

the state of music

reviews by chris rice except as noted

2???

What Next/Nonsequitur has been a major player in experimental/art music for some time now, with a trio of recent releases helping to emphasize that position. Teiji Ito is best known for his soundtracks to films by pioneering filmmaker Maya Deren, chiefly her most famous film "Meshes of the Afternoon," but until this CD no recordings of his music have been available. Ito's music, as displayed in the three compositions included on *Meshes*, is inspired chiefly by the music of cultures from around the world, most notably music that is created to accompany theatre and dance, which, along with film, is also Ito's favorite way to compose. The compositions found on *Meshes* are primarily self-performed, which helps to add a deeply personal air to the proceedings. The soundtrack to "Meshes of the Afternoon," composed and recorded in 1959, is reminiscent of Japanese music, particularly gagaku, and evokes a similar wistful, disembodied mood with its quivering flute, meditative, droning vocals, cello & mouth organ and insistent percussion. Another soundtrack, this time to Deren's "The Very Eye of Night," was the first collaborative effort between Ito and Deren, a pairing which eventually led to their marriage, and works as a perfect companion to "Meshes of the Afternoon." But rather than gagaku, the inspiration this time is Indonesian gamelan and as a result the composition is more deeply rooted in rhythm, though the emphasis still falls equally on flute and clarinet as melodic elements to compliment the cadence of the metallophones and drums. The final piece on the CD, "Axis Mundi," which was composed to accompany a theatre piece by Christopher Hampton called "Savages," was recorded in 1982, the same year as Ito's death. This is the only track that features performers in addition to Ito, with the trio employing a whole host of percussive and wind instruments and once again drawing from his background in and admiration for traditional music to present a beautifully absorbing 30-minute tour of Ito's own take on musics of the world.

Annea Lockwood's *The Glass World* is a fairly exhaustive study of the sounds that are possible from one source—glass. The CD itself is organized almost like a volume in a library of sound effects, each of the 23 tracks named for the type of object used—glass rod, gong, bulb, jars, etc.—and often the action being done to the glass—shaken, vibrating, spinning, etc.—but the results are much more than a dry cataloguing of Lockwood's experiments. As can be imagined, the wealth of sound here is quite diverse and offers a fascinating glimpse into Lockwood's obsession with "the complexity of the single sound."

The final release of the trio is *AC-DC-VC* from Jeffrey Krieger, who uses electronic cello, along with a handful of effects such as an Alesis Quadverb and a Digitech Harmonizer, to bring out some of the harder to hear qualities of sound, such as the subtleties of overtones and microtonalities. Krieger performs pieces from five different composers, showing off five different approaches to difficult music for solo cello. The highlights of the CD include Sarah Hopkins' "Cello Chi," which begins the program and presents a beautiful study of the overtones possible from the combination of cello and voice in a thickly reverberant space. With "Indian Summer" Alvin Lucier is up to his old tricks, namely his long-standing concern with the physical nature of sound. The piece is a study of the beating patterns and other aural craziness that arise from the bowing of two closely tuned strings, the resulting tones swirl around your listening space like so many wonderfully maddening insects. And finally, N. Sean William's "Come Window Gold Coming" provides a glimpse into a tranquil world of floating, sustained tones that emerge from silence to completely envelope the listener.

Annea Lockwood: The Glass World
(What Next?, Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103) Variation on the sound effects record, as Lockwood examines straightforwardly the noises made by shaking micro glass, rubbing ribbed glass discs, bubbling, or a bottle tree showered with glass fragments. Like magnifying textile fibers or crystal structure, the effect of close examination reveals unusual textures, rhythms, tones...the sound of the cosmos, worlds forming & decaying & singing on the small scale.

EARWAVES



by Dwight Loop

Annea Lockwood, "The Glass World" (What Next?)

John Cage was a master at making music from common objects like wheel rims, pieces of wood and odd-shaped metal. New Zealand-born composer Annea Lockwood, another pioneer in environmental sounds who for 30 years has carved out her own niche in this fascinating earth-music field, has just re-issued what is possibly her masterpiece on an Albuquerque-based experimental label. Originally released in 1970 as an LP on a British label (Tangent) and out-of-print for many years, "The Glass World" documents her explorations into...the sound of glass. One immediately recalls the Fluxus movement with this music; commonplace sounds placed on a large canvas, unobstructed by definition. Cage thought all sound is music. He was right. Lockwood is brilliant because she takes great care in allowing the sounds to find their own space. They flow naturally to the listener's ear like water from a river finds the open sea.

Sonar



Map

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"all soundz created equal"

free

Annea Lockwood, *The Glass World* CD. Apparently obsessed with glass, Lockwood, gives us 23 examples of the sonic potential that this common substance holds. Why are these tracks all so minimal? Is this a sound effects CD? Lockwood provides a very interesting answer to that question by writing, "I have become fascinated by the complexity of the single sound. I have treated each sound as if it were a piece of music in itself. For me every sound has its own minute form- composed of small flasing rhythms, shifting tones, has momentum, comes, vanishes, and lives out its own structure" What Next, c/o Nonsequitur, P.O. Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103, USA. [S.Mediacast]

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Glassworks

PHILLIP GEORGE

Annea Lockwood. "The Glass World" [micro glass shaken. glass rod vibrating. turning gong. mini mobile. wine glass. water gong. two ribbed discs. rod across edge of pane. glass bulb. glissandi. spinning discs. dialogue: bottles & jars. vibrating pane. bubbling. breathing machine. water jars. rod roll. micro glass on goblet. micro glass along pane. cullet: two glass rocks. medium mobile. bottle tree showered with fragments. deep water gong"]. Annea Lockwood. What Next? Recordings, c/o Nonsequitur, P.O. Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103.

Following John Cage's dictum to "let sounds be sounds," Annea Lockwood shatters preconceptions in her CD, "The Glass World," on What Next? Recordings. What's next is a series of honesty-in-packaging isolated sonic events (ranging in length from 24 seconds to almost six minutes): each interesting, none particularly related to one another except via the shared medium of glass -- struck, rubbed, bowed. "The Glass World" began in 1966 as a live two-hour presentation entitled "The Glass Concert," with performances in Europe, Australasia, and America. A complete, illustrated score was published in "SOURCE: Music of the Avant Garde," Volume 5 (1969). This CD is a reissue of a Tangent Records release in 1970.