

THE WIRE 460 | JUNE 2022

WIRE

ADVENTURES IN SOUND AND MUSIC | INDEPENDENT SINCE 1982



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P h e w

Is hardcore. By Emily Pothast
+ Alan Cummings on Japanese punk

PAULINE OLIVEROS | THE DREAM SYNDICATE | AVA MENDOZA

Gary Lucas on Third Ear Band

Julie Tippetts & Martin Archer | Hildegard Westerkamp

FMP | Sonic Protest | Counterflows

Black Glass Ensemble | Julmud

Pnew | Pauline Oliveros | The Dream Syndicate | Ava Mendoza

percussion, clavinet and electric guitar. Sly humour abounds on numbers like the tipsy bossa "It's In A Move" and the bleary ballroom slow dance "Lookie". But there's a soulful core. Standout track "Dust In The Wind" feels like an update of Frank Zappa's "Blessed Relief" with a wistfully carefree muted trumpet hook and gorgeous beams of sunburst psych guitar.

Chad Fowler & Matthew Shipp *Old Stories*

Mahakala 2×CD/DL

It's instructive to compare this session to the oeuvre pianist Shipp has built up with Brazilian tenor man Ivo Perelman. At this first meeting with the Arkansas based saxophonist Chad Fowler, he's less abstract, allowing more of a rootsy lyricism to shine through. Fowler mostly plays the straight alto Roland Kirk called a stritch and gets a lot out of it, from an affable blues grumble with generous vibrato, all the way up to a searing cry, frequently tipping over into whiteout multiphonics. On one track he switches to the soprano saxello, revealing a hint of Sidney Bechet's sweet growl. Whether responding with towering chords or delicately strolling figures, Shipp remains a consummate master of spontaneous composition.

Hyper.object

inter.independence

Phonogram Unit CD

As the title suggests, this Portuguese quintet's intention was to concentrate on their individual improvisations without immediately reacting to or engaging with each other, layering five discrete performances in real time to spark unexpected moments of synchronicity. They all clearly have very good intuitive ears because the results are surprisingly coherent and convincing. The opening track "Glitch" is a brief burst of dense free jazz but it works best when there's more wriggle room; "Low" starts with ponderous arco bass and a quiet undertow of percussion over which João Almeida toots bumblebee trumpet, Rodrigo Pinheiro radiates warm piano ripples and Carlos Santos's burbling electronics bubble up like a puddle of hot volcanic mud.

Martin Küchen *Utopia*

Thanatosis Produktion CD/DL

Tamburas have been used in jazz for at least half a century, and too often as a lazy signifier of ill-defined spiritual intent. Here, Swedish saxophonist Martin Küchen does something entirely new – and utterly captivating – with the idea. A luxuriant electronic tambura drone provides a bed for unhurried improvisations on alto and tenor with hints of Indian, North African and Greek sonorities. A snare drum resonating near the tambura's speaker adds a grainy buzz and crackle, as if from a 78 rpm disc recorded on some lost continent in the 1920s. Heavenly radio snippets of Western classical music weave

dreamily in and out of focus. It feels like a soul leaving the body and ascending.

Kuttekop

Transverse Toxospumosis

Supreme Tool Supplies LP

US comedian Bill Hicks's famous skit about the lascivious Goat Boy demon featured a sonic depiction of priapic abandon during which he would put the mic in his mouth and bellow out an overamplified barrage of disgusting roars and growls. Add another layer or three of distortion and stretch that out to two sides of vinyl, and you have this latest from British/Dutch trio Kuttekop. London based drummer (and erstwhile Roscoe Mitchell collaborator) Kikanju Baku thrashes out frenzied free jazz blast beats while Dennis van Geldrop mangles a bass guitar and howls tortured vocals. However they're all but obliterated by Sjak van Bussel, humbly credited with contributing noise. It sounds like the pits of hell. Goat Boy approves!

Andrew Lisle/John Edwards/Kit Downes

Multi-directional

Raw Tonk CD

From the very first moment of this set recorded at London's Cafe Oto in November 2020, John Edwards's lithe, muscular tone and quicksilver imagination demand attention. Perhaps more than any other double bassist currently working in improvised music, his playing is a panoply of mercurial ideas, executed with the utmost confidence and precision: ethereal harmonics, bullish plucking, queasy slides and more are stirred into an endless stream of invention. It's more than enough to inspire greatness in his collaborators. Drummer Andrew Lisle generates a savagely energising pulse-time forward momentum like a Rottweiler straining at the leash. At the piano, Kit Downes intersperses thorny rhythmic and melodic puzzles with conversational asides and cheery flurries. It's highly complex music played with instinctive verve. And that's no mean feat.

John Yao Triceratops *Off-Kilter*

See Tao CD

For this follow-up to 2019's *How We Do*, New York trombonist John Yao continues his mission to write harmonically rich compositions for a chordless quintet featuring a triple horn front line. Certainly, his ultra-complex heads contain some tight voicings, with saxophonists Billy Drewes and Jon Irabagon slotting neatly into place. But, to these ears, he could do with loosening up. "Crosstalk", for instance, sets out to bring the funk but is way too concerned with precision and ends up lacking any danger. It's not all bad, though. Veteran drummer Mark Ferber takes some welcome liberties with time, and Irabagon gets points for making a tiny soprillo sax sound like a blast of shrill computer code. □

Noise, Industrial & Beyond by Raymond Cummings

Lisa Bella Donna

American Watercolors

Bandcamp DL

Somewhere in the Appalachian mountains, Lisa Bella Donna is holed up with a raft of synthesizers, sequencers and more, conjuring soft wonders. Her latest in a long string of LPs, *American Watercolors*, stands apart from its predecessors by dint of its ambition and sheer depth. One is struck by the many layers and levels of detail, ambient as an intricately wrought ecosystem: those mid-range bleeps overtaken suddenly by twinkles, these rippling misshapen conga-like tones close enough to touch randomly lost to shadow, and on and on. If "Early Dawn At Green Lake" dedicates itself to the mellow side of this approach, "East River Mountain" is more interested in how aural infinity might be applied to mild, trippy dread – though its ennuement may catch you off guard.

Chanbara

Prego!

Superpang CD/DL

These mystery players splay out in every direction imaginable on an LP that exists as a constant state of unravelling. Broken into eight uneasy pieces titled after Roman numerals, *Prego!* is one big agitated scramble: each raw sound power-sanded, carved and rearranged into rawer sound. At any given second, Chanbara waterboard, nail-gun or otherwise abuse whatever misbegotten sources are at hand. Whether this experience is exhilarating or exhausting is extremely mindframe-dependent, but never boring.

Kazumoto Endo/Boar

Split

Peyote Tapes DL/LP

Tokyo, Japan's Kazumoto Endo plays off against Dubuque, Iowa's Boar, winking at each other as broadly as noisemakers can while grinding so hard and eschewing clever samples. It helps that both artists grant us some room to breathe. Endo's "Homebrew" starts off with provocative, shreddy knob twists before dealing a series of tight loops into his compositional card deck. On "Metal Bound Flesh", Boar pans back and forth between the speakers in a caustic cascade of beat-smashed effects. This is the anti-music version of watching a short YouTube film flashing a couple of microseconds of every fabric pattern imaginable in sequence, but he arranges his noises with such elan that

it's disarming when the dimensional collage convulses into bracing, sustained rhythms and textures, and fools us with more than a few trick endings.

Kudzu

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Liquid Pathogens DL/MC

Kudzu's self-titled debut tape pushes a violently condensed dose of its invasive namesake: bashing away with a convulsive gravity and manic fury that's downright chameleonic at times. This is the sort of hard noise where vocals seem to be in the mix, but the listener is possibly hallucinating them. From 2019, the A side opens with a turnpike pile-up of ideas, as if this American trio's creative enthusiasm got the better of them from the off, to our benefit. The churn veers from melodic to searing and back in any 20 second stretch, a thumping blare that's simultaneously impenetrable and shattering. Recorded at last year's Ende Tymes festival, the B side leans harder into distortion and feedback, the rabid electronic din tripping over itself, almost threatening to short out the set.

May Putin Rot In Hell: A Noise Compilation In Solidarity With The People Of Ukraine

Various

Noise Against Fascism DL

As of this writing, Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine is little more than two months old, with no clear end in sight. Though military and civilian casualties vary, the United Nations estimates that up to 15,000 lives have been lost in the ongoing destruction of this country's heritage; meanwhile refugees resettle abroad as the broader international community arms Ukraine in a high-stakes proxy war against Russia. The appropriately titled charity compilation *May Putin Rot In Hell* nicely expresses the vicarious rage, fear and shock felt by anyone with a soul. Claus Poulson's "Louder Than Sunshine" is a terse, signal-jammed guitar study. Lasse Marhaug's "This Ridiculous Darkness" is a Harry Bertola-esque dirge. Sweden's Ann Rosén's "Sands" hits hardest, suggesting the last gushes of a symbolic bloodletting.

Paolo Gàiba Riva

Tropical Feedback

Zoomin' Night DL/MC

As PGR, Italy's Paolo Gàiba Riva pursues jolting, choppy harsh noise. *Tropical Feedback* finds him operating in a different mode, lightly mixing field recordings of insects, bats and birds made in Malaysia. The result is all-natural screech, winding and vaguely oppressive; humanity, if present, is all but swallowed up by the din. The sensations evoked don't soothe, necessarily. "Taman Negara Pulau Pinang 2" put me in mind of a blowtorch flaming at a distance; the polyphonic chirps peppering the psychedelic "Tasik Perdana, Gunung Reng And Gerik" fairly popped from my laptop speakers. □