dee. "Chaos & the Emergent Mind of the Pond," field recordings of sound generated by microscopic aquatic insects. (Nonsequitur Foundation).

intake

Issue # 5 Absolutely Free

# MANIFOLD

David Dunn - Angels and Insect  
cd - Nonsequitur

Oh yes, very nice. David Dunn gives us a disc of brooding experimental sounds that fall somewhere between Tony Conrad and Zoviet France, with a heavy theme to the whole package.

No melody or tone, just sound experiments involving ominous pulsations and atonal waves in the first part of the disc, and something altogether different in the next. Mr. Dunn has recorded the sounds of underwater insects in a pond using hydrophones, then manipulated some, left others alone, thus creating a 25 or so minute long

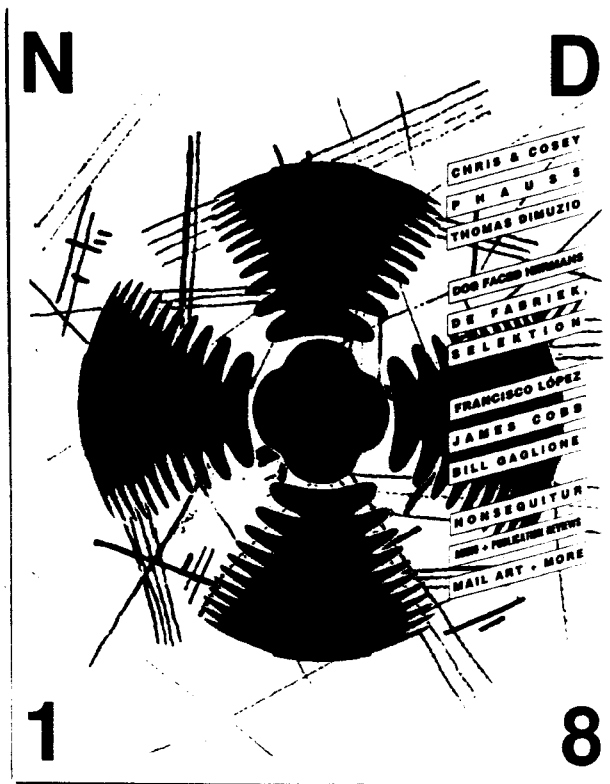
tapestry of cycling insect sounds. The resulting cacophony will put you in that pond....

I swear. Quite creepy and quite good, one of the most creative pieces I've ever heard. VH

# MINN. COMPOSERS FORUM NEWSLETTER, SEPT. 93 (RE-PRINT FROM FURNITURES)

**David Dunn: Angels and Insects:**  
A pair of visionary experiments from this New Mexico composer. *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49, computer-processed voices based on the investigations of Renaissance mathematician/astrologer John Dee. *Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond*, field recordings of sound generated by microscopic aquatic insects.  
(Nonsequitur Foundation, PO BOX 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103).





**Dunn, David "Angels & Insects" (Nonsequitur) (CD)**  
One part spirits, one part pond life. The seven pieces constituting angels may be accessible, perhaps philosophically related to insects (as liner notes suggest), but they are too electronic and buzzy. The notes do lend rich, interesting perspective to the set. The insects in their pond, for me, are more enjoyable. (MS)

# Pasatiempo

THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN'S WEEKLY ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE · JAN. 22, 1993

## 'Angels & Insects': a fascinating study

By DWIGHT LOOP

**M**usic as sound. Sound as music. John Cage believed there was no separation between the two. The sound of the city streets in New York fascinated Cage as much, if not more, than a piano composition.

David Dunn's new recording, *Angels & Insects*, on the Santa Fe-based label What Next? is a fascinating study in

### REVIEW

the relationship between sound, musical composition and nature.

Dunn, a Santa Fe composer, has spent the past 15 years exploring the relationships between music, environmental sounds and language.

He was an assistant to Harry Partch, the recognized guru of experimental music instruments and composition, in San Diego during the '70s.

Dunn also designed electronic music instruments at San Diego State University and has had his work premiered at the Ars Electronics Exhibit in Europe.

He also is a trained violinist, but Dunn's real exploration in music has come with his environmentally-inspired compositions and sound installations.

Many of Dunn's early works took place in isolated desert or mountain areas with only the surrounding animals and insects as witnesses.

*Angels & Insects* consists of two works. *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49 is a suite of works for computer-treated voices based on John Dee and Walter Kelly.

Dee was an Elizabethan mathematician, alchemist and astrologer and was the model for Shakespeare's Prospero in *The Tempest* and Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*.

Kelly was a psychic medium who assisted Dee in communicating with various angelic beings, going as far as compiling a list of their names.

Dunn masterfully uses the 49 names of the angelic beings as the sonic script for the piece.

Utilizing a very expensive and intelligent digital computer music, Dunn subjected the names of the angels to a phonetic analysis.

Through this process, Dunn came up with a series of patterns he then articulated using his computer to make fractal images of these individual phonemes using time expansion algorithms.

This process allows for phonetic sounds to be stretched out into long, eerie-sounding passages.

The individual phonemes comprising the magical names were articulated by seven different voices, featuring such notable Santa Feans as Gene Youngblood, Marcia Mikulak and Steina and Woody Visulka.

The piece is divided up into seven sections, and each section has its own unique character and textures.

You can tell it's made up of human voices, but from what planet?

*Tabula Angelorum Bonorum*'s end result is a very mysterious soundtrack to the inner sanctum of the human mind.

The music/sound is what you'd expect — deep, low bass tones permeate throughout.

Beautiful high frequencies seem to meld into melodic

Continued from Page 43

phrases of unknown origin.

Dunn successfully cracks the cosmic egg with *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49.

*Chaos & the Emergent Mind of the Pond* is the other selection in this masterfully recorded CD.

This composition, a collage of recordings Dunn made in the freshwater ponds of North America and Africa, also was pieced together on Dunn's computer.

Dunn's expertise in environmental recording never has been demonstrated better than on *Chaos & the Emergent Mind of the Pond*.

Bio-acousticians have said that every location on earth has its own specific soundtrack vital to its survival.

The freshwater pond, with its serene above-water scenery, looks like it should be pretty tranquil.

However, the sounds that emanate underwater are much busier than imagined.

In this composition, it's not so much the technique Dunn employs that impresses, but the end result.

Recorded beneath the surface with special underwater microphones called hydrophones, the sounds here are a

whirling pool of buzzing, clicking, whizzing and whooshing insects and plants.

Beneath the surface, the sounds are downright alien.

At times it sounds as if there is a giant percussion jam going on.

Other times you can hear the wheezing of large water beetles carrying their air supply between their legs.

The most incredible aspect of listening to this piece is that chaos seems to eventually make way for order — an order of the unspeakable language of insects and plant life.

Dunn's overriding philosophy behind this piece is that we humans take for granted the complex life of the planet earth and its creatures.

And consequently, we destroy and mismanage it.

Dunn writes defiantly in the liner notes, "if one is to speak of the chaos of living systems, I prefer to hear it."

Go to your nearest record store, pick up *Angels & Insects* and listen for yourself.

It just might open a hidden door to your unconscious that will change the way you view the earth and its inhabitants.

If you're already convinced, then Dunn has provided the soundtrack for further exploration.

Continued on Page 47

sonic



striations

issue #2

\$1.50

**David Dunn-Angels and Insects (What Next) (CD, cs)** Two extended pieces composed and realized by Dunn. "Tabula Angelorum Bonorum 49" is inspired by and based on a text by John Dee, a leading sixteenth century scientist with a deep interest in the supernatural and his fellow researcher, clairvoyant Edward Kelly. Dee described his and Kelly's attempts to contact angels in "De Heptarchia Mystica," in which the names of forty-nine good angels are divulged through various alphanumeric codes. Dunn subjected these names to a rigorous phonetic analysis, using them as raw data and realizing them as computer processed voices. Dunn's extensive liner notes detail this process in more depth. The resultant seven part composition is appropriately unearthly with various synthetic drones and tones being molded into a very coherent whole. "Chase and the Emergent Mind of the Pond" is an investigation of a "sonic multiverse of exquisite complexity," taking as it's source underwater recordings made in North American and African ponds. Aside from sequencing and slowing down certain sounds one octave Dunn has left everything as he captured. The result is a fascinating mix of various clickings, buzzing and whirring. Dunn also provides extensive notes for this piece, which include some very thought provoking speculations on the underwater communities that have produced the sounds and their relation to awareness and intelligence. Recommended.

DAVID DUNN

*Angels And Insects*

WHAT NEXT? WN 009 CD

Labai retai galima aptikti tokį šiuolaikinės muzikos darbą, kuriame taip glaudžiai sąveikautų viena kitą papildydamos novatoriškos muzikinės idėjos (dirbęs su Harry Partch smuikininkas, muzikos teoretikas) ir tikro tyrinėjimo metodologija bei praktinis darbų diegimas (bioakustika, hidroakustika, chaoso teorija, kompiuterinė technologija) kaip šiame leidinyje.

Dvi solidžių truknių kompozicijos pakankamai išsamiai ir visapusiškai supažindina su bent vienu iš tų gausių kompozitoriaus interesų. Nors "grynosios" muzikinės medžiagos požiūriu šie kūriniai atstovauja eksperimentinei sričiai, tai gilūs, išnešioti darbai, be to, atskleidžiantys ir paties kompozitoriaus mąstymo kategorija bei požiūrių plocius. Kita vertus, čia ir daugiau kaip penkiolikos metų rezultatas, pateikiamas pirmajame plačiajai auditorijai prieinamame leidinyje.

Šios kompozicijos - tai renesansiškosios Anglijos matematiko ir astrologo (sakoma, vieno labiausiai išsilavinusių to meto Europos enciklopedininkų) John Dee bei jo bendraamžio, alchemiko ir mediumo Edward Kelly susistemintos idėjos pjesėje *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49 ir ...gėlavandenių Šiaurės Amerikos ir Afrikos gyvių balsų skaitmeninių įrašų koliažas, atrinktas specialia aukštos technologijos hidroakustine įranga, kūrinys *Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond*. Būtų drąsu teigti, kad tarp šių kūrinių nėra nieko bendra, nors jų vertė imant kiekvieną atskirai taip pat neabejotina. Tačiau viduramžių alchemikų principas "kaip danguje, taip ir ant žemės" būtų ne vienintelė gija, jungianti šį nepaprastai įdomų darbą. Būtent tai ir atsispindi tuo solidžiu teoriniu pagrindu grindžiamame kūrinys *Tabula Angelorum*, gaudžiančiame sferų ovalais bei keistų garsinių trajektorijų harmoniniais dariniais, triukšmu šnopuojančiame ir knibždančiame vandens gelmių mikropasaulyje, leidžiančiame suvokti mikro- ir makropasaulių tapatumą.

Nepaprastai švarios sąmonės darbai - Meisterio Ekchart kontempliatyvumas ir šiandieninės ekologijos sampratos dimensijos!

Linas Vyliaudas

**CONSUMER GUIDE**     **Kyle Gann**

**David Dunn: *Angels and Insects* (Nonsequitur)** Dunn is a philosophic conceptualist, and the significance of his noisily meditative disc may be more mystical than musical. *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49 computer-samples the names of the angels recorded in the conversations of 16th-century magus John Dee, and slows them into rough, evolving, deep bass drones. Equally electronic-sounding, *Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond* is a compilation of unretouched underwater insect recordings from North America and Africa. Listening is pleasant, if uninvolving, and I love the ideas. **B**

contemporary  
**VITAL**  
under ground  
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MAGAZINE FOR  
ELECTRONIC AND  
ELECTROACOUSTIC  
MUSIC

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**DAVID DUNN - ANGELS & INSECTS (CD/cass by What Next?).** First piece: In total we hear phonemes pronounced 7x7x7 times. The structural order has been derived from Elizabethan alchemist John Dee, who is said to have spoken to angels who provided him with the names of the good guys in heaven. The result (a circular table that consists of 7 concentric circles, equally divided into seven sections, again divided into 7 sections) Dunn has taken as structure. What we hear very well might be what this alchemist heard during his spiritual sessions. We hear the phonemes expressed one after the other, mostly unintelligible, sometimes at frequencies so low that a sub-woofer system is essential.

Second piece; have you ever dipped your head under water and listened to the local insect life? Well, if the water isn't too much polluted you can hear all kind of weird things. Dunn has recorded these sounds with a hydrophone and presents them on this CD-cassette. The result is a very interesting soundscape. Bubbling noise, cricket-like, buzzing and sizzling sounds form a natural orchestra. What remains a mystery is to what extent the sounds have been edited. The cover mentions that some sounds have been transposed a complete octave, but what sounds are which not is not clear. What we hear therefore cannot be regarded as the soundscape underwater, but as a composition made of its elements.

All in all I find the results very American, very conceptual, and quite interesting.(IS)