



MATTHEW BURTNER:
METAPHORPHONE COLOURS

a drone/deconstructed
jazz opus



PHILIP BLACKBURN:
HABANERA

A Soundwalk Through Old
Havana, Cuba.



DEAD CAT BOUNCE
**HOME SPEAKS TO
THE WANDERING**

the impassioned beats and untamed
caterwauls emanating from the
unmuffled passels of saxophones
plus bass & drums.



the label of
the American
Composers
Forum

With the first bouncy, leaping riff of 600 Lines to its answering phrase pitched lower in the ensemble, it's immediately obvious how skillfully Alter Egz have this music under their fingers. The music swings with the lightness and breathless momentum of Count Basie's brasses and reeds, and the performance highlights the extent to which Glass inherited a sensation of pulse and energy that had little in common with the classical norm. What 600 Lines hadn't yet developed is the itheeness of harmonic control that emerged only a few years later. Here the music spins manically around its tonic, not able to deal in the wittily abrupt gear changes and alterations of key that Glass would weave into *Another Look At Harmony and Twelve Parts*. How *Now* is less ambitious, based on the attenuation of pulsing attacks with staccato interruptions by flute and high strings. Again, it forshadows the internal conversations between instrumental groupings characteristic of later Glass, adding to the sense that this disc offers valuable slices of his prehistory.

DAVID GRUBBS
A GUESS AT THE RIDDLE
FAT CAT FATCATS CD/DP
BY NICK SOUTHGATE

A *Guess At The Riddle* could serve as an apt summation of David Grubbs's musical odyssey. It's mostly recorded with a "classic" rock guitar/bass/drums line-up with occasional cellist from Nikos Veliotis and electronics contributions from Matmos. The riddle may remain ineluctably recondite, and Grubbs's latest seems to be a straightforward one, but the results are sublime.

Grubbs returns to the dynamics of post-hardcore electric guitar playing with a thrilling purity of execution and insight. Indeed, the production values are uncannily close to post-hardcore benchmark groups such as early Dinosaur Jr, Pavement and Bob Mould's brace of solo albums between *Hüsker Dü* and *Sugar*. The bright colouring of the guitar combined with the fracturing sincerity of Grubbs's vocals gives every song an intimacy and luging sense of instant recognition. The silvered opiferness of "The Neophyte" turn with cart effortlessness to intensity and slip gracefully back again. The opening "Knight Errant" is world-weary yet exhilarating as Grubbs sings, "I'll choose the next/I'll choose whatever's next." The contribution of Matmos is most evident in the instrumental "Rosie Ruck" and the tender defiance of the protesting "You'll Never Lame Me". Grubbs's other collaborator here is cult author Rick Moody, with whom he plays in The Windgate Community Singers, and who contributes lyrics to "Wave Generators" and "Hurricane Season". Grubbs's reputation is rightly based on his contribution to a tradition of eclecticism and experiment, something he gestures to here with a couple of Mayo Thompson's "Magnificence As Such". However, on the evidence of *A Guess At The Riddle* we should hope that Grubbs the songwriter is heard from much more in the future.

A HAWK AND A HACKSAW
A HAWK AND A HACKSAW
LEAF BAY36 CD
BY MIA CLARKE

Ex-Neutral Milk Hotel drummer Jeremy Barnes is accustomed to working in various locations. Having left Leicester to return via Prague to

hometown Albuquerque, he has periodically overcome logistical challenges for the sake of his many musical commitments, be it with Chicago's free jazz trio Savion, or his continuing involvement with Athens, Georgia's Elephant 6 collective. His one man band, *A Hawk And A Hacksaw*, began in 2000 and most of his self-titled debut was recorded in a makeshift garage studio in Saumur, France, with occasional trips to the US and Norway turning up some spontaneous collaborations.

Barnes simultaneously employs drums, whistles, vocals, and bells, but the dominant instrument is the accordion. It carries many of the main melodies, as its sweeping cascades fall over intricate piano scales and analogue clippings of field recordings. *A Hawk And A Hacksaw* was, Barnes says, greatly inspired by his surroundings in rural France. His claim is borne out on tracks such as "All Along The Tide", with its electronically manipulated birdsong, and "Maremaitette", introduced by a gurgling cockerel.

Barnes's confident muddle of Eastern European folk influences and rollicking rhythms set in informal yet precise structures have a sorrowful, understated charm. The jarring samples of machinery in "At Dusk" buckle perfectly underneath a desperate, dainty piano arpeggio, recalling the metallic tundra of Björk's "Frost" (from *Vesperine*, 2001), though Barnes's piano mops up more human shards of sound. French composer Jacques Thillat gets a reworking in "Quand Le Son Devient Aigu, Jeter La Giraffe En La Mer", and the spontaneous marimba jam with Derrick Altnsted, called "With Our Thoughts We Make The World", is a real treat, unravelling with a brilliant sample of what would often be a gang of inflated monkeys. Barnes's often breathtaking compositions trace a peculiar darkness lurking beneath the blossoming melodies. It is this shadier side of *A Hawk And A Hacksaw* that eventually takes the upper hand, ripping the pretentiousness of first impressions sharply, and satisfyingly, in the bud.

GLENN JONES
THIS IS THE WIND THAT BLOWS IT OUT
STRANGE ATTRACTORS AUDIO HOUSE
5AAH024 CD

STEFFEN BASHO-JUNGHANS
7 BOOKS
STRANGE ATTRACTORS AUDIO HOUSE
5AAH2021 2XCD

By DAVID KEENAN
The river of singing steel flows endlessly on. *This Is The Wind That Blows It Out* is a set of solos for six and 12 string acoustic guitar from Cal De Sac's Glenn Jones, modernist remainings of the topographical conceptions of American frontiersmen like John Fahey, Robbie Basho, Jesse Fuller and Charles Veas.

Jones has long been working such thematic material into the weave of *Cal De Sac's* music, starting with the heavy take on Fahey's "The Portland Cement Factory At Monolith, California" that graced their 1991 debut album *Ecim* and continuing with 1997's *The Epiphany Of Glenn Jones*. Along with his solid grounding in pre-war guitar cosmologies, his finger style reflects a working knowledge of a host of intriguing parallel currents. These include ripples of Latin-infected plumage that recall the wide open spaces of the

music of Bola Sete through Convertible road rhythms, beer bottle droops and fanfares of pure Yankee doodle.

Here his gorgeous, luminous settings are saved across a series of open tunings, which he threads with beautiful rolling melodies, his slide work sounding like the flutter of tiny metal butterflies. Throughout the set, he builds slow dynamic curves by courtiering long probing lines of song with soft enjoining basslines that sink like weighted pianos. *Flow* string singer Jack Rose turns up for an alternative take to the duo's "London Avenue Storm" (a version of which also appears on Rose's *Two Originals* Op.) and he also has a song dedicated to him, the bandaging "One Jack Rose (That I Mean)". But Jones's "Fahey's Car" is the highlight, a triumphal seasaw that hijacks the "ghost tones" and hymnal tuning of Jesse Fuller's sanctified 1950s recordings to exhilarating effect. Definitely one of the best of the recent haul.

German guitarist Steffen Basho-Junghans is another player committed to navigating the various tributaries first signposted by the early Tacoma pioneers. Parallel to his exercises in homage, Junghans's most interesting work come out of another, almost antithetical tradition, the contrarian impulse towards dissecting and reinventing approaches to traditional instrumentation which found expression in German labels like FMP and vanguard compilations like Virgin's mid-70s *Guitar Solos Series*. 7 *Books* is drawn from this more challenging side of his work, a concept album based on an epic vision of universal birth and evolution.

Operating under various musical binds is one of Junghans's central strategies, limiting his technique in order to bring focus to his invention. Here it mostly sounds as if he's playing one accord, deriving slices of "solar notes" from an acoustic 12 string using only a metal slide. While much of disc one sounds exactly like what it is, a worthwhile experiment, disc two is considerably more explosive, as he works his newly discovered modes and styles into a convincing and highly personal vocabulary.

RICHARD H KIRK
EARLIER/LATER
MUTE KIRK8 2XCD

SANDOZ
DIGITAL LIFEFORMS REDUX
MUTE KIRK7 2XCD
BY KEITH MOUNIE

Cabaret Voltaires' early experiments with electronics, tape cut-ups and extreme FX processing produced some of the most vibrant music of the post-punk age. Less rigorous ideologically than contemporaries like Throbbing Gristle, CV focused more strongly on the texture of the music than high art concepts and shock tactics. Although the contributions of fellow members Stephen McIlneric and Chris Watson were crucial, Kirk was the chief architect of their distinctive sound.

The *Earlier portion* of this collection of "unfinished projects" gathers together some of his attempts to create blueprints for both the contemporaneous work of CV and his own solo releases. Indeed, somewhat cheekily, much of the collection comprises the unadorned backdrops to tracks that appeared on his *Time High Fiction* album. The rest consists of