



MATTHEW BURTNER
METAPHONE COLOURS

620
a droney deconstructed jazzopus



PHILIP BLACKBURN
HABANERA

204
A Soundwalk Through Old Havana, Cuba.



DEAD CAT BOUNCE
HOME SPEAKS TO THE WANDERING

583
the impassioned beats and untamed carnivals emanating from the unruly passel 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 skilfully Alter Ego have this music under their fingers. The music swings with the tightness and breathless momentum of Count Basie's brasses and reeds, and the performance highlights the extent to which Glass invented a sensation of pulse and energy that had little in common with the classical norm. What *600 Lines* hadn't yet developed is the liteness 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 alternation of pulsing triads with staccato interruptions by flute and high strings. Again, it foreshadows 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 FATCD33 CDLP
BY NICK SOUTHGATE

A Guess At The Riddle could serve as an apt summation of David Grubbs' musical odyssey. It's mostly recorded with a 'classic' rock guitar/bass/drums line-up with occasional cello 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 pulse 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 brittle colouring of the guitar combined with the fracturing sincerity of Grubbs's vocals gives every song an intimacy and tugging sense of instant recognition. The silvered opening runs of *The Neophyte* turn with dark 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 Ruler" and the tender defiance of the protesting "You'll Never Shame Me". Grubbs's other collaborator here is cult author Rick Moody, with whom he plays in *The Wingdale 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 cup 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 BAY35 CD
BY MIA CLARKE

Ex-Neutrom 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 *Babilon*, 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 "Maremailette", introduced by a gurgling cockle.

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 simplicity of machinery in "At Dusk" buckle perfectly underneath a desperate, dainty piano arpeggio, recalling the metallic tundra of Björk's "Frost" (from *Vespertine*). Indeed, through Barnes's piano pops up more human shards of sound. French composer Jacques Thailot gets a reworking in "Quand Le Son Devient Ager, Jeter La Giraffe En La Mer", and the spontaneous marimba jam with Derrick Almond, called "With Our Thoughts We Make The World", is a real treat, unravelling with a brilliant sample of what would be a gang of irritated monkeys. Barnes's often breathtakingly beautiful passage a peculiar darkness lurking beneath the compositions melodies. It is this shadier side of *A Hawk And A Hacksaw* that eventually takes the upper hand, nipping the prettiness of first impressions sharply, and satisfyingly, in the bud.

GLENN JONES
THIS IS THE WIND THAT BLOWS IT OUT
STRANGE ATTRACTORS AUDIO HOUSE
SAAH024 CD

STEFFEN BASHO-JUNGHANS
7 BOOKS
STRANGE ATTRACTORS AUDIO HOUSE
SAAH001/2 CD

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 Cul De Sac's Glenn Jones, modernist reimaginings of the topographical conceptions of American frontiersmen like John Fahey, Robbie Basho, Jesse Fuller and Charles Yess.

Jones has long been working such thematic material into the weave of Cul 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-inflected plumage that recall the wide open spaces of the

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

Here his gorgeous, luminous settings are scored across a series of open tunings, which 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 countering long probing lines of song with soft anchoring basslines that sink like weighted pianos. Fellow string slinger Jake Rose turns up for an alternative take on the duo's "Linden Avenue Storm" (a version of which also appears on Rose's *Two Originals Of...*) and he also has a song dedicated to him, the band-dancing "One Jack Rose (That I Mean)". But Jones's "Fahey's Car" is the highlight, a triumphant teasing that hijacks the "ghost tones" and hymnal tinnut of Jesse Fuller's sanctified 1950s recordings to exhilarating effect. Definitely one of the best of the recent deluge.

German guitarist Steffen Basho-Junghans is another player committed to navigating the weary tributaries first silted by the early Takoma pioneers. Parallel to his exercises in homage, Junghans's most interesting work comes 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 bins 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 acoustic 12 string using only a metal slide. While much of disc one sounds exactly like what it is, i 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
MUDO KIRK6 2XCD

SANDEZ
DIGITAL LIFEFORMS REDUX
MUTE KIRK7 2XCD

BY KEITH MOULINE
Cabaret Voltaire's 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 Mallinder 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 unaccommodated backdrops to tracks that appeared on his *Time High Fiction* album. The rest consists of